



PEACEWATCH

Center for Domestic Peace Newsletter • Fall 2011

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We did it! After several years, many volunteer and staff hours and a lot of detail work, we launched Center for Domestic Peace, our new name and brand, last October with this newsletter and a grand event. As you may recall, the name change came after much analysis and introspection about who we are and who we want to be. The new name better reflected our current programs and future vision. And here we are a year later. Many in the community have commented on its positive nature, embracing its optimism and focus on the outcome we are striving for. We also want to acknowledge that some told us it sounds “like a homeland security organization” or it feels too “lofty”. This is who we are now, while still the home of Marin Abused Women's Services. Our services are all the same, serving our community uninterrupted for 34 years.

Every October, while putting the newsletter together during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we reflect on the issues and how they impact our community. With the two cases in the news this summer, the conviction of James Mitchell in the brutal death of Danielle Keller and the killing of Marin County Sheriff's Deputy Jim Mathiesen, we are reminded of the danger and lethality of domestic violence. Our heart goes out to their families and friends, and to the community as we heal from these devastating losses. We are so grateful to those who dedicate their lives to protecting and serving us.

Here at Center for Domestic Peace, we are focused on a violence-free tomorrow. We work every day to not only ensure the immediate safety of those in need, but also to inspire our community to take action. We have included in this issue a copy of the Individual Peace Agreement we created last year in our efforts to promote a peaceful community. We invite you and your family to cut out the agreement, talk about it, sign it, and post it proudly in solidarity. Let's all work together for a peaceful tomorrow.

Cristy Egan

Cristy Egan
Chair, Board of Directors



Economics and Domestic Violence

During this economic downturn, Center for Domestic Peace has been asked numerous times about the trends we are noticing due to the economy. Nationally, domestic violence organizations have reported alarming increases: 80% of domestic violence shelters report an increase in women seeking assistance from abuse, and 73% attribute this rise in abuse to financial issues. Our 24-hour hotlines experienced an all-time high record of calls this past year. Does this suggest that economics play a role in domestic violence?

First, consider the influence of the current economic crisis on domestic violence.

Similar to our experience in Marin, domestic violence practitioners know that a down economy does not cause domestic violence. It can, however, contribute to intensifying domestic violence where it already exists; there may be more opportunity for abuse when unemployed couples interact more frequently and have more challenges to resolve. National statistics cite that domestic violence is more than three times as likely to occur when couples are experiencing high levels of financial strain than when they are experiencing low levels. Some researchers have theorized that underemployed and unemployed men have higher levels of stress due to the social stigma around financial success that is tied to their masculinity and perceived social status. When men's belief system of dominance and control is challenged, domestic violence can occur or escalate; these social norms must be taken into consideration when understanding the nexus between economics and domestic violence.

We've also noticed that survivors have a harder time finding safe, secure housing for themselves and their children if they've decided to leave the relationship. In 09/10, requests for shelter were at an all-time high. More than a third of domestic violence victims nationally become homeless as a result of leaving an abusive relationship. It has been reported that fewer people are divorcing because they can't afford to leave, as their options have narrowed.

Second, consider that domestic violence can lead to financial problems for individuals of every economic class and can entrap them in poverty.

Marin is a community of considerable wealth, and women who are financially secure may seem to have access to more resources. However, victims of domestic violence in more affluent communities often face special challenges – geographic isolation, unfamiliarity with service agencies, and social status concerns. Many victims lack access to cash or credit cards, or even information about the amount and location of family finances, living only with an allowance used to monitor and control their behavior and whereabouts. These factors, including risk of economic instability when leaving an abusive partner, can contribute to prolonged stays in violent relationships.

Batterers can also interfere with a victim's ability to maintain stable employment by engaging in employment-related sabotage, such as visibly injuring victims, repeatedly harassing them at work, or ruining childcare arrangements. A woman who must attend court hearings or enter a shelter might lose her job due to time missed from work. All these factors can significantly reduce options for employment and economic self-sufficiency, putting victims at a higher risk of poverty.

Low-income women in particular often face multiple levels of bias and discrimination that reduce their options for safety and financial security, e.g. landlords may not want to lease to a single mother whose rent is subsidized by the government. This can contribute to prolonged stays in violent relationships. Many services are provided only in English and fail to respond to the needs of diverse cultures. Money can mean mobility, choice, bargaining power, and access to enforcing laws that protect her against such discrimination.

Finally, consider how society's safety responses are being impacted by the recession.

Cuts in funding for law enforcement, courts, and prosecution are impacting the capacity of the criminal justice system to hold offenders accountable and protect victims' safety. Foundations and government funders have reduced and/or redirected resources, providing less support for shelters in California. Safety net services such as housing and community clinics have been reduced or eliminated. With demands for services at record levels, the new normal – fewer resources and greater need – challenges organizations like Center for Domestic Peace to do more with less. We continue to work on solutions to this dilemma.

