

Purpose of the Organization

Mission: The SAGE Project is an organization committed to improving the lives of women and girls who have been trafficked into prostitution or victimized by sexual exploitation and violence.

SAGE is organized by and for survivors of abuse, prostitution and trauma (most of the staff have had criminal histories, severe drug addictions, and were formerly homeless,) and within our various programs, we counsel over 350 women and girls per week. Interwoven in the staff are peer and drug treatment counselors, therapists, acupuncturists and social work and therapist interns. The personal knowledge and experience possessed by many of the staff enables us to effectively provide support and engender trust without re-traumatizing even the most fragile of clients. SAGE has assisted in raising public awareness concerning the sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls.

Evidence of Success

During a twelve-month period in 1999/2000, SAGE Project served 1,000 women and girls providing over 6,800 units of service to the client population. As a result of our interventions, SAGE has assisted over 700 women and girls in exiting the criminal justice system, escaping prostitution, recover from abuse and acquire appropriate services such as medical and mental health care, substance abuse treatment, housing, legal immigration status, case management, educational and vocational training.

San Francisco is the first jurisdiction to ever focus its law enforcement efforts on the demand side of prostitution. The First Offender Prostitution Program (FOPP), of which Norma Hotaling is the co-founder, in collaboration with the SF Police Department, and the SF District Attorney's Office has diverted over 4,500 customers of prostitutes from the court system to an educational and rehabilitation experience in lieu of criminal prosecution. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the 4,500 men remain arrest free. Fees collected from these men fund a full range of services to women and girls who are the real victims of prostitution and sexual exploitation.

Wrap around services for women and girls include:

- *prevention
- *early intervention
- *crisis care
- *harm reduction
- *mentorship
- *individual therapy
- *language skills
- *legal advocacy
- *health care
- *housing.

Treatment is provided to women such as Kristine a former SAGE client, mother of four, grandmother of fourteen, and in the State prison system for over 21 years, implemented and coordinated women's services at SAGE as the Director of Services. And Agnes, who began her treatment with SAGE in jail, now coordinates The First Offenders of Prostitution (FOPP) which provides services to an average fifty customers of prostitutes per month and provides services to 75 women and girls per week or Leslie who began treatment in jail paid for from FOPP funds. She now coordinates jail programs working for the Sheriff's Department. Or Autumn, who also received services from FOPP funding, is currently the Administrative Director of the SAGE Project and a new mother. They now pay taxes, have health care, are building healthy families and are giving back to the communities and live lives that matter and are free from abuse.

At SAGE, we measure success in terms of:

Real outcomes-

Real results-

Utilizing the peer empowerment model, former prostitutes provide treatment and support.

We achieve dramatic decreases in:

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Depression

Suicide
Recidivism rates
Re-victimization
Increases
Self esteem
Confidence
Overall Health
Ability to take charge of their lives
Get and Keep legal jobs
Advance in education
Recover from drugs

“This approach reduces crime, makes for a safer community and is good for the women and girls themselves. Without SAGE, hundreds of women and girls would still be on the streets, in and out of our jails, separated from their families and children, suffering from sexual and physical abuse, and worse. Since SAGE began, we have seen many prostitutes permanently leave the criminal justice system and build new lives free from crime and victimization. We know SAGE saves the City millions of dollars every year but more importantly, they’re saving lives.” San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey.

Achievements

Peter F. Drucker Award.

In recognition of its Peer Educator Training Program, San Francisco’s SAGE Project is the winner of the 2000 Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation. The SAGE Project is dedicated to helping prostitutes leave the streets, escape from being trafficked and build productive lives free from violence and exploitation. During the last four years, SAGE peer educators-former prostitutes themselves-have enabled more than 700 women and girls to leave prostitution and reclaim their lives.

The Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation is given each year to a nonprofit organization in recognition of a program that has made a difference in the lives of the people it serves -- producing results that exemplify Peter Drucker's definition of

innovation: Change that creates a new dimension of performance. The Drucker Award was conferred at an award ceremony in Dallas on October 30, 2000. *"Of the 275 applicants for this year's Drucker Award, SAGE's Peer Educator Training Program is an outstanding example of superb social sector innovation,"* said Frances Hesselbein, Chairman and CEO of the Drucker Foundation. *"The Selection Committee was impressed that this program helped SAGE increase its organizational capacity and community outreach. Its results show it is making a powerful difference in many lives."*

Innovations in American Government Award.

