



Dear Supporters,

There are moments in life that change us forever.

For many survivors of domestic violence, those moments are marked by fear, uncertainty, isolation, and difficult choices. As someone who has experienced domestic violence myself, I know healing is not a single moment. It is a journey, one that often begins when someone reaches out, offers support, and reminds you that you are not alone.

Today, I have the privilege of raising two boys. One of my greatest responsibilities, and joys, is teaching them what healthy relationships look like: kindness, respect, empathy, accountability, and compassion.

That is why the work of Center for Domestic Peace means so much to me.

Every day, C4DP helps individuals and families find safety, healing, and hope. I see survivors taking courageous steps forward, children rebuilding their sense of security, and dedicated staff providing compassionate, expert support.

This year, I am especially proud of our growing investment in behavioral health and therapy services. Domestic violence does not end when the immediate crisis is over. Trauma can remain long after someone finds safety. Counseling and therapeutic support give survivors and their children the opportunity to heal, grow, and thrive.

We are also strengthening support for children exposed to domestic violence. As a parent, this speaks deeply to me. With stability and opportunities to heal, children can build healthy, hopeful futures.

Through programs like Marin Against Youth Abuse and Champion Men's Zone, we are also investing in prevention by engaging young people in conversations about healthy relationships, self-worth, leadership, and respect. Teaching young people healthy communication and relationship skills helps create safer communities for generations to come.

I often think about those who helped me find my own path forward. Their support reminded me that healing was possible and that my story did not have to be defined by what happened to me.

Your support provides that same hope to others.

Because of you, a survivor can access counseling, a child can begin to heal, and a young person can learn what a healthy relationship looks like.

Thank you for believing in healing, investing in prevention, and standing alongside survivors and their children. Together, we are building a future free from violence.



With gratitude and hope,

Monica Gray, Board Chair
Center for Domestic Peace

PEACEWATCH

Center for Domestic Peace Newsletter • Fall 2026

Healing Today. Preventing Violence Tomorrow

By Tara Peterson, Executive Director



At Center for Domestic Peace, we know that safety is essential—but it is only one part of what survivors and their children may need to rebuild their lives. For many families, the path forward is not linear. It can involve immediate crisis support, time to stabilize, space to process trauma, and access to care that honors each person's choices, culture, strengths, and pace. This year, a grant from the Marin County Health and Human Services Department is helping us take an important step toward that more complete continuum of support by expanding our clinical program and strengthening the therapeutic services available to survivors and families.

With this support, we are growing our behavioral health capacity through the addition of new clinical interns and a clinical supervisor. This investment allows us to serve more people, provide stronger supervision and training, and build a sustainable pipeline of trauma-informed clinicians who understand the dynamics of domestic violence, including coercive control, isolation, financial abuse, and the complicated decisions survivors often face. It also allows us to respond more fully to what survivors have been telling us for years: healing cannot be separated from safety, advocacy, housing stability, legal support, parenting, community connection, and the right to define recovery for oneself.

This expansion is especially important for children who have been exposed to domestic violence. Children's responses can vary widely depending on their age, temperament, relationships, culture, and the support around them. Some may have nightmares, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, anger, withdrawal, or struggles at school and in relationships. Others may appear outwardly fine while carrying stress internally. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network notes that children exposed to intimate partner violence can experience immediate reactions such as anxiety, nightmares, difficulty concentrating, and worry about safety, as well as longer-term impacts on emotional health, behavior, and learning.

We also know that children are resilient, especially when caring adults, safe environments, and appropriate therapeutic supports are in place. Supporting children does not mean labeling them by what they have experienced. It means helping them rebuild a sense of safety, strengthen the bond with a nonoffending parent or caregiver, and process trauma in developmentally appropriate ways. When we do this well, we are doing more than responding to harm. We are helping create conditions where children can grow, connect, learn, and imagine relationships rooted in respect rather than fear.



This is the heart of our work: healing today so we can prevent violence tomorrow. Still, prevention is not