



The Lisa Project

Some secrets should be told...

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**The Lisa Project Evaluation Report
San Bernardino County
January - March 2012**

Thank You...



Children's Network is honored to have been able to coordinate The Lisa Project's three month exhibition in San Bernardino County. We would not have been able to bring The Lisa Project to our county, however, without the generous contributions of First 5 San Bernardino, Children's Fund, Children and Family Services, and San Bernardino County's Children's Policy Council. Furthermore, it would have been impossible to host this exhibition without the help of over 150 volunteers.

It is the collective effort of these agencies and our volunteers which has afforded Children's Network the opportunity to highlight the various facets of child abuse and neglect. Raising awareness of this issue in the greater community is the first step towards telling secrets, breaking cycles and ending child abuse. After all, it is our community's collective responsibility to protect our children.

Thank you so much again to The Lisa Project's local sponsors - First 5 San Bernardino, Children's Fund, Children and Family Services, and Children's Policy Council - and for your continued support in Children's Network's mission and vision.



Executive Summary

The Lisa Project is a multisensory exhibit that tells the story of child abuse from a child's perspective. While walking through each room and hearing a child's story, one learns that child abuse does not discriminate against age, gender, race, or socioeconomic status; it tends to be cyclic, leaves life-long scars, and tends to remain a secret. The objective of bringing The Lisa Project to San Bernardino County was to raise awareness of child abuse and help illustrate that it is our collective responsibility to protect children in our community.

San Bernardino County hosted The Lisa Project over three months in three different locations throughout the county: Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton for January 2012, Mall of Victor Valley in Victorville for February 2012, and Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga for March 2012. These locations were chosen because of their high general public traffic volumes. Over these three months, 5,139 people visited The Lisa Project and 4,210 visitors completed response forms.

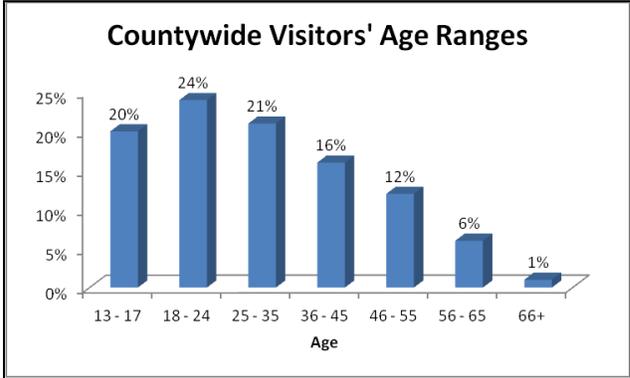
San Bernardino County Highlights...

- **65%** of respondents were between the ages of 13—35
- **45%** of respondents felt they were much more aware of child abuse
- **26%** of respondents felt they learned something new after visiting The Lisa Project
- **137** respondents revealed that they too were victims of child abuse
- **1,196** respondents requested information to volunteer locally
- **596** respondents requested information on local mentoring organizations
- **213** respondents requested information on becoming a foster/adoptive parent
- **Reflection Room Themes:** expressions of gratitude, commitments to action, offerings of hope, help & solutions, victims' testimonials, breaking the cycle, believing the children, and thought provoking statements

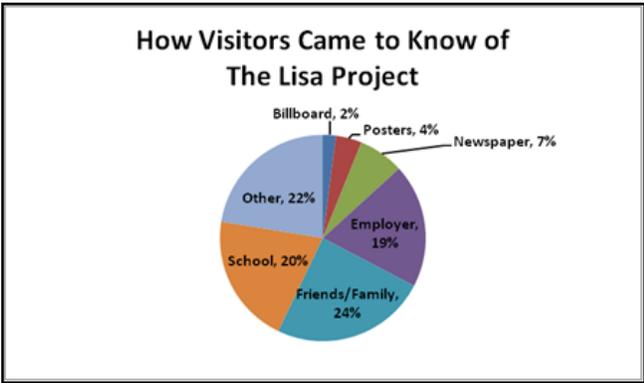
San Bernardino County Lisa Project Data

Upon entry into the exhibit, visitors were greeted by a volunteer and given an introduction to The Lisa Project. This volunteer maintained a count of the number of people visiting using a number counter. A total of 5,139 individuals visited The Lisa Project at all three locations. Of these, 1,098 people visited ARMC, 2,278 people visited Mall of Victor Valley, and 1,763 people visited Victoria Gardens.

