

PEACEWATCH

Center for Domestic Peace Newsletter • Fall 2020

Dear Supporters,

First and foremost, we hope you are healthy and sheltering in peace as we continue forward in this global pandemic. So many individuals worldwide are enduring suffering, as COVID stops for no one and also illuminates inequities and vulnerabilities where they already exist.


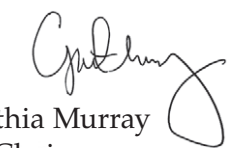
At Center for Domestic Peace (C4DP), we know that women primarily continue to be victims of domestic violence and are subject to greater poverty and discrimination. We also know that women of color experience racism, domestic violence, poverty, and COVID-19 at disproportionately higher rates.

Since so many of our supporters have asked how our work is being affected and informed by COVID and the rise of the Black Lives Matter Movement, highlighted in this edition are articles providing insights into the challenges and successes we have faced in being responsive to survivor needs during these times. Also included is an article about C4DP's strong foundation as a social justice organization rooted in our deep commitment to economic and racial justice as a key part of our non-violence work.

C4DP's Board of Directors takes pride in sharing the accomplishments of staff during this time. Maintaining a 24/7 emergency response operation while also pivoting to remote work during a pandemic has been a major undertaking for C4DP. We are especially grateful to the staff who faced their own personal challenges and losses while learning new technology, establishing spaces to work at home, and staying current with the endless number of requests for help, administrative demands, and facility work.

Finally, to those of you who financially contributed this past year to help us reach our June 30th goal, we are grateful! The "upside of down" through the experience of COVID has taught us that our core values and true nature are clearer and stronger than ever. We value the relationships we share with all of you as our supporters.

Thank you for standing with us as we continue to work towards greater safety, justice, and equality!

 
Natasha Singh and Cynthia Murray
Co-Chair Co-Chair



Standing Steady as We Learn Our Way Forward

Donna Garske, Executive Director

Center for Domestic Peace (C4DP) could not have imagined the unprecedented rapid change soon to come when several donors indicated discomfort with attending our donor appreciation event on March 4, 2020. The outbreak of a virus in China had already spread to Italy and Spain. Within days, C4DP began scenario planning, reviewed our Emergency Preparedness Plan, and added additional cautionary steps to our protocols for direct service work. To the best of our ability, our goal was to be prepared to face whatever was ahead.

Two weeks later, shelter-in-place (SIP) orders were enacted in Marin County. Overnight, C4DP's 55-person workforce began pivoting to new ways of working, both remotely and with reduced direct contact with shelter and transitional housing residents.

As a 24/7 crisis intervention and emergency shelter provider, C4DP's number one priority was to maintain critical survivor-safety responses via the shelter, transitional housing, and C4DP's 24/7 English/Spanish hotline. Establishing web-based legal advocacy services and individual therapy support followed next.

With 12 adults and children at the shelter the first day of SIP, 70 moms and kid in transitional housing, and hundreds of legal advocacy participants needing support to navigate the criminal justice system, C4DP witnessed firsthand how SIP brought added fear for victims already navigating complex situations. While our response to COVID may sound like what other nonprofits faced, our pivoting required coordination with multiple systems and institutions also undergoing their own rapid change process.

Without access to the court, initially closed due to SIP, how would a temporary restraining order slated to expire two days be extended? How would a pending custody arrangement be resolved so that the survivor could have her children returned? How would children in transitional housing participate in remote learning with no income to buy a laptop? How would a guest at shelter find permanent housing with SIP in place?

Domestic violence doesn't stop in a crisis, and neither do we!

Social distancing was impossible to maintain in a group setting, so all C4DP group services were put on hold, including our programs for those who abuse. We have since transitioned these services to remote options, including our "In This Together" therapy program for children and their non-abusing parent and individual therapy so families can maintain a safety line during SIP. With on-site youth prevention work at Marin high schools and colleges halted, C4DP began online meetings for C4DP's Marin Against Youth Abuse (MAYA) youth leaders so they could stay connected with their peers to strategize about how to help young people in unhealthy relationships during COVID.

