

Balm

for Body and Soul

by Susan Shalhoub

Longwood woman's unique charity gives domestic violence victims a powerful, pocketable show of support

Visit FindYourFabulosity.org

They are small, sometimes glittery. They often come in shiny, luxe-look packaging. They fit in pockets, purses, or clutches. And for victims of domestic or dating violence, they might just deliver a desperately needed boost at a critical time.

They are, of course, tiny tubes of lipstick.

They come in neutral tones, glossy hues, dark reds, and a rainbow of other colors and formulations that are as unique as the women wearing them.

"You have a lipstick, and you are beautiful – that is the meaning behind it," says Sheryl Kurland. "I call it 'a tube of inspiration.' My mother used to say, 'Put on some lipstick, you'll feel better.'"

Sheryl, a certified domestic violence advocate, founded the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization Find Your Fabulosity last year. From her Longwood home, Sheryl collects donations of new lipsticks and sends them out – for free – to women's shelters in every state in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. There are a variety of colors and types in each package. The new lipsticks arrive in a box of 25 for distribution to women who may have fled their homes with just the clothing on their backs.

As a frequent volunteer at local shelters, Sheryl has seen the domestic violence problem from a closer perspective than most. She is the author of *Everlasting Matrimony: Pearls of Wisdom from Couples Married 50 Years or More*, which earned Sheryl interviews with *ABC World News Tonight* and other national news outlets. She was inspired to start her domestic violence charity while on a speaking tour.

A graduate of the Seminole County Community Law Enforcement Academy, Sheryl has given presentations for Girl Scouts, college sororities, retirees, and professionals on topics such as leadership, domestic violence, self-love, and sisterhood.

There is something about lipstick, Sheryl says, that symbolizes confidence, self-care, and identity for women. Getting a new lipstick from a stranger is a symbol that there is a community out there that supports healing amid an often well-hidden epidemic of abuse.

"Shelters get other health-and-beauty items," Sheryl notes, "but not lipstick. The psychology of lipstick is just incredible. I've seen it. [Lipstick donations] really resonate."

"[Many women who received the donations] intended to wear it to their job interviews," says a shelter manager who works with Find Your Fabulosity. "It's something small and nice that boosted their self-esteem."

Sheryl's lipstick gifts are the symbol of her organization, but Find Your Fabulosity is also a resource for domestic violence victims. The nonprofit's mission statement features goals of outreach and education. At FindYourFabulosity.org, victims can find a checklist to determine if they are in an abusive relationship: *Does your partner put down your interests or goals? Are you allowed to go out with other people? Do you dress in ways that hide injuries?*

The site also contains daily affirmations, domestic-abuse statistics, and a look-up feature to quickly find a nearby shelter.

Sheryl is always interested to see how the lipsticks she sends are used in shelters. Some shelters, she says, use lipsticks as part of a gift package when a woman in a shelter celebrates a birthday. Other facilities use them as motivation when certain goals are reached or as part of an incentive system.

For donors, lipsticks are an easy way to show support for abuse victims. Maybe, as part of a free cosmetics gift package, a donor received a lipstick that isn't quite their color. Or they might pick up a few extra lipsticks when they see a sale at the drugstore. These extra tubes can help change a victim's outlook. Businesses can hold lipstick drives as a fun way to raise awareness about domestic violence. Or, when inviting people over for a party, if guests ask what they can bring, lipsticks are always a good request. Sheryl, with the help of her board of directors, will make sure the lipsticks make it to a shelter where they can offer women some hope during a dark time.

"It's a conduit to get an ultimate message out," says Sheryl. "To help women move on to a new way of life."



Find Your Fabulosity founder Sheryl Kurland. Sheryl stocks domestic violence shelters around the country with colorful lipsticks to help lift the spirits of women in crisis.