Since 1995, the First Offender Prostitution Program has had remarkable success, honored in 1998 by the Innovations in American Government Award awarded by the JFK School of Government at Harvard University and The Ford Foundation. Through the end of June 2000, more than 3,000 male customers of prostitutes had completed FOPP. Fewer than two percent (2%) had re-offended anywhere in the state of California. Cost savings to the criminal justice system as a result of FOPP alone are tremendous. The District Attorney's Office estimates savings to the criminal justice system resulting from FOPP program of over \$4.5 million to date. This Restorative Justice Program provides a continuum of education, prevention, early intervention, and rehabilitation services for prostitutes and customers. The administrative fees from the customers of prostitutes are funneled back into services provided by SAGE Project.

Replication Activities.

In the five years of its formal existence, SAGE has established itself as a unique service provider leading to dynamic growth and replication. Evidencing the unique nature of SAGE's leadership and the effectiveness of our model, community-based organizations and government agencies have replicated or are in the process of replicating SAGE models in twenty-five localities including the United States, Canada, Europe, South America and Asia.

Media Coverage.

The unique, innovative and successful quality of SAGE's work is also evidenced by the diversity and depth of media coverage that it has received. Beyond local media coverage, SAGE has been covered on national television by CNN, Good Morning America, the Oprah Winfrey Show, Day and Date, ABC World News Tonight, A&E Investigative Reports, and 20/20. International coverage has included stories by BBC television, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, BBC radio, Street Stories with Ed Bradley, and United National radio. Print coverage has included extensive coverage by local journalists as well as stories in Life Magazine, New York Times, Dallas Morning News, Glamour Magazine, The Nation's Health, Chicago Tribune, Readers Digest, Hope Magazine, Marie Claire, and the London Observer. Norma Hotaling was named one of ten most innovative people in the United States in George Magazine, April 1997. SAGE staff believes that effective communication strategies are critical to effective public education on prostitution, trafficking in women and girls, sexual exploitation and violence and to encourage replication of successful recovery and treatment models.

Youth Program.

Since 1998, the Girls Program has demonstrated tremendous success in improving the lives and community environment of girls 12-17 years of age. SAGE has implemented the program, successfully worked with the girls who have entered the program, provided drug counseling, job and educational training, and decreased the level of violence in their lives. The girls have routinely planned and engaged in activities that have empowered their lives and have contributed to the health and vitality of San Francisco. An additional success of the girls program is the leveraging of federal victims of crime treatment funds for mental health and health recovery services.

Community Benefits.

Substantial savings accrue to San Francisco's criminal justice and public health systems through the work of SAGE. Annual local costs for the arrest and handling of adult prostitution cases exceed \$4,125,000 (not including jailing costs or juvenile cases). In addition, 40 of the 200 heaviest hitters of the public health system are prostitutes, costing

the system over \$5 million annually. Since 1995, SAGE has helped more than 500 women and girls in San Francisco to permanently exit prostitution and build lives free from abuse and violence. Thousands more have received services and are moving toward healthier lives and recovery. Each woman and girl receiving SAGE early intervention and recovery services represents significant public health system savings, savings that will increase with implementation of the planned Wellness Center.

In addition, immeasurable benefits accrue to our community by helping women and girls build positive, contributing lives. As one client stated recently, *“We are statistically a good investment, if you help us with our needs, we are survivors. We need this bridge to become the women we were meant to be, to give back to our communities, to become good mothers and good neighbors.”*

Significant markers of success lie in indications of institutional change in local government’s response to prostitution-related issues. Where prostitutes were routinely disregarded or seen as impossible to serve, even law enforcement agencies have come to a new understanding that our clients are assets, not liabilities. Susan Breall, a 15 year veteran of the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office and now Chief of the D.A.’s Criminal Division recently summed up the cultural shift in her office, *“A few years ago, no prosecutor wanted to take a case if the victim was a prostitute. Those cases were seen as losers. Now our office has been educated by SAGE and armed with the information and tools to educate judges and juries to understand that prostitutes are particularly vulnerable victims. The criminal justice system has come to understand and respond to the need for dramatically stepped-up protection for these women and girls who are routinely and serially abused, assaulted and raped. Today, my lawyers come to me asking for cases with prostitute victims because the cases are important and because we know we can win them. None of this would have happened without Norma and without the women of SAGE.”*