Through our various connections with survivors, the added risk SIP presented soon became apparent. Lack of privacy at home made it difficult to call for help. Loss of employment and the SIP order drastically reduced options for victims to leave violent relationships. And COVID itself became a new weapon for an abuser to control a partner by refusing to return children to the victim's home or threatening to infect someone if their demands were not met.

Through it all, we have discovered much about who we are as an organization. COVID stress-tested us to our core and revealed our pre-existing strengths: **responsive, adaptable, nimble, survivor focused and emergency responders extraordinaire!**

It also revealed another natural asset – we are relationship based. Existing strong relationships with 12 Bay Area sister domestic violence organizations enabled C4DP to quickly establish an emergency shared learning and resource exchange with others facing similar organizational challenges. Existing strong relationships facilitated immediate communication and problem-solving with our domestic violence liaisons in law enforcement, the courts, and the district attorney's office. Relationships with donors saw us through the financial gap resulting from cancellation of our annual Mother's Day Luncheon in May.

Regretfully, the end of C4DP's COVID journey is not in immediate sight. Our administrative site at A Street in San Rafael remains closed to the public. However, we remain on stand-by to re-open when it is safe to do so.

In the end, C4DP has solidified our knowledge that **"Domestic violence doesn't stop in a crisis, and neither do we"** is more than a slogan. It's who we are!

Our Community Supporting Us ~ Thank You!

Center for Domestic Peace honors the hundreds who invest in the work we do. We are especially grateful to our partners who contributed more than \$5,000 from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. For a complete list of donors, please download our Annual Report online after December 31, 2020.

\$100,000+

Blue Shield of California Foundation
Buck Family Fund of MCF
California Department of Housing and Community Development
California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services
County of Marin
Office on Violence Against Women
Justine Miner

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Ginnie & Peter Haas Jr. Fund of MCF
Silicon Valley Community Foundation

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C4DP Staff amidst COVID- Becoming “Tech-Sperts”

As mentioned on the front page, the shelter-in-place (SIP) order has had a significant impact on C4DP and those we serve. One unanticipated side effect is that we are well on our way to becoming “Tech-Sperts” or experts in technology as a result. With 55 employees living in 5 different counties, SIP and remote work created new challenges for C4DP around both how to function cohesively and collaboratively, as well as how to respond effectively to the evolving needs of survivors.



Many of our staff, like the survivors we help, now share the burden and stress of working remotely and homeschooling young children. With staff no longer able to walk over to a coworker’s desk to ask a question or get immediate feedback, how could we best support each other? With the intensity and stress of survivors calling for help, what support systems could we implement to rapidly respond to staff needs for support? To that end, while developing new online service delivery methods, we also stepped up our organizational capacity to support staff, such as move our Fun Fridays to Zoom. Fun Fridays engage staff in building community with each other and offer relief from the demanding work we do. Recent topics have included “Thriving-in-Place,” “Celebrating Self,” and “Creature Comforts,” as well as an online yoga session. “My favorite day of the month! I really look forward to these,” stated a hotline advocate.

SIP also illustrated the increased risk to survivors inherent in depending on technology for help – loss of privacy, password insecurity, limited or spotty internet bandwidth, and access to devices being used as a tool by abusers. As Tech-Sperts, C4DP staff continue to guide survivors in creating safety plans that address the risks posed by increased use of technology during SIP orders.

With a workforce now capable of managing meetings on Zoom, C4DP is using this platform to host our batterer intervention classes, train youth and prevention interns, and work with collaborators on trainings and court advocacy; soon we will also offer empowerment and support groups via Zoom. We consider it one huge step forward to be capable of successfully helping survivors navigate this new tech reality.

We are confident that with our training and focus on technology, we are responding professionally and seamlessly in this pandemic to our staff, participants, community collaborators, and donor community while also being mindful to care for ourselves.

