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IMPACT REPORT 2021

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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year has been a challenge for all of us, and we have also felt this at Libera. However, our vision and passion is so strong that it drives us to innovate in the face of barriers. In fact, Libera is about owning your story, identifying your barriers, and connecting to resources to overcome them. We feel this year and last have given us an opportunity to grow past our barriers as an organization in new ways, as you will see. So what is that vision and passion all about?

You might not know that Libera started out of crisis. Two people who were close to me tried to end their lives. I was the person that found them and took them to the emergency room, and it shook my world. I didn't know how to help my friends; and as I looked deeper, I saw that I needed help, too. I was living a life that was a lie; I wasn't living out who I really was. I always felt like I wasn't enough. I was judgmental, people-pleasing, and repressed. I was always tried to earning other peoples' love and approval. I was not free.

I looked around. My friends, the women around me, weren't free either. The lies they believed, that shut down their voices, that held them back from their dreams, were more powerful in their lives than the truth of who they were.

"You aren't enough. You are unloveable. You're too much. You're stupid. You're ugly."

You have lies, too. Lies you believe about yourself. We all do.

Maybe people have always given you signals that you're too much. Maybe you've been bullied or abused, and never felt like you could be loveable. Maybe you've lived your life as a people pleaser, not as who you really are, because you are afraid people won't love the real you. We all believe lies. We all live from them, whether consciously or subconsciously.

So how do we all get to the truth? We start a *listening revolution*. We create a safe place of listening, where people can be vulnerable, uncover the lies they believe about themselves, and replace those lies with the truth. That only happens when people are listened to and validated for who they are.

David Augsburger says, *"Being heard is so close to being loved, that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable."*

Listening is at the foundation of everything we do in Libera. YOU have helped provide listening and resources across the state of West Virginia this year! Whether you are a supporter, a Listener, a grantor, a donor, or someone who has given us advice and shared our mission and vision, YOU have helped spread the listening revolution, along with mental and emotional health resources, across the state. We appreciate you!

But we've only just begun. We are only 6 years into this, and our vision and passion is to spread this *listening revolution* all across our great state of West Virginia. We hope you continue to be a part of the *listening revolution*. You can always reach us at info@liberawv.com, or 304-319-0970.

We're listening!



Karen Haring
Founder & Executive Director

BY THE NUMBERS

23

The number of West Virginia counties our programs impacted this year

8

Counties where we have now provided teen groups in public schools, libraries, foster residential homes, and juvenile detention centers

1266/19

The number of LovePacks distributed to homeless and foster youth in 19 counties

6000+

Resources distributed throughout our state

3,824

The number of students who attended our body safety, online safety, and human trafficking prevention assemblies done in conjunction with SHIELD Task Force

3

The number of at-risk youth facilities where we are providing teen groups (foster and juvenile detention)

3

Videos created of WV survivors stories and prevention tools on childhood sexual abuse, online stalking, and trafficking, distributed to thousands

7,000

The number of LovePacks we have committed to providing to all 7,000 WV Foster Children through various grants and donations this year

25

The number of new Listeners (volunteer mentors) trained

HIGHLIGHTS

- We hired two new staff members. Welcome, Beth & Kelsey!
- We held our first ever urban rappelling event to raise funds for our youth programs.
- We collaborated with other nonprofits, including SHIELD Task Force and WVSU Healthy Grandfamilies.
- We received several grants for a LovePacks project to provide a LovePack for every foster child in WV!
- Two of our Listeners/staff wrote a book and illustrated it! *The Brave Knight* is a children's story to help keep kids safe from abuse. And, it's going in every LovePack we distribute to foster children around the state! Congrats, Diane Tarantini & Jessie Haring!

