

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Film puts spotlight on cycle of abuse

BY CRYSTAL CHEW

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Yoav Potash and Josh Safran had an idea for a documentary that was originally expected to be a fairly simple six-month project. It ended up taking seven years.

Safran, a lawyer, was representing Deborah Peagler, a battered woman who was wrongfully imprisoned.

Her case became the subject for *Crime After Crime*, a documentary that will be shown as part of the Alper JCC's 34th annual Book Festival at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Dave & Mary Alper Jewish Community Center, 1155 SW 112th Ave., in the Robert Russell Theater.

"She really wanted not to be forgotten in prison," said Safran, who will be presenting the documentary along with his own personal story and book, *Free Spirit: Growing Up On the Road and Off the Grid*.

The event will benefit, Shalom Bayit, a Jewish Community Services program open to any Jewish person living in Miami-Dade County who is domestically abused.

The goal of the program is to help victims break the cycle of violence, be independent and protect their children.

Clara Fleischer, the case manager for Shalom Bayit, sees victims every day. She defines domestic abuse as a relationship where one person is constantly exerting control and power over the other. One person is a perpetrator and the other a victim.

"These roles are not interchangeable," said Fleischer, explaining the difference between a dysfunctional relationship and an abusive one. Often victims return to their abuser, repeating a cycle of violence because it

If you go

What: Joshua Safran presents his personal story and screens documentary, "Crime After Crime."

Where: Dave & Mary Alper Jewish Community Center, 1155 SW 112th Ave., in the Robert Russell Theater

When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday

Cost: Admission is \$10 or a \$10 Publix or Target gift card for the victims of domestic violence. Alper JCC is also collecting toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner.

Details: Call 305-271-9000, ext. 268, or visit alperjcc.org.

For more information

For more information on Joshua Safran, visit jsafran.com, and for the documentary 'Crime After Crime,' visit crimeaftercrime.com.

means keeping the family together. For many, family is the most important thing in life.

"It's very difficult for people to understand the psychology of a person going through domestic violence and also why sometimes the victim returns to the perpetrator," Fleischer said.

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, domestic abuse programs report that 52 percent of victims return to their abuser, 21 percent become homeless, and 7 percent of families end up living in their cars.

"We would never push a person to do what we think



AUTHOR APPEARANCE: Gail Sheehy attends the Women's Day Luncheon in October as part of the Alper JCC's 34th annual Book Festival.

they should do," said Fleischer, who believes in helping people fully understand their situation, getting them jobs and finding safety and stability. "Once a person gets self-confidence, they realize that he or she can make it by their own."

Marcy Levitt, director of literary and performing arts at Alper JCC, believes that Safran is the perfect person for the event and hopes to bring awareness to the community.

"It should be a really interesting evening," Levitt said. "He's a great speaker. He's very personable. He's knowledgeable. He's had a very fascinating journey."

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BOOK FESTIVAL COMMITTEE: Susan Spatzer, Elaine Katz, Nadine Barocas, author Gail Sheehy, Marcy Levitt, Renee Greenstein, Anne Sheldon.