So as you can see, yes, economics play a complex role in domestic violence. On page three, learn about the success and effectiveness of the economic empowerment program at our transitional housing facility, Second Step.

*“Money is a current, a carrier,
a conduit for our intentions...
Money carries the imprimatur
of our soul.”*

Lynne Twist,
*The Soul of Money:
Transforming your Relationships
with Money and Life*

The recent political budget fights in Sacramento and Washington challenge us to look at what is left on the table after all is said and done. Regardless of political party affiliation and rhetoric, the question remains: what does money and spending mean to us? What are the values that are imbedded in choices politicians make? What are the values that are reflected in the people we elect to make those decisions for us? And what values are reflected in the decisions we make about our own use of money?

Almost daily, Center for Domestic Peace is blessed to receive donations from our community. They come in the form of in-kind donations – bedding, clothing, and toys for the families at shelter and transitional housing. And they come in the form of financial contributions - sometimes small amounts, sometimes larger gifts, sometimes from events organized by civic groups on our behalf. During the past fiscal year alone, we have been the beneficiary of rock concerts, soccer games, theatrical performances, supermarket campaigns, church collections, and club-organized drives. And thanks to the creative, dedicated, and enterprising people, groups, and businesses in our community, for the past four years in a row we have reached our fundraising goals.

What is constant, regardless of the size, form, or source of the donation, is the meaning that Center for Domestic Peace attaches to contributions. While certainly all gifts to the organization provide vital support for programs, we are inspired to also recognize every donation as a statement of solidarity with the commitment and ideals that Center for Domestic Peace holds. Often we find notes attached to checks filled with words of encouragement and appreciation. Once, a sister sent a contribution to thank us for helping her brother through the ManKind program. Recently, a mother donated to us to help a child because her young son was spared a life-threatening event. Years ago, an elderly gentleman bequeathed us a property to “help women” because he never forgot his childhood friend who grew up in a violent home.

For all of you who are able to donate to Center for Domestic Peace, we are grateful for your giving. Your gifts speak to us. We recognize them as a conduit for your intentions to stand in solidarity with the day-to-day work of the organization, and the long term vision of domestic peace for all.

24-HOUR HOTLINES

English 415.924.6616
Spanish 415.924.3456
Men’s 415.924.1070

We Applaud You — OUR SUPPORTERS!

Every year at Center for Domestic Peace, we are inspired by the amount of support we receive from the community. Thanks to your generosity and your commitment to domestic peace in our community, we were able to meet our 2010-2011 fundraising goal!

We would also like to extend a heartfelt thanks to those who generously gave clothing, household items, bedding, furniture, and volunteered their time. Even the smallest donation of an outfit or a towel can help rebuild the life of a woman in our shelter.

The following is a list of supporters who donated \$150 or more between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011. Although space limitations prevent us from mentioning all our donors, **we are most grateful to each and every one.**

\$10,000 and above

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Center for Domestic Peace's 8th Annual Luncheon, In Celebration of Mothers

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EVENT!

This past May, friends and supporters of Center for Domestic Peace gathered together to celebrate and to raise money for Center for Domestic Peace's direct services and prevention programs. With your help, we brought in over \$55,000! We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to everyone who made this event such a great success, and especially to our featured speaker **Jan Yanehiro** and to our mistress of ceremonies **Dana King**. Mark your calendar for our next event on May 11, 2012!

We deeply appreciate the support of all our partners.

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 Centers of America

Special Thanks:

Mother's Day Event Committee: Jessica Bartolini • LeeAnn Bartolini
 Pat Davis • Ariane Dobrin • Surime Dobrin • Phyllis Galanis
 Alex Jennings • Janet Oelklaus • Jennifer Weller

Table Captains: Jessica Bartolini • LeeAnn Bartolini • Milena Belloni Dixon
 Lisa Canepa • Laura Collins • Maki Daijogo • Rachelle Dorris
 Cristy Egan • Donna Garske • Alex Jennings • Kaiser Permanente • Kate Kain
 Tracy Kostiuik • Denise Lucy • Gwen Mauvais • Jennifer Weller

Economic Empowerment for Residents at Second Step

Sarah, a resident of our transitional housing program, Second Step, has demonstrated tremendous strength and determination. Although she entered in crisis, in only four months she secured employment, purchased a vehicle, obtained affordable child care for her two youngest children, re-gained custody of her two oldest children, and completed the paperwork towards securing a Section 8 HUD voucher with the Marin Housing Authority.