C4DP’s Intervention Classes Go Online



C4DP has a longstanding commitment to addressing the root causes of domestic violence and has developed several first-in-the-nation programs for individuals to learn how to change their belief systems and behaviors to prevent violence toward their partners. Up until March 17, 2020, ManKind, WomanKind, and Mujer Gentil 52-week programs were held in person and facilitated in a supportive group format. Class members attend because they are either self-referred or are required by probation to attend.

As the pandemic unfolded, these classes were temporarily cancelled due to the group setting. The team began to research options for transitioning to web-based learning going forward. Challenges included determining how best to use technology to create online agreements for participants, collect fees online, and develop user guides to train staff and class participants on how to use the tools. After several months, on June 3, we held our first online class via Zoom. We now have all three programs up and running online with regular attendance.

When asked how COVID was impacting their relationships, many reported that sheltering with their partners has been difficult, and they were grateful they had the skills they learned in the class to tap into. These strategies include the knowledge that they have a choice in the moment to breathe and walk away. They are reminded to use mindfulness and notice how the body changes when they get upset.

One man was anxious to get back to class so he could regain visitation with his children; another mentioned how important these learned skills were because he was now home with his kids and didn’t want them to witness his previous pattern of yelling at his partner. Many appreciate the support they get in the group setting, feeling connected to others who are experiencing similar issues. Others miss the in-person groups, feeling that Zoom calls don’t have the same sense of community and connection.

No matter where in the process class members are, we remind them that they are on a journey towards a life of peace and equality. It is in those moments when they feel violent that they need to hold themselves accountable, to step back and be mindful of the choices they are making. We encourage anyone who wants to know more about the programs to call us – 415-457-6760

Resilience. Even in a Pandemic.

Even in a pandemic, the work of C4DP’s Second Step 21-unit transitional housing program stayed steady and strong. Second Step offers a multi-faceted program which includes economic self-sufficiency and occupational education, counseling and case management, leadership opportunities, and just as importantly, help obtaining permanent housing upon exiting from the program.

Consider this snapshot of the program from January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020, as COVID ramped up throughout the US. In sum, 28 survivors and 64 children/dependents received a total of 11,370 bednights of transitional housing at two sites. Nine families transitioned to permanent housing and eight new families began their journey with Second Step.

COVID-19 presented new challenges for these Second Step families who were already grappling with the impact of domestic violence: job losses, reduced work hours, and increased stress related to childcare and schools being closed. Additionally, the shelter-in-place (SIP) order impacted residents’ access to support networks; many expressed fear over leaving their homes, interacting with others, and bringing COVID-19 home to their children. Shared space at Second Step, such as the computer room, was curtailed, making it difficult for residents to follow up with applications, benefits, and even their education. All of this was layered over the experience of working to establish an independent life free of violence.



C4DP staff rose to the occasion by quickly connecting residents to key community service organizations to help with financial and material assistance, including food, rental stipends, and cash aid. C4DP staff also transitioned to phone case management and support, and eventually to Zoom. On one of these calls, a resident mentioned how grateful she was that she could shelter in place here with us and not her abuser.

The Marin community helped as well. Marin Community Foundation offered cash aid of \$500 to all 21 residents in the program. Many received computers from their children’s schools as they pivoted to online learning. Moms became resilient and found free apps to do yoga together and searched YouTube to learn new things. Some even found mediation videos online to cope with this newfound stress.

Another important part of the program is staying connected to previous Second Step participants. Follow-up services have been especially important during this period. Immediately when SIP started, Second Step staff reached out to former residents to assess their individual situations. Several survivors lost their jobs initially, but were resilient and found work shortly after. For those who lost their jobs and benefits on a longer-term basis, Second Step helped them apply for Unemployment Insurance and access immediate financial aid.

Despite the very difficult and uncertain times, current and former residents consistently handled the situation with calm and strength, demonstrating the program’s success in helping them build confidence and skills for self-sufficiency in the face of significant challenges.

Of the nine families that exited during this period, 100% secured permanent housing, a remarkable achievement during COVID-19. Nearly half of all residents served in the last six months increased their income, with an average increase of 33% in earned income. And 78% of residents who exited had achieved at least half of the long-range goals they set for themselves at program entry, despite the challenges they faced due to the global pandemic.

