

# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

SUMMER 2023

## Girls Night Out set for Aug. 12

*Event to raise funds for Resolve Family Abuse Program*

**The greater the glory, the more intense the story: Meet Taylor Jones, survivor of domestic violence**

She already knew the red flags of domestic violence.

Taylor Jones 23, of Charleston, was well aware of what physical abuse and controlling behavior looked like.

In fact, her earliest - and only - memory of her father was at three years old when he physically assaulted her mother, leading to an adolescence in and out of shelters like Sojourner's Shelter for Homeless Women & Families and the Resolve Family Abuse Program's Hope House.

She learned early on what not to look for in a partner: Don't let him push you. Don't let him hit you. Don't let him be like her father.

Sam\* was different.

He started out as a friendly neighbor who would help fix minor repairs for her car or house. They quickly became best friends, developing a

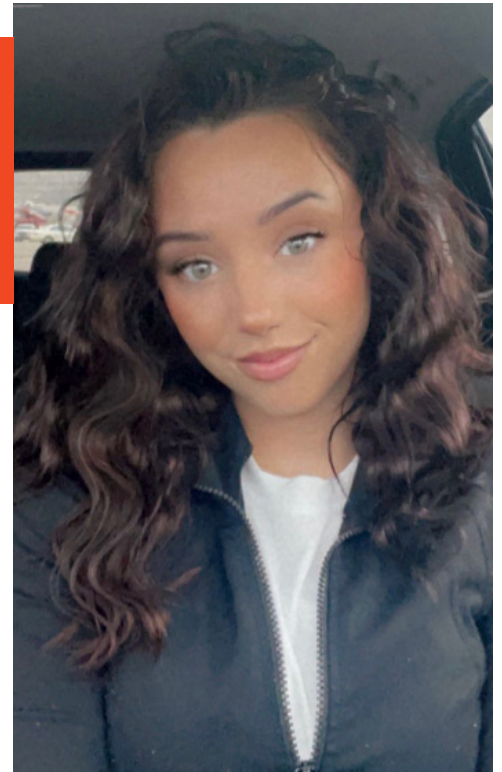
five-year-long relationship before Sam pursued her romantically.

"He asked me to start dating him, which I was over the moon about because I had had a crush on him for five years. And everything was perfect. I thought I had truly found my person," she said. "Never in a million years would I think that he would turn out the way he did," she said.

It started with cheating. When confronted, Sam would respond explosively and call Taylor "crazy." Then, it kept happening: the lying, the gaslighting, the manipulation.

"He really knew how to get in my head, and honestly, I was starting to think I was crazy. I was acting crazy. I wanted to show him proof, but he knew how to flip it back on me and make it all my fault," she said.

"Then things just kind of progressively got worse." she said. "I started to feel like this isn't so safe anymore. You think you know who you are and you think you know what you want



and then you find yourself in these situations where you're like 'Gosh, who am I? How did I end up here?'"

He lost his job. He started doing drugs. He would be gone all day and come home late at night.

Then, Taylor discovered she was pregnant.

"I took the test and tried to call him but I couldn't get ahold of him. He pretty much abandoned me. He wouldn't answer my calls. But, I was already having complications with the pregnancy," she said.

If you or someone you know needs help, contact the 24-hour Domestic Violence Help Line at 1-800-681-8663 or 304-340-3549.

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# Women of Achievement

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
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## Breakfast with Champions



Twenty-three fifth-graders from Ruffner, Piedmont, Mary C. Snow West Side and Edgewood elementaries enjoyed breakfast with Women of Achievement honorees. The event was sponsored by West Virginia State University.

### 'GNO' CONTINUED FROM

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At nine weeks pregnant, Taylor went in for her ultrasound. Sam did not want to go with her.

"It was the hardest day of my life. There were a bunch of student nurses doing the ultrasound, and nobody said anything, and then they all just walked out. The doctor came back in and said 'Unfortunately...' and I just kind of blacked out. I knew."

Taylor had miscarried at six weeks.

"I walked through those hospital doors pregnant and walked out not," she said. "I had to go through that alone. ... That was the turning point for me to leave."

She packed her bags and moved out, which sent him into a rage. He

began stalking her, harassing her with threatening suicide and showed up at her house banging on her bedroom window.

She received a Domestic Violence Protective Order, and before long, turned to the YWCA Resolve Family Abuse Program to help give back to those in similar situations.

"Resolve was our safe space as a kid, and if it wasn't for family, I would've been back there hiding away from Sam," Taylor said. "Programs like Resolve are so needed because once you're in that gate, you're safe. Nobody's going to get through, and if you're in an abusive relationship, you need that safe place to go to."

Taylor is working to create the Sutton Project, named after the anti-

pated daughter who miscarried.

"Even though Sam wasn't particularly hands-on abusive, it was an eye-opener for me that if he got his hands on me, I would be done for because I didn't know how to defend myself. So I want to teach women's self-defense, so that if that situation arises, they know how to handle themselves," she said.

"I want to help other women walk in confidence - whether that be a short walk to their car or into their own home. That's what Resolve helped give me."

She looks forward to the next chapter in her journey, which she says despite the obstacles: "the greater the glory, the more intense the story."

*Note: \*name has been changed*

# Meet new YWCA directors



**Candace Nelson**  
Marketing Director

Candace has 15+ years of marketing experience within higher education, state government and nonprofits.

She is an award-winning reporter and published author with degrees from WVU in journalism and English.



**Eddie Williams**  
Human Resources Director

Eddie was the Operations Director of the Armed Services YMCA in Virginia. His responsibilities included human resources, finance and volunteer coordination. He has degrees in human resources from Strayer and business from Marshall.

## Nearly 700 attend Race to End Racism

More than 700 people attended YWCA Charleston's seventh annual Race to End Racism on April 23.

The race brought together members of the community to participate in a 5K run or 1 mile walk throughout the West Side with proceeds benefitting the YWCA Charleston Racial Equity & Inclusion Program.

The program will be housed in the new Center for Racial Equity & Inclusion, which is located at 412 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV 25301. It is set to open this summer.

"We are thankful for the community's generosity to help realize this mission," said Jennifer Goddard, CEO for YWCA Charleston.

After the race, Program Director Shanté Ellis hosted the inaugural Cultural Celebration, which featured food trucks, entertainment, chalk contests and more.



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*Girls Night Out*  
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