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Esthetic Dentistry

*Inspiring Lives Through Beautiful Smiles.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Local Woman Finds that *Hope In A Smile* Truly Delivers Just That**

***New Haven Dentist Donates a Smile Makeover to a Domestic Violence Victim;  
Deems the Reward is Priceless.***

***Karen Swaylick finds hope after receiving complimentary reconstructive dental treatment through Hope In A Smile, a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting victims of domestic violence.***

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT— Domestic violence can be a traumatic life altering change. Yet, through organizations such as Hope in A Smile and giving professionals like Dr. Nancy Summer Lerch, domestic violence victims like Karen are seeing positive improvements in their life after enduring the cruelty of such abuse.

- Close to 5.3 million incidents of intimate partner abuse occur annually among women ages 18 and older. *The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*
- 44% of women murdered by their intimate partner had visited an emergency department within 2 years of the homicide. Of these women, 93% had at least one injury visit, *Crandall et al. 2004, reported by the CDC.*
- 29% of women and 22% of men had experienced physical, sexual, or psychological Intimate Partner Violence in their lifetime, *Coker et al. 2002, reported by the CDC*

Hope In A Smile is a non-profit organization that donates preventive dental treatments to domestic violence victims through local shelters and provides a comprehensive no-fee reconstructive dental treatment plan—or smile makeover—to one victim each year.

Dr. Lerch, a founder of Hope In A Smile, explains, “As more and more people suffer from oral health and/or tooth damage due to domestic violence, it is important to educate people that there are resources available to assist victims in need. When teeth are damaged as a result of trauma, people can be devastated in many social ways. It is therefore very important to preserve the functionality of teeth and provide esthetic harmony for the face of domestic violence victims.”

-MORE-

**Nancy Summer Lerch, DDS, FAGD, AAACD, Director**



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**www.theartofsmiles.com**

Karen S., located in New Haven, Connecticut, felt dissatisfied with her teeth due to the damage they sustained from repeated hits to her face over the years. This combined with a lack of attention and care had caused Karen to hide her smile everywhere she went. Karen also knew that if she had the opportunity to repair her teeth, her life could improve in many ways. Yet, with two children, at a local shelter serving as home for one year, and no job, the prospect of repairing her teeth looked grim. That was until she was selected by Hope In A Smile to be the one patient that could receive a full year of extensive reconstructive dentistry. As Karen explains, "For years, I never smiled and I held my lip over my teeth when talking because I was so embarrassed by my teeth. After a year of receiving dental treatment through Dr. Lerch to repair the damage, I learned that appearance meant everything. The results of my smile makeover helped to build my confidence, perform well in job interviews and meet new people. In fact, I found that people have been much nicer to me after my smile makeover."

*Karen after*

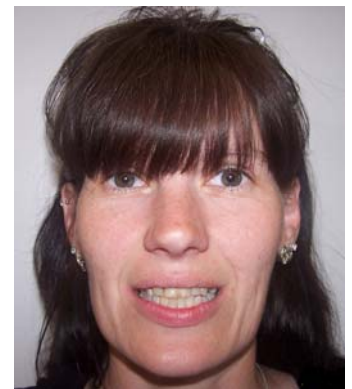


Dr. Lerch's treatment plan for Karen included whitening, decay removal followed by porcelain crowns and bridges; deep gum cleanings and oral hygiene care.

*Karen's smile after*



*Karen's smile before*



*Karen before*

Dr. Lerch is deeply touched by the effects of dental trauma from domestic abuse. "The costs of care after domestic violence can be staggering. Reconstructive dental treatment plans can be extensive in many ways. For example, Karen's dental and smile treatment would have cost over \$25,000 dollars if we had not donated the services. Then there is the treatment time. The patient's dedication to a lengthy treatment plan is often required for post domestic violence dental injuries. This is a big commitment, too. Then there are the many organizations that need financial support to help victims of domestic violence and just as many needy who require assistance. Furthermore, the consequences of domestic abuse are not only the physical damage to the affected area of the body. Victims often experience emotional consequences such as social isolation, depression, sleep dysfunctions and

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flashbacks. Emotional counseling is often needed. In the end, the reward for caring for victims is priceless. You know you have affected a life when you see someone like Karen smiling broadly, looking beautiful and confident. That makes it all so worthwhile!”

***Dr. Nancy Summer Lerch, New Haven Dentist and co-founder of Hope In A Smile, helps survivors of domestic violence receive reconstructive dental treatment after they have suffered damage to their teeth.***

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