While we have yet to know the full impact this pandemic will have on Second Step residents, we do know that survivors could be facing challenges for years, even generations, to come – including housing shortages, lost wages, family illnesses or even death, and other impacts. We are grateful to all who support our work transitioning families to lives free from violence and abuse, and we pause to celebrate the courage and resilience of our residents!

By the Numbers

Here is a look at C4DP's work over a 15-week period in the middle of a global pandemic.

From March 17 to June 30, 2020 we:

- ▶ Answered 2,218 hotline calls.
- ▶ Housed 44 shelter guests.
- ▶ Maintained 88 residents in transitional housing.
- ▶ Helped 207 survivors with legal advocacy services.
- ▶ Responded to 58 texts/calls from teens.
- ▶ Provided 192 sessions of individual therapy for both adults and children.
- ▶ Held 21 Zoom calls with high school members of MAYA (Marin Against Youth Abuse), Champion Men’s Zone participants, and college interns to continue prevention education, outreach, and advocacy.

Case Studies in Resilience

Below are 2 stories of how survivors have overcome the impact of domestic violence and found a new life with C4DP’s help.



Dani, not her real name, had endured abuse for many years by her son’s father. She was referred to C4DP through a partner agency because her abuser’s violence was escalating. Once at C4DP’s shelter, Dani received an array of services including individual counseling, domestic violence education, and safety planning, and she also participated in “In This Together” group therapy. She and her son worked very hard to heal the emotional scars



after years of abuse. They eventually moved into Second Step, where she continued to learn how to keep herself safe and empower herself economically. During the shelter-in-place order, with C4DP’s assistance, she succeeded in finding permanent housing. When asked how she is doing, she stated, “For the first time in many years, I am finally ‘home’ and feel safe. I am forever grateful to the compassionate advocates who held my hand through the toughest days of my life. Thank you!!!”



Angela, a Second Step resident, has overcome many obstacles, including limited English, no work experience, and immigration barriers. Second Step worked one-on-one with her to improve her confidence until she felt ready to find a job and start earning an income. Access to childcare assistance funds enabled her to find employment. She also used C4DP’s therapy program and legal advocacy services to help deal with her ex-partner. After a few months, she successfully found a job in a retail store. She felt like her life was starting to get easier, but her abuser continued to harass her, showing up at her workplace and making a scene in front of her supervisor to try to get her fired. Fortunately, the abuser’s tactics did not work; the employer



Photo Credit: Sarah Gonzalez/NPR

contacted the authorities and a restraining order was issued. She was able to continue working and was promoted twice with an increase in her salary. Unfortunately, the store closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even with this new challenge, she was able to find a new part-time job as well as permanent housing. She left Second Step a month ago and is continuing to work and support her family. “I feel I can do anything now! God bless all of you at C4DP.”

24-Hour English/Spanish Hotline: 415-924-6616

Other support can be found by calling:
Monday - Friday 9am-5pm:

ManKind Program 415-457-6760
Marin Youth Services Text Line . . . 415-526-2557
Therapy and Support Groups 415-526-2553

Addressing Gender, Racial, and Economic Inequity in Creating Domestic Peace

“To be truly antiracist is to be feminist.
To truly be feminist is to be antiracist”

~How to Be an Antiracist: Ibram X. Kendi

With the current heightened awareness of racial injustice stemming from the murders of George Floyd and Breanna Taylor and the economic inequality revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Center for Domestic Peace (C4DP) reaffirms its commitment to addressing the intersections between domestic violence, sexism, racism, poverty, homophobia, and other forms of oppression in the work we do to create domestic peace.

Embedded in C4DP’s core principles is the recognition that racial, economic, and gender inequities exist and are foundational in understanding and solving domestic violence. Women are the most common victims of domestic violence and are most frequently on the frontlines as essential workers. They face precarious financial situations and simultaneously endure institutional racism, sexism, and health disparities. Creating freedom from domestic violence requires centering race, gender, and economic justice in solutions to ending it.

