

Recently we received a thank you letter from a client and wanted to share her experience with you so you can see a wonderful example of what your donations are making happen.

"Thank you for believing me and helping when I needed it the most. Fleeing an abusive situation was one of the hardest things I have ever done, and I couldn't have done it without support from agencies like STAR. Taking the steps to leave your abuser isn't easy, I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say, 'If you don't like the situation then leave'. It's not as easy as it sounds. I was fearful of retaliation against me and my family, fearful for my pets and afraid of being homeless. I have never felt so much fear in my life but I knew if I didn't get out it would only continue to get worse.



My Advocate didn't rush me to make a decision, she listened as I cried and expressed my fears, we safety planned and discussed options. I thought I would be stuck in a shelter for a long time, rent in Alaska is expensive and I wasn't sure how I would be able to afford anything with my current income. I couldn't leave my pets behind. I felt even more trapped trying to figure out how to afford to leave than I did dealing with the constant abuse. We talked about options, everything seemed impossible, until my Advocate asked if I had any family out of state. As soon as I heard those words it was as if a weight lifted off my shoulders, I could breathe, I didn't think going back home would even be a possibility.

In just a few days we had a plan in place, my documents ready to go and a plane ticket booked (even tickets for my pets). We had a safety plan in case he followed me to the airport and a plan in place for when I arrived back home. That morning I felt like he knew, I felt like everything was going too smoothly, there was absolutely no way things would work in my favor, but they did. I took my belongings, packed up my pets and made it to the airport with no trouble, I was on my way back home. When I arrived, I had an email from my Advocate with a list of resources available in my area in case I needed them, they even called after I landed to make sure I made it okay.

STAR helped in ways I cannot explain. Their support helped me on my hardest days, their services helped me leave a situation I felt trapped in, and they continued to provide support as I got settled into my new hometown. I now have a new job, a place of my own, a new phone and am laying low on social media for now. I have a new life, I have continued support through my Advocate at STAR and I still have access to their 24 hour crisis line on the nights that I have trouble sleeping. I thought once I moved the services would stop, but they didn't, and I couldn't be more grateful that an agency like this exists. Thank you STAR, for believing me and helping me during a time when I needed it the most."

Wow.

Your support means we can help the next survivor, like this one. We hope you can join us in our mission to end sexual assault in Alaska. Thank you so very much, and we wish you a wonderful holiday season and a very happy and healthy new year.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keeley D. Olson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "O".

**Executive Director
Standing Together Against Rape (STAR)**