

I am a survivor of abuse on many different levels. As a person who has not only survived but also thrived, I wanted to ensure that I passed the strength along by becoming a voice for the abused. I looked into many things, and found numerous awareness programs, and while they are good & worthy programs, it wasn't quite calling me so much. I also enjoyed being a crisis counselor at the local shelter.

I have always been an activist towards equal rights and been a firm protector of children, so it wasn't going to be hard to come up with an idea of where to start. In college, I loved being a student lobbyist to fight for women's rights. I really missed it. I had helped pass a Wisconsin bill for equal pay for equal work, as well as another one to render the attire of a rape victim as inadmissible against the victim in the court of law. On the federal level, I helped contribute a little bit to the Violence Against Women Act of 1993, and then to ensure the passage of that.

I felt empowered, knowing that my voice and passion went to actually make something happen for possible victims to keep from being victimized. Observing the amount of sexual crimes that happen on the internet, I felt that there should be something done about this to be a better deterrent against online predators. With the help of a friend, we came up with the name "Youth Voice Initiative", for my cause.

The most convincing way of getting a bill to be considered is through petitions and so I knew I had to not only hit the pavement, but I also needed to get my petition for any laws I wanted to pass, in a high exposure area. What better way than the internet where the predators are doing their heinous crimes? Just my presence there can make a possible offender think about what he is doing and reconsider, thereby saving another child from being preyed on. Stopping sexual crimes against children or adults is something the majority of humankind agrees on, to instill quality of life and a better future for us all.

I conducted much research and compiled a list of all of the things I would need to start YVI and be fully legal and operational. It seemed a little pricey to get things started but when compared to the well being of our children or other victims, it was a "drop in a bucket", of value. YVI's mission is to lobby any laws that will protect anybody (though especially focused toward children) from abuse, sexual or otherwise, and to stiffen the penalties towards those offenders.