In C4DP’s 43-year history, our core organizational principles have guided our strategic directions. They have provided clarity on creating solutions to domestic violence and ensured alignment with the international movement working to end violence against all who identify as women and girls. This framework ensures that we also work to eradicate the violence that men and boys experience in their intimate relationships.

So at this moment in history, where does C4DP shine brightest in our commitment to equity and justice? Where must we deepen our resolve and actions to do more to address racial justice?

Increasing competency and responsiveness to issues of diversity including race, ethnicity, culture, age, language, citizenship, sexual orientation, and gender has been a long-term and ongoing commitment for C4DP. The board strengthened this commitment to racial justice several years ago by further diversifying its membership. Currently 60% of board members are of color. Two years ago, C4DP hired trainers to conduct unconscious bias and racism awareness training at its annual board retreat, which continues into this fall. C4DP staff established a priority in fall 2019 to increase our understanding of C4DP’s core principles and policies that address bias and discrimination



by establishing ongoing practice sessions, which are currently underway, on how to apply these tools to our work.

To strengthen connections within the Black/African American community in Marin with a primary focus on Marin City, C4DP hired a liaison to that community in 2017 to increase domestic violence awareness and support survivors in accessing services. C4DP continues to work collaboratively with Marin City partners to generate solutions to domestic violence within a relevant cultural framework. These actions built on 35 years of work done by C4DP to create a fully bilingual Spanish response, which includes,

- 1) providing all direct survivor services in Spanish, 2) offering culturally specific prevention programs, and 3) maintaining a vibrant multicultural staff.

These are highlights of some of our actions toward becoming more inclusive, diverse, culturally competent, and responsive.

We humbly submit, however, that more work remains to be done. The domestic violence field has relied far too heavily on criminal justice responses to domestic violence, and this is an area that requires our attention. We accept our responsibility to advance the conversation and be at the table to find alternatives to address survivor safety, especially for Black women, when alternatives to engaging law enforcement to deal with abuser accountability are requested. And while C4DP follows the lead of survivors on how they want to proceed - never requiring the involvement of law enforcement - we stand committed to seeking alternatives as part of a community-wide approach to criminal justice reform.

Anti-racism work for board and staff will continue as C4DP deepens its commitment to address racial justice awareness in all training programs offered by the organization. These are a few of our next steps forward.

We hope that we are at a moment in time when our country is on the verge of addressing racism and economic injustice more deeply and powerfully than ever before. Toward that end, C4DP stands grounded in our commitment to a broad analysis of intersectionality, in particular how gender, poverty, and race impact the lives of survivors. From this place, we move forward toward the creation of a more equitable society where domestic violence no longer exists!

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**CENTER FOR DOMESTIC
PEACE**
Working Together to End Domestic Violence

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October Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we invite you to participate in our activities this year. With COVID-19 presenting a challenge to meet in person, our goal is to bring awareness through these online strategies:

A Mindful Moment – Building a Collective Consciousness about Domestic Violence - on the same day, at the same time, and with the same purpose!

Join C4DP and yoga studios and teachers around the county at 9:30AM on October 3rd and 24th for a simultaneous yoga session, in universal support of survivors during this pandemic. Show your solidarity and intention for peaceful relationships by participating on one or both days. C4DP will offer two free online sessions, along with many yoga studios and individual yoga teachers in Marin County. Details on how to get involved are on C4DP’s website.

Frames and Filters – Do you use Facebook or Instagram? You can temporarily change your profile photo by adding a special frame or filter this October. Show you care about ending domestic violence and help get the word out about C4DP. Details on C4DP’s website.

Join us Friday, October 30th from 12-1pm for our first virtual Dia de los Muertos, Day of the Dead, hosted by C4DP and Voces de Cambio (Voices of Change) – a volunteer and activist group of former service users. Our annual event will be held online and include a special memorial and reading of the names of those in the Bay Area killed by domestic violence.

For more information or to RSVP, email mhedlund@c4dp.org
www.c4dp.org/dvam