

AUG 31, 2015 @ 12:53 AM

CELEBRITIES & ENTERTAINMENT TV JOSH DUGGAR JESSA DUGGAR SEEWALD JILL DUGGAR DILLARD

TLC Didn't Name Josh Duggar Once During Its Sexual Abuse Special

Instead, *Breaking the Silence* focused on survivors who are fighting to preventing abuse before it starts.



By Megan
Friedman

542

Shares

f SHARE

t TWEET

p PIN

E-MAIL



Instagram

Three months after **news surfaced** that 19 *Kids and Counting* star Josh Duggar molested young girls when he was a teenager, TLC, the network that brought you the show, aired a special documentary about childhood sexual abuse — although it didn't mention Josh by name once.

Breaking the Silence, a documentary that aired Sunday night, instead focused on telling the stories of five survivors, who are each speaking out about their experiences in an attempt to educate both parents and children. According to experts interviewed, at least 1 in 10 children suffer a sexually abusive experience before they turn 18, and it's important for both parents and children to be educated about how to detect and respond to abuse.

The cameras followed Jill and Jessa Duggar, who were among Josh's victims, accompanied by their mother, Michelle, as they attended a seminar to help stop abuse before it starts. The seminar was conducted by the group **Darkness to Light**, and the group provides **five steps** for parents to help detect signs of abuse in their children and know how to react if it happens in their family. "It was amazing to

understand that there are so many people that deal with this exact same thing in their own families," Jill said. "I feel like this should be a discussion that people are having, even regularly. It shouldn't be a taboo subject," Jessa added.

The Duggars were a small part of the documentary, however. Instead, a central figure was Erin Merryn, who was abused during her childhood by two different men, both of whom were close to her. She wrote about her abuse in her little pink diary, which she later turned into a book, *Stolen Innocence*, which was published when she was still in high school. Since then, she's traveled the country educating families, teachers, and students about sexual abuse. Now, she's fighting for **Erin's Law**, which requires age-appropriate curriculums on abuse; it's been passed in 26 states, and she's fighting not only for all 50 states but federal legislation as well.



Erin Merryn.
TLC

Cheryl Burke, who became famous after appearing on *Dancing With the Stars*, also spoke out in the documentary. She talked about being abused by a family friend who was in his 60s, who "groomed" her by getting her to trust him and help him when he was feeling lonely. She spoke out when he tried to abuse her stepsister's friend, and her testimony led him to a 20-year sentence in prison. "It takes so much courage, but once you are able to express your experience and what happened to you, you'll feel like a stronger person," she said. "I'm proof you can actually move on from this."



DARKNESS TO LIGHT

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR THE PREMIERE OF

**"You will get through this.
You can make it.
Regardless of how hard it**





DARKNESS TO LIGHT

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR THE PREMIERE OF

"You will get through this.
You can make it.
Regardless of how hard it
is right now, life is still
good."

-David Moody, Child Sexual
Abuse Survivor

Breaking the Silence



sunday august 30 10/9c

WWW.D2L.ORG/BETHEVOICE

FIND US ON TWITTER @Darkness2Light #BETHEVOICE



david moody

@cmoody1003

Follow

Harder to watch the documentary than to give the
interview. My emotions are everywhere right now.

[#BeTheVoice](#)

10:36 PM - 30 Aug 2015



9



14

Other survivors included **David Moody**, a 59-year-old who kept his secret suppressed for decades, **Ter-rae Lee**, 24, who was abused by her father and found help by calling the RAINN hotline, and an 11-year-old girl named **Kealin**, who got to meet Merryn, her hero, during the filming of the documentary. "You're not alone," Kealin said. "Have courage and you'll be OK."

If you or someone you know needs help, contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE, or go to [rainn.org](#).

Follow Megan on [Twitter](#).



SHOW 2 COMMENTS