How did Sarah accomplish these successes? The intensive supportive services provided by Second Step help residents address factors that place them at-risk for long-term poverty including the ability to obtain a job, earn a living wage, and



Second Step Program Manager Encarny Aguado-Amsems and Economic Development Advocate Ramon Manrique.

successfully maintain economic independence and stability. Second Step is a 21-unit housing project that offers survivors and their children a second chance to begin rebuilding their lives in a peaceful home. Through an economic training module and case management, residents receive education in financial fundamentals and planning; debt reduction; how to procure child support; credit card management; and other relevant financial topics. Residents also receive assistance in securing employment and enrolling in an education program and/or job training. Second Step also recently added a curriculum for youth (13-18) that covers setting financial goals, how banks work, managing money, and giving back (helping others).

As of June 2011:

- 76% of the residents increased their income since their start in the Second Step program.
- 71% of the residents are currently employed or attending school.
- 81% of the residents use some form of electronic or documented budget.

Residents are focusing on reducing overall expenses and increasing savings. This is often the fastest way to have a more solid financial footing. By adding an emphasis on savings, residents have an increased sense of security and a personal budget that they alone control without having to first further their education or receive higher pay. Ultimately, families are learning how to have more money in their pocket at the end of the month.

In a three year follow-up study conducted by a professional evaluator, on average, former residents reported that they were all in stable housing situations. All reported having adequate food and clothing, good relationships with their children, and positive feelings about current work situations, and the majority felt safe and self-sufficient. All reported their children were doing very well both physically and mentally.

We invite you to sign this
**individual peace
agreement**
as a step toward
promoting peace at
home and in the
community.

A mixture of **education,**
changing relationships,
negotiation, and
dialogue
is necessary to
achieve the
personal and **societal**
transformation
reflected in
this **Individual**
Peace Agreement

INDIVIDUAL PEACE AGREEMENT

Starting today I will:

- 1) Acknowledge and accept responsibility for not always practicing healthy behaviors in all my relationships.
- 2) Immediately end any form of physical violence that I may have been committing.
- 3) Educate myself about all forms of domestic violence and abuse outlined as the PEEVS (Physical, Emotional, Economic, Verbal, Sexual, Spiritual, and Stalking forms of abuse).
- 4) Learn more about my own behaviors and how they may appear unreasonable, abusive, or threatening to others, respecting those who offer me insights.
- 5) Eliminate any form of the PEEVS toward my partner, former partners, children, and others.
- 6) Hold myself accountable and make amends to others, if appropriate, for the harm my behavior has caused.
- 7) Seek assistance to stop my behaviors if I begin to falter in this Peace Agreement.
- 8) Educate others (my partner, children, co-workers) about this Peace Agreement and invite them to sign.
- 9) Promote social policies and practices that create more opportunities in support of domestic peace for youth and adults.
- 10) Contact Center for Domestic Peace if violence occurs in my interpersonal relationships or community and if I need assistance understanding what to do to "take action."
- 11) Expand my commitment to equality in all my relationships by valuing and respecting diversity inclusive of gender, race, age, class, and sexual orientation.

By making these agreements and living by them, I create and maintain healthy, loving, and equal relationships for myself, my partner, my family, and my community.

SIGNATURE

DATE

WITNESS

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

October Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities

Ways you can participate:

- ◆ Cut out, sign and post the **Individual Peace Agreement** above, showing your commitment to healthy relationships; wear a purple ribbon in solidarity; shine a purple light in your window, office or storefront; raise a purple flag at your school.
- ◆ Become a certified **Domestic Violence Advocate** by taking our 40 hour training, beginning October 11. Information is available on our website.
- ◆ Join us on October 4th 12:00-1:00 pm on the **National Call for Unity**, hosted by The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Come to 734 A Street, San Rafael and join us on the call and in the moment of silence for those who have lost their lives to this crime. RSVP to 457-2464. You may also visit our events page to register for the call individually.
- ◆ Join us for at the **West End Village Celebration** held Sunday **October 9th** from 11:00am-7:00pm. Between H & Shaver on 4th St., San Rafael. Look for our banner!
- ◆ Join us for our annual **Dia de los Muertos, Day of the Dead**, memorial and reading of the names of those killed by domestic violence on **October 28, 12:00 – 2:00 pm** at Center for Domestic Peace, 734 A Street, San Rafael. RSVP at 457-2464.
- ◆ Volunteers and staff will be placing **informational stickers** in bathroom stalls around the county to remind those in need that help is available.
- ◆ Volunteers and staff will be posted at several **Safeway** and **Trader Joe's** stores on various days to bring awareness and offer **Individual Peace Agreements** to the community.
- ◆ **San Rafael police cars** will show their support with a Purple Ribbon campaign.
- ◆ **The Silent Witness campaign** – a collection of life-size silhouettes of domestic violence victims with a description of how each was killed – will be on display in various locations throughout Marin County, including Center for Domestic Peace.

To find out how to get involved please call 415.526.2541.