



## **Rebuilding from Lost Innocence**

Erin comes from a blended family with six teenagers, one of them pregnant, her mother and a step-father. At sixteen she was referred to counseling at the Family Violence Prevention Center of Greene County, a United Way Partner Agency, after a physical fight with her stepfather left her with two black eyes. The fight was not an isolated event. On another occasion, Erin's stepfather had crawled into her bed and touched her inappropriately. She had also been sexually abused by her grandfather for several months when she was only seven.

When Erin first came to the Family Violence Prevention Center she was very callous and closed off. Over time she opened up and revealed the horror stories from her life – her struggles with abuse and how flashbacks haunted her and nightmares kept her awake at night. While in counseling at the center, she learned about healthy teen relationships and how to set appropriate boundaries with people in her life as well as about ongoing safety planning and how to heal from her past sexual and physical abuse. She began to regain her confidence and build self-awareness, resilience, and strength. Erin has made enormous progress. She successfully integrated into her life much of the exercises she learned in counseling for setting boundaries, healthy relationship skills, and starting on a healing path.

Erin's success was made possible by the staff at the Family Violence Prevention Center and funding by the United Way. Without this type of funding, Erin could not have received all of the beneficial counseling and support services that helped her get to where she is today.