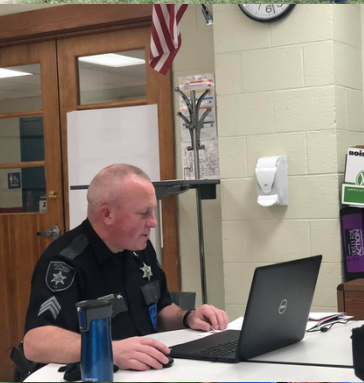
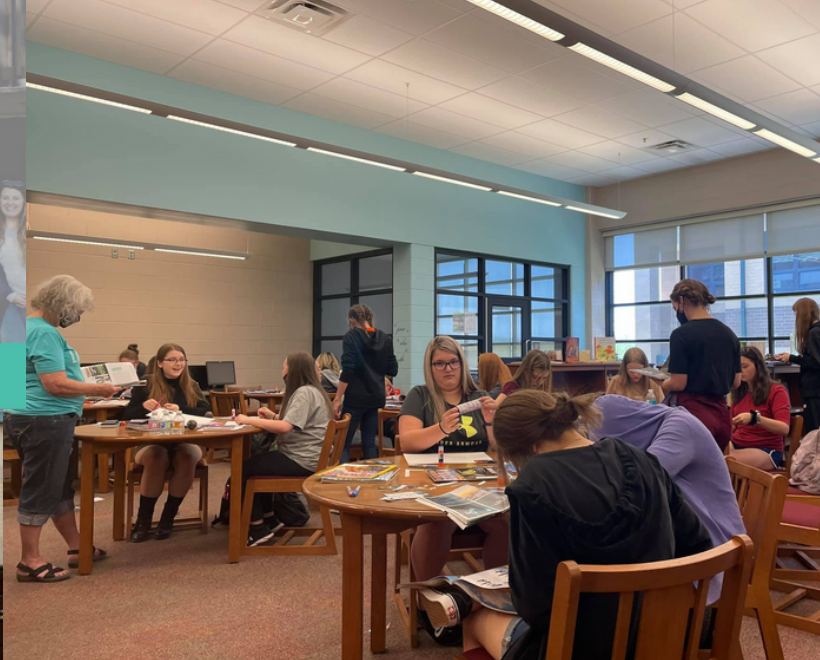




LISTEN UP!

WE'RE LOOKING FOR AN ARMY OF WOMEN.

West Virginia needs you.
Our children need you.



WORDS FROM TEENS

[HOW LIBERA GROUPS IMPACTED THEM THIS YEAR]

"This group made me realize that we all go through the same crap."

"Take care of myself, take time to breath when I get mad, not everything has to be bad."

"People have problems, problems are okay, pain is good."

"It's okay to be you, to love yourself, to always talk to someone."

"Start a new chapter in my life and gave me hope that things will get better."

"I am not alone and that there are other people who feel the same as me."

"1. I am not the only person going through stuff, 2. All of my friends love and care for me, 3. I am not the only person that feel down."

"This helped me a lot personally, I think this helped me so much and I love being able to open up to people."

"Venting and people actually listening/agreeing with me really helped me."

"1. Be yourself, 2. Ask for help, 3. Live and love your life."

"Hopeful."

"People really listened to each other. There was no judgement and I think I got closer to people."

"Today helped me start a new chapter in my life and helped me realize that I am not alone."

"Libera impacted me because now I know I will always have someone there for me when I need it...thanks Libera!"

"It helped me get a lot of stuff off of my chest."

"It got things off of my chest and made me feel better about my past."

OUR STORY SO FAR

OUR VISION

Our vision is a West Virginia where women and teens are empowered to live in freedom, one person at a time.

OUR MISSION

We are a sisterhood of caring mentors. We're helping the women and teens of West Virginia feel seen, love themselves, and flourish.

OUR MODEL

- LISTEN to your story with empathy and without judgment
- ILLUMINATE the lies in your story
- BELIEVE the truth in your story, instead of the lies
- ENVISION a new future living in that truth
- REACH for resources to overcome your barriers and lies
- ALIGHT by empowering others in your circle

OUR HISTORY

Libera launched full speed in January of 2016. We started as a nonprofit for helping women find freedom and empowerment, using our Libera model. We soon shifted at the advice of other social agencies and nonprofits to include middle school and high school girls. In our first few years, we outfitted busses as mobile offices and meeting spaces, generously provided by Premier Chevrolet Buick GMC. The busses have traveled to every county in WV at least twice, meeting with women and teens and distributing resources for mental and emotional health. In 2019, we began collaborating with SHIELD Task Force to provide body safety assemblies with follow up listening sessions to schools around our state. This aligns with our desire to help women and girls who are in abusive situations or being groomed for, abuse. This impacts many women and girls over their lifetime. This last year, we added the LovePacks project; backpacks for at-risk youth which include mental and emotional health resources and abuse prevention tools. This was a way to get the resources we normally give in person into the hands and homes of youth during the pandemic.

OUR VALUES

LISTEN

with empathy and
without judgment

LEARN

about someone
and learn from them

LOVE

them as they are,
where they are

OUR 2021 GOALS

1

Expand Libera Teen Groups to 8 counties.

We had the goal this year of expanding the reach of our teen groups from six counties to eight counties, which was a big goal in the midst of a pandemic. We have now provided teen groups in eight different counties of West Virginia, with connections for potential groups in three more counties.

2

Present Body Safety Assemblies and provide listening follow up for at least 6 schools.