Approximately 74% of our visitors were female and 26% were male. Their ages varied; however, 65% of visitors were ages 13–35. Notably, 31% of Victorville’s visitors were between the ages of 13 and 17, most likely due to outreach at local high schools. Many of Victorville High School’s Do Something Club members made it a point to spread the word in their local community.



Many visitors heard about The Lisa Project from their friends, family, school, and employer. Some reported having come across it while driving or walking by at the mall, or from their local county departments, organizations, and churches.



Percentages of how visitors came to know of The Lisa Project were comparable across all three locations. In particular, 33% of ARMC visitors learned of the exhibit at work. Victorville and Victoria Gardens had 27% and 25% of its visitors, respectively, hear about the exhibit at school from their instructors, classmates, or clubs.

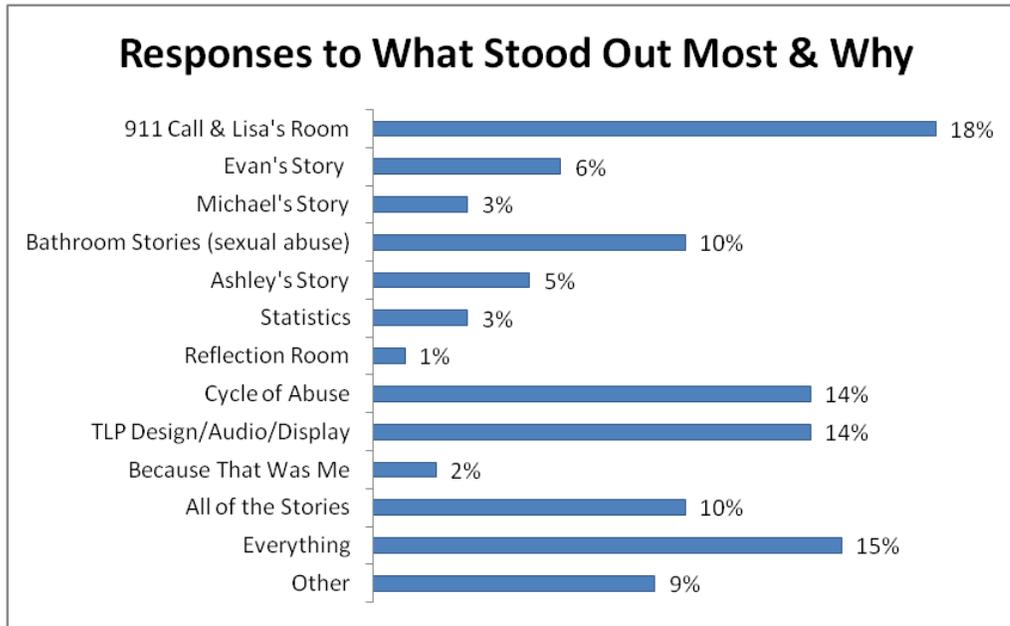
At the conclusion of their tour, visitors were requested to complete a response form where they were asked to share their levels of awareness, what stood out to them and why, and if they would be interested in receiving more information on volunteering, mentoring, or becoming a foster parent. A total of 4,210 visitors completed a response form.

Forty-five percent of respondents felt they were much more aware of child abuse and neglect after visiting The Lisa Project, while 16% reported felt they were somewhat more aware. In fact, 48% of Victorville’s visitors felt much more aware. Twenty-six percent of all visitors reported learning something new as a result of their tour.



