



## Reconstructing Hope, One Person at a Time

Adam Schaffner, MD, FACS

**B**ased in New York, Reconstructing Hope is a non-profit organization whose mission is to help victims of domestic violence rid themselves of signs of prior abuse.

Reconstructing Hope was co-founded by ASAPS member Adam Schaffner, MD, FACS. *Aesthetic Society News* recently chatted with Dr. Schaffner about the roots of the organization, its mission, and its future.

### Thank you for your time, Dr. Schaffner. Tell us a little bit more about Reconstructing Hope.

Reconstructing Hope is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity whose mission is to help victims of domestic violence rid themselves of signs of prior abuse, including—but not limited to—tattoos, burns, scars, broken bones, as well as chipped or missing teeth. These procedures enable survivors to improve their self-confidence, helping to minimize the psychological trauma they endured—and repeat each time they view the physical signs of that violence. As a result, they are able to better move forward and to live more productive lives.

### Who are the professionals engaged with Reconstructing Hope?

We work with plastic surgeons, facial plastic surgeons, oculoplastic surgeons, dermatologists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, cosmetic dentists and mental health professionals to ensure the best possible treatment is delivered to these survivors. These dedicated healthcare professionals enjoy support from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and other professional organizations to ensure the best possible collaboration is occurring between experts of these specialties.



### How long has Reconstructing Hope been in existence?

Reconstructing Hope started as an idea over 25 years ago. In 2011, steps were taken to formalize the organization. During the past four years, the organization has expanded, transforming from being a small group of dedicated volunteers to a full-scale charity. Seeing the positive impact Reconstructing Hope has on the lives of domestic violence victims is the best part about volunteering.

### What is the most challenging aspect of helping victims of domestic violence?

The most challenging part of helping victims of domestic violence is learning about the tragic circumstances surrounding the injuries they sustained. The stories are often heart-wrenching which makes being able to help these victims all the more gratifying.

### How does one access Reconstructing Hope?

Victims of domestic violence are screened by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. To qualify for treatment through Reconstructing Hope, victims must have received the physical injuries from an abusive intimate partner or spouse, must be out of the relationship with the abuser, and must have had contact with a domestic violence advocate, social worker, counselor or therapist a minimum of one time. Services in high demand include tattoo removal, scar removal, repair of broken noses or other facial bones, treatment of burns as well as repair of chipped or missing teeth.

### Where are these services performed?

Healthcare professionals who volunteer their services perform the procedures in their offices, unless intravenous sedation or general anesthesia is required. In circumstances where the procedure must be performed in a hospital or surgery center, Reconstructing Hope works with the anesthesiologists and surgical facilities to ensure the patient is able to receive the care required.

### Is the organization solely focused on New York?

While Reconstructing Hope started as an organization focused on treating victims of domestic violence in the New York City area, in response to requests from across the United States by healthcare professionals wanting to volunteer and victims of domestic violence wanting help, Reconstructing Hope is currently in the process of recruiting healthcare professionals from across the United States who desire to volunteer.

### How can people get involved with Reconstructing Hope?

If you are a licensed healthcare professional and would like to volunteer your services, please visit [www.ReconstructingHope.org/volunteer](http://www.ReconstructingHope.org/volunteer)

If you know of anyone who may benefit from the services of Reconstructing Hope, please forward the information to [Info@ReconstructingHope.org](mailto:Info@ReconstructingHope.org)

For more information about Reconstructing Hope, please visit [www.ReconstructingHope.org](http://www.ReconstructingHope.org).