We have been collaborating with SHIELD Task Force to provide body safety assemblies and teacher/staff trainings on mandated reporting in K-12 schools across the state. This year, we were able to provide these assemblies in 9 schools for 3,824 students. Every student walked away with resource cards in hand that included the Crisis Text Line, Child Abuse Hotline, anxiety tools, and connection to more resources.

3

Train 50 more Listeners.

We also had the lofty goal of training 50 more Listeners (our volunteer mentors). Listeners go through a Libera group, then 2 training sessions on Listener training materials, which include what to do in a crisis, mandated reporting, confidentiality, and motivational interviewing and listening skills. The final step is online suicide prevention and response training. Partly due to the pandemic, we found it more of a challenge to get women involved in this intensive training, and fell short of our goal. We are, however, moving forward, brainstorming more systemic ways to train women around the state.

4

Provide LovePacks for at-risk youth.

LovePacks were birthed from the constraints of the pandemic. It's been much more difficult to do Libera groups in schools, foster homes, and juvenile detention centers, with outside groups often not being allowed in, and students burned out on virtual schooling and groups during quarantines. We pivoted to the LovePacks project, to get mental and emotional health tools and abuse prevention resources into students' hands and homes in late 2020. We distributed over 1,000 LovePacks this year. The exciting thing is, now we have written and received grants to distribute over 7,000 Love Packs in the next several months. This is beyond our goal of 4,000; we've just been delayed a bit.

OUR 2021 STRATEGY

We employed our Libera model in groups for women and teen girls in order to help them find more empowerment and freedom. We also employed this model when listening to women and students in general, and also in our body safety assemblies follow up. Our strategy is to help women and girls own their stories; illuminate the barriers and lies in their stories; and get connected to help and resources to overcome their barriers and lies.

Dr. Elizabeth Claydon, WVU School of Public Health, has been providing qualitative and quantitative analysis of feedback from Libera participants over a few years.

A November 2021 report of feedback from participants shows:

- *An increase in life satisfaction*
- *A decrease in depressive symptoms*
- *A decrease in anxiety symptoms*
- *A decrease in eating disorders symptoms*

A final part of our strategy since the pandemic has been distributing LovePacks into the hands and homes of the most at-risk youth who have had less access to mental and emotional health resources and abuse prevention tools during this crisis.

PROGRAMS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Libera groups for women and teen girls	We provide groups on our Libera model to help women and girls break through barriers to find more freedom and empowerment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We provided programs for women in over 10 counties.• We have expanded out teen groups from 6 counties to 8 counties.
Body Safety Assemblies with SHIELD Task Force	We educate students and staff at public schools on these topics, and provide connection to help when abuse is disclosed, in order to prevent abuse and get help to those who need it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We presented assemblies at 9 schools in 4 counties• We educated 3,824 students• 8 students disclosed abuse and were connected to help.
LovePacks for at-risk youth	We provide LovePacks to at-risk youth, including homeless and foster children. These drawstring backpacks are filled with mental and emotional health tools, along with abuse prevention resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We distributed over 1,200 LovePacks in 19 counties.• We received grants to provide LovePacks to all 7000 foster children

WHAT ABOUT 2022?

SOME OF OUR PLANS FOR THIS YEAR

- Finish distributing 7,000 LovePacks to every foster child in West Virginia
- Expand our teen and women's groups to more counties in West Virginia
- Expand our teen groups to more juvenile detention centers and foster residential homes, so we can serve more at-risk youth
- Provide Body Safety Assemblies and Listening to several new counties
- Start a social enterprise
- Hold another urban rappelling event

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to our :

Libera Board:

Annette Wolfe	Jessica Lowe
Ann Bartolo	Laura Seybold
Hattie Wright	Rebekah Matuga
Paulina Nottingham	

Libera Staff:

Karen Haring	Beth Currence
Jessica Haring	Kelsey Riggi
Barbara White	Teresa Martin

Libera, Inc.

P.O. Box 1147

Dellslow, WV 26531

304-319-0970

www.liberawv.com

info@liberawv.com

and Listeners, too many to list!

for carrying out the work of Libera this year!

Collaborators:

SHIELD Task Force: <https://www.shieldwv.com/>

WVSU Healthy Grandfamilies: <http://healthygrandfamilies.com/>

A huge thank you to all of our grantors and donors this year!

YOU are the fuel and fire behind Libera, giving us the ability to carry out everything in this report! Thank you for making a difference in the lives of women, girls, and at-risk youth in our state. We are forever grateful for the impact you are making to provide our state with listening mentors, resources, and hope! Our deepest indebtedness for your support.



WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF
OUR PROGRAMS