- **45%** of all respondents felt they were much more aware of child abuse
- **26%** of all respondents felt they learned something new after visiting The Lisa Project

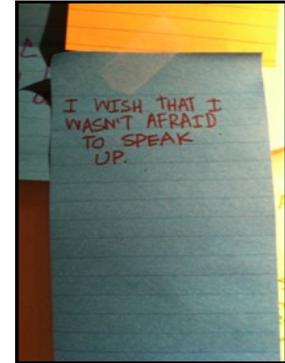
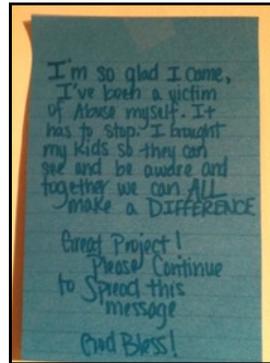
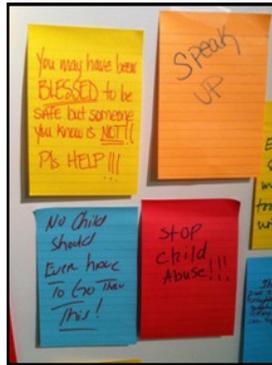
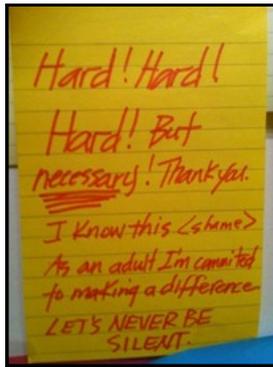
What stood out most to you and why?



Respondents were asked to describe in an open-ended question what part of the exhibit stood out to them the most and why. A content analysis illustrated that the majority of respondents (18%) were struck by the very beginning - Lisa's 911 call - hearing the fear and terror in her voice and her picture in clear view. About 14% were taken by the overall project design, audio, and display because it all felt so real given the sights, voices, and smells. Some (14%) were struck by the cyclic nature of abuse. Another 10% felt that the sexual abuse stories specifically in the bathroom stood out to them the most with many being astonished that a mother was sexually abusing her two-year-old toddler. Ten percent felt that seeing/hearing all of the stories with varying types of abuse made their visit a notable experience, while another 15% felt that everything stood out to them - the stories, sights, sounds, smells, etc made it so much more compelling, powerful, and real. The percentages reflected above were comparable across all three locations.

For the hundreds of responses that did not fit into any of the above mentioned categories, the following themes were elicited as things visitors were struck by or had learned as a result of their experience:

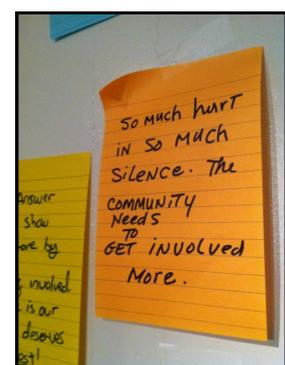
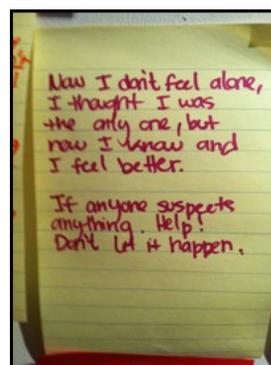
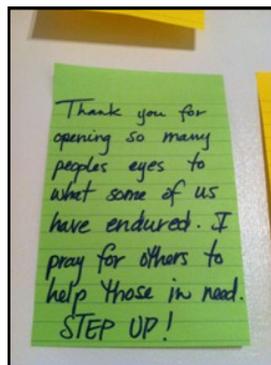
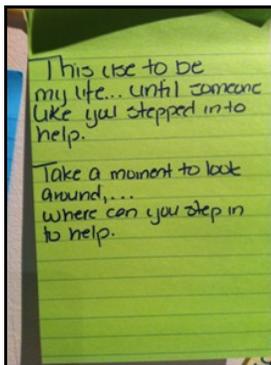
- Helplessness of the children
- Abuse from a child's perspective
- Local statistics illustrated how close abuse is to our homes
- The fact that no one talks about child abuse
- How common child abuse is and how it does not discriminate against a victims' gender, age, race, income, etc
- Even mother's are capable of abusing their children
- Children try to hide abuse to protect their abuser - often it is someone they care about
- Knowing that victims are afraid to speak even if they are hurting
- Some children/victims simply accept their abuse
- How the scars of child abuse can affect a person over a lifespan
- Disappointment in man's capacity to commit such atrocious acts
- What to look for and do when suspecting child abuse



Reflections...

