

Honor Roll

Helping hand

■ M.A.M.A. targets battered women

By Cynthia E. Griffin
OW Staff Writer

“I was in a bad relationship, and I prayed to get out. God said ‘don’t worry, I got you, help this other lady,” recalls Los Angeles resident Arlene Dyer.

The “other lady’s” boyfriend had broken her Collar bone twice, and after being put in jail, called from the lock up and threatened the woman with more bodily harm.

“She asked me what to do, and I told her to get out of town. I said go to the bus station get a ticket and check yourself into a hotel, and do it now,” recalls Dyer, who during the course of helping people find employment had encountered many women who were victims of domestic violence.

The woman followed Dyer’s instructions, and later called to report her safe arrival.

Dyer’s experiences led her to write the book “Escaping to the Workplace,” which addresses the growing trend of women and men battered at home, respected at work.

Meanwhile, the motivational speaker and author of five books looked for a way to create a web community that would help battered women. The biggest stumbling block was finding a way to make sure the site was truly secure. “People’s life would be at stake,” Dyer recalls thinking.

That challenge was dealt with thanks to a chance encounter.

“I met a guy from a company call Apogee Inventions at an IT conference. He heard my story, and



■ Arlene Dyer

came up to me and said ‘We want to work with you.’”

The result of the collaboration is the web site Making a Major Adjustment (M.A.M.A.) Help Me!

In addition to providing information on domestic abuse, the site (www.mamahelpme.org) enables battered women who register to chat privately

with one another and resource providers. The organization can also, after verifying an individual’s legitimacy and sincerity, help relocate women who want to get away from an abuser. This service includes providing money, clothing and other assistance.

Eventually counselors will be online enabling victims to talk with someone immediately. There will also be chat sessions, blogs and a teen section, because of the number of young girls who are in abusive relationships.

“I’ve been helping women since 1981, but M.A.M.A. was just founded in December 2007,” explained Dyer, who realized in October that in order to get M.A.M.A. up and running, she would have to put aside some other projects she was working on and concentrate fully on building the non-profit organization.

The \$20,000 to launch M.A.M.A. has primarily come out of the pockets of Dyer, Apogee and a few interested individuals. But now with the site operating, people can go online, seek help and make donations.

For more information on M.A.M.A., visit the web site mamahelpme.org or write MAMA c/o MYSELF, Inc., PO Box 47499, Los Angeles, CA 90047.