

## Speech for Second Chance Employment Services Client Last Kiss of Summer Gala Benefit

When Second Chance asked me to speak tonight, I didn't know what to do. I'm a shy person, and talking to a crowd scares me. But I *wanted* to tell you that what Second Chance does for women like me *really works*, and *that's* why I'm here.

The truth is, since I came to Second Chance, they asked me to do a lot of things that scared me. But they gave me so much support that I overcame my fears [pause] Maybe its hard for you to understand, but when you haven't worked in *eight years*, when you've been abused and have lost all self-confidence, *even a job interview is frightening*.

Years ago I couldn't imagine myself here tonight. I left my career as an accountant to stay home and raise my three boys. But I lived with a husband who beat me, who made me beg for money for food and medicine for our children. I had no income. *Everything* was in my husband's name. And my husband often told me I was "a leech and a liability."

The story of my abuse isn't much different than the stories of *thousands* of abused women. The difference between me and so many others is that I was lucky enough to have been a client of Second Chance. You know, I'm not here today because I had more courage than other victims, *I'm here because I had more help, the help of Second Chance*.

From the moment I came to them, they supported me. They spent hours coaching me, they gave me business clothing, and sent my résumé to so many companies. They even offered to babysit so I could go on interviews. And when they found me a position, they paid the deposit for a day-care center so I could actually go to work. [pause] This was *very crucial*. I was caught in a catch-22. They found me a job, but I had no money for daycare. And I couldn't leave my kids home alone until I got my first paycheck. When Second Chance paid that deposit, it meant everything [pause] it meant I could work.

Thanks to Second Chance, today I'm an Accountant for the Association of American Medical Colleges, and it was *your support* that made this possible.

I hope you continue to help Second Chance so they can help *more and more* women like me. *I thank you*, and I stand before you tonight as *living proof* that their program *really works*.