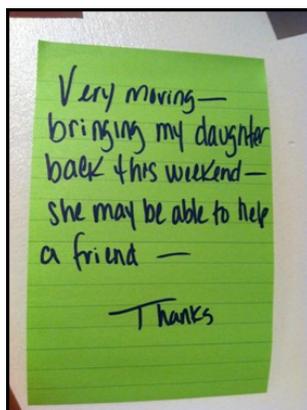
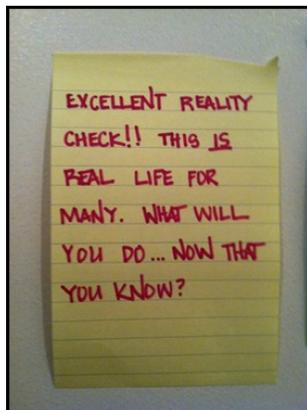
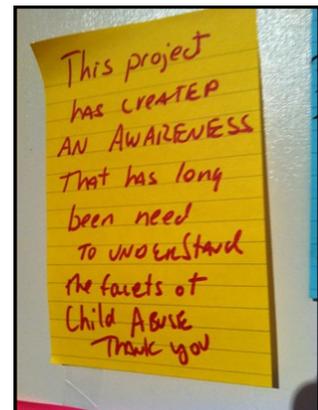
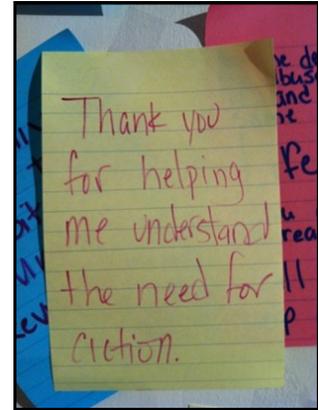
Towards the end of their tour, the Reflection Room served as an immediate outlet for visitors to express their thoughts and feeling of what they had just experienced. They were invited to write their thoughts on a Post-It note and to post their feelings amongst the hundreds of other reflections that adorned the walls.

In addition to writing their own thoughts, visitors had the opportunity to read the thoughts of hundreds of others. Emotions ranged from sorrow and disgust to pleas asking for people to help end child abuse and report it when they suspect something. Several themes emerged from the thousands of Post-Its that covered the walls at all three locations. These themes included expressions of gratitude for the project, feelings of impact, commitments to change, offerings of help, hope, and solutions, victims' testimonials, breaking the cycle of abuse, believing the children, and thought provoking statements. The following pages are a handful of the thoughts and feelings our visitors had shared...



Expressions of Gratitude...

- Who knew one person can make all the difference. Thank you so much for this experience!
- Thank you for opening my eyes. I closed them many years ago when I was in the same situation.
- I'm calling today! Thank you!
- As a teacher, my eyes are opened. Thank you. I will watch.
- An honor to be educated! I have 6 years sobriety and promise no verbal abuse or alcoholism in my family.
- Thank you for revealing the hidden secrets.
- I didn't want to know how awful people could be in this world with children. But then I thought how selfish of me not to be aware of this. I needed my eyes open so when I work with children, I can see the signs and get the abuse to STOP! Thank you for making this available.

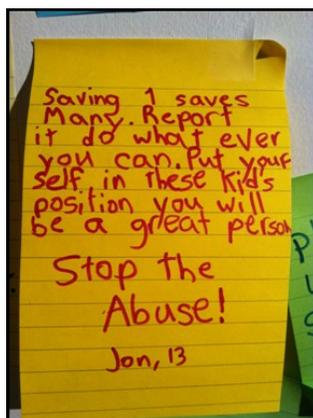
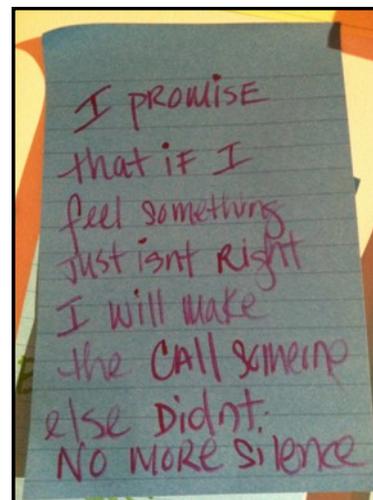


Feelings of Impact...

