Hello New Beginnings community!

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of New Beginnings!

In September, I joined this team bringing over 20 years of nonprofit experience and leadership, having spent the last five years in the domestic violence sector. Over the past few months, I spent time with staff, Board members, and key community partners and, as a result, my excitement for doing this work here has strengthened.

As you know, we have an incredible and dedicated staff team at the organization. The growth New Beginnings has seen, especially with the addition of the DVHopeline in 2021, is impressive. As an organization, we are moving into the next phase focused on deepening our services to better meet the complex needs of survivors rather than expanding and taking on new programs. You will be sure to hear more about this in the coming months.

I hope you will continue to be a partner, contributing your time, talent, and resources, in ways that are meaningful to you. One organization cannot end domestic violence alone, we need everyone in this movement – we need you.

Thank you for your support. We couldn’t do it without you.

With openness and hope,

Aja Osita

Want more information on how to empower survivors and mobilize our community?

Follow us online to learn more here!

- [www.newbegin.org](http://www.newbegin.org)
- [facebook.com/newbeginningsendingdv](http://facebook.com/newbeginningsendingdv)
- [instagram.com/newbeginningsendingdv](http://instagram.com/newbeginningsendingdv)

You’re investing in our community’s future leaders

When people think about survivors of domestic violence, they often picture adults in intimate relationships. But children and teenagers are also survivors of domestic violence, both in their families and—when they are in middle and high school—their own dating relationships. In this issue of Empowered Voice, we wanted to highlight all of the ways partners like you enable the mental healthcare, financial assistance, and prevention work that keep kids and teens in our community safer and happier!

Therapy for Youth and Families at Home Safe

Through a partnership with Ryther, we are going to have a therapist available to youth at our Home Safe program! This person will be on site regularly to offer services to the youth in our programs and support families. We know that domestic violence is traumatic for everyone involved, especially children. Having someone to support them in their healing journey is integral to stopping the cycle of violence. We are grateful for this partnership and to be able to offer this service to youth and families.

Your support helps children heal and thrive!

You Give Youth Opportunities to Have Fun!

With the generous support from our community and folks like you, New Beginnings is able to offer financial assistance to help kids develop their own strengths. This support helps children and youth on the road to recovery and normalcy after all they’ve experienced. Here’s a few examples of how this funding has been used:

- Swim school for two young sisters
- Summer camp for three brothers
- Back packs and lunch bags for youth going to camp throughout the summer
- A professional hair cut for a young teen girl’s birthday
- Phone for a child as part of their safety plan
- Activities for youth matched to their interests, including a magic kit, camera, and art supplies

Thank you for investing in the lives of youth survivors!
In August, we held our first Youth Leadership Retreat, free and open to Seattle and Shoreline teenagers. For three days, ten students learned about peer education, healthy relationships, and social activism. Taking time out of their summer break, participants met one another while receiving training on consent, bystander intervention, and how to effectively facilitate future Crushin’ It classes and conversations around healthy relationships.

We are in awe of the work and commitment of these middle and high school students, and are so grateful for the investment of community partners like you that make events like these possible!

Empowering Teens to Lead the Way!

The mission of this retreat—and all of our work—is to collaborate with students and co-create discussions around healthy relationships (as seen here in a workshop discussion circle).

One exercise the teens took part in is listing what they would want in a healthy relationship. Some characteristics include: supportive, understanding, exciting, fun, and genuine.

DID YOU KNOW?

Middle and high school students are so important to reach about dating violence because many of them start dating between 12-14, and 1 out of 3 teenagers report some form of dating abuse before they turn 18 years old.

Teen Leadership Council Launches at Robert Eagle Staff Middle School

2022 saw another first-time program: the Teen Leadership Council! This pilot program at Robert Eagle Staff Middle School was started so students can take an active role in making their school a safer, more inclusive place. This year’s cohort consisted of 6-10 students who were able to shape how New Beginnings’ educators talk about relationships in the Eagle Staff community, learn more about healthy relationships, and took an active role in trying to shape the culture at their school. Meeting twice a month after school, each member of the council will be creating a final poster or art project to remind and teach students about healthy relationships, consent, and much more. Thank you to the amazing students, teachers, and families of Robert Eagle Staff for taking part in and supporting the first of hopefully many iterations of the Teen Leadership Council!

And as we always say, we could not have done this important work without community members like you. Thank you for investing in teen leadership and a world free from violence!
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