- So touching! It really inspired me to reach out!! "Break the cycle" Amazing!
- Very moving. I think sometimes we focus so much on ourselves, we don't realize that other people are struggling.
- I have no words. This has been a life changing experience.
- Deeply impacting! There should be more tours like this one.
- Never knew how lucky I really am.
- Now, I think different.
- Very moving. I hope this is taken nationwide to raise awareness.
- An absolute reality check! Definitely puts a 'face' to what you read and hear about.

Commitments to Action...

- I will change things in my home.
- This was a real eye opener. I can and will look for ways to help. I wish someone would have helped me!!
- Being a victim, I wish this was around to help me. I will do my part to protect all children, my children. Thank you.
- I love my family and will be more patient and a better mom!
- I know how they feel. I was pushed to play sports and when I didn't do well...all I remember was a car window smashing against my head. I will never treat my kids like that!
- My nieces and nephew are in unsafe situations with their mom. I will tell the secret.
- Amazing! Will not hesitate to make a CPS report or call 911.
- This has renewed my commitment to get involved – long term as well as in an immediate situation. **BE STRONG** – for them.
- I came today because our peer mentoring teacher mentioned it. I recently talked to a child who is afraid her father may abuse her and her sisters. She wasn't definite, so I didn't know if I should report. The Lisa Project helped me make my decision. Thank you..

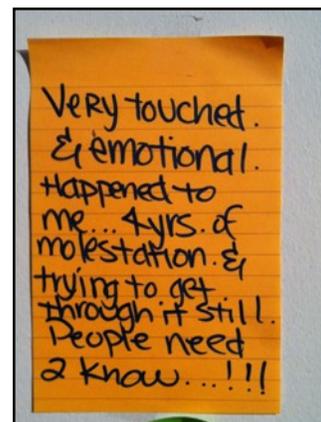
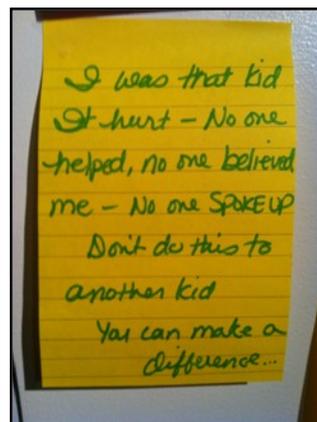
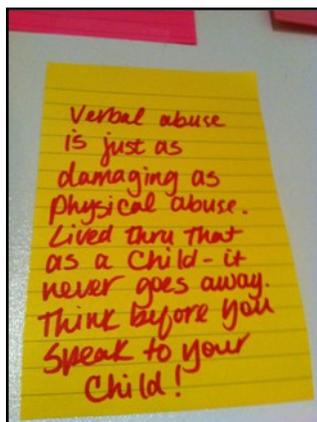


Offering Hope, Help & Solutions...

- The answer is to show your love by getting involved. Everyone is our future and deserves the best! Wish I would have asked for help!!
- Through this experience, we're able to see how important our roles are, we're able to see how much influence we have.
- One call can make a huge difference.
- Help starts with YOU!!
- When you hear of a child going through this, we must have the courage to take action. Otherwise, we are just as complicit with our silence. Please have courage!
- I will pay attention.
- It is ALL of our responsibility to help.
- A solid reminder to be a voice for those who have none.
- When everyone holds hands, who will pull out the guns?
- If I didn't see it, it didn't exist. Time for me to open my eyes.
- If not for your voice or my voice...sometimes we would never be heard. Give voice.
- No one is exempt, but everyone can help.

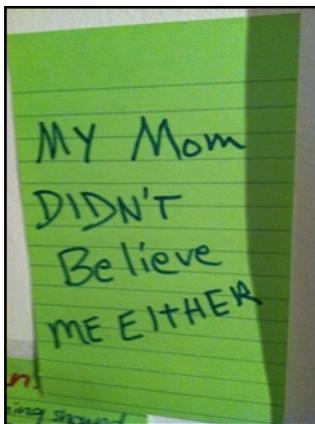
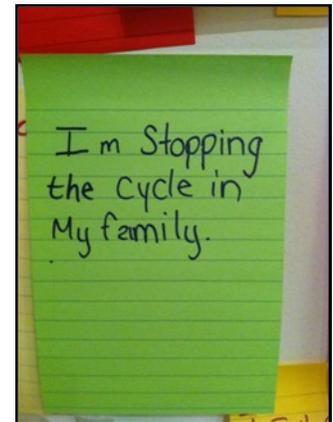
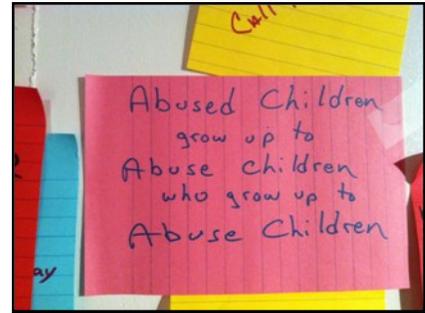
Victims' Testimonials...

- I'm so glad I came. I've been a victim of abuse myself. It has to stop. I brought my kids so they can see and be aware and together we can ALL make a DIFFERENCE. Please continue to spread the message.
- Abuse hurts. It hurt me and I hurt my children. I've changed.
- This used to be my life...until someone like you stepped in to help. Take a moment to look around... where can you step in to help?
- I was an abused child. I didn't tell until I was 35 years old. It's never too late to tell.
- I used to be the one getting abused. But I told someone and now my life and his life are better.
- I have made that call and am not afraid to continue to do so if needed. The monster in my life just passed away. I am elated!
- It's why I left!
- I grew up getting abused physically, emotionally, and sexually. If you know someone who is getting abused, HELP THEM!! They helped me! People do care...I'm now in a loving home...
- I've got some healing to do.
- This is why I Do what I Do! To give a voice to others! And also because I didn't have a voice for 18 years.
- Now I don't feel alone. I thought I was the only one, but now I know and I feel better.
- Get out so they can live. I saw my daughter in Ashley's room. I left my abuser when she was 9 years old. She is understanding the cycle now and choosing to change. Get out if you're in abuse! Get help! Get counseling! It's worth it.
- I am a survivor of incest. I know the pain that a victim of sexual abuse goes through. I am going through my recovery and am glad that there is a kind of awareness for people to see what is going on everyday. Thanks.
- Think before you speak to your child!
- So much fear if I tell my mom – I hate feeling dirty! What if the other kids find out?
56 years later!!!
- That was me...the girl in the shower...many years ago...it still hurts...God is showing me how to heal. God, PLEASE protect our children.
- I wish I wasn't afraid to speak up.
- I was abused too. Help me help others.



Breaking the Cycle...

- The cycle repeats in my family...I wish it would stop. Even if I am just one, I will continue to fight! To my 2 God-daughters, I am sorry you are a story on these walls. I love you. - Nina
- I broke the cycle.
- You're no longer a victim when you break the cycle. It can be done...I know...I did it! Be brave.
- I broke the cycle of abuse that happened as a child with my children. This exhibit has showed me how invaluable breaking the cycle truly was. Thank you.
- It's NEVER too late to break the CYCLE.
- I stopped the cycle. Thank you to The Lisa Project for reminding me that I made the right choice.
- Thank you. This made me thankful that my dad stopped the cycle, but it made me sad to think of what he went through when he was a kid. He recently told me [that] when his mom goes to hug him, he flinches because he thinks she will hit him again...He is 62 years old!!!
- Thank God for voices that choose not to be silent and break the cycle. I was mentally and physically abused by my father.
- Stop child abuse because if you don't, children will do the same.

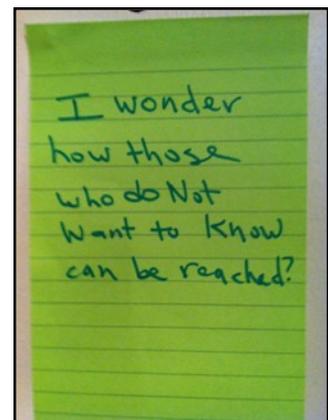


Believing the Children...

- I was that kid. It hurt – no one helped - no one believed me – no one SPOKE UP. Don't do this to another kid.
- Believe the children when they tell you something bad is happening.
- Listen to children when they talk about what happens in their home. You may be able to save their lives and change their living conditions.
- Believe!

Thought Provoking...

- Let's not keep \$ an issue when saving a child!
- Imagine if it were you.
- When you (I) see someone, you wonder, do they have a story to tell?
- Child abuse is life abuse! Don't do it!
- No one asked to be abused. No one!
- WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
- The truth is always better than a dressed lie.
- My past does not define me.
- Every man is guilty of the good they did not do. – Voltaire



Last Thoughts...

Over the course of three months, 137 respondents revealed that they too were victims of child abuse. Of them, 30 were from the ARMC location, 72 were from the Mall of Victor Valley location, and 35 were from the Victoria Gardens location. It is worth noting that these numbers most certainly under represent the true number of victims that walked through The Lisa Project's hallways.

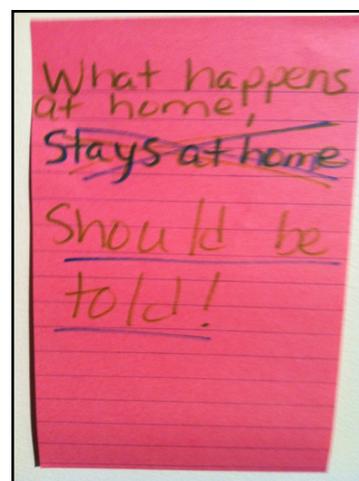
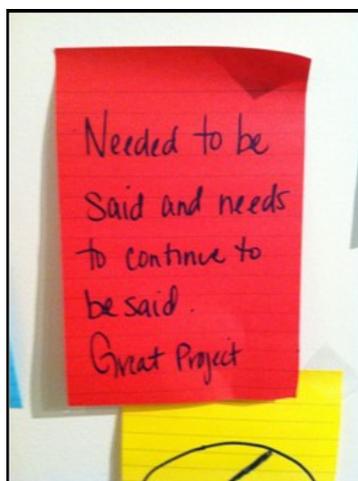
After completing the tour, visitors were invited to provide their contact information if they were interested in receiving additional information on volunteering, volunteering at local events to raise awareness, information on mentoring organizations, and information on becoming a foster/adoptive parent. Our visitors throughout the county were interested in the following:

- 1,196 visitors requested volunteering information
- 1,034 visitors requested information on volunteering at local events to raise awareness
- 568 visitors requested information on mentoring organizations
- 213 visitors requested information on becoming a foster/adoptive parent

Visitors who requested information regarding volunteering and mentoring organizations were mailed resources by Children's Network and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of San Bernardino County. Those who were interested in becoming a foster/adoptive parents were contacted by San Bernardino County Children & Family Services and invited to future trainings.

The Lisa Project attempted to lay a stronger foundation for raising the awareness of child abuse in San Bernardino County. Through this innovative endeavor, 5,139 more people are aware that child abuse happens right here in our neighborhoods, that it can happen to anybody, and that its affects are lasting. Visitors walked away recognizing that it is our collective responsibility to protect our children, and that some secrets should be told.

Thank you to all who made The Lisa Project possible in San Bernardino County. Your continued support in helping Children's Network achieve its mission will certainly not go in vain.





Children's Network
County of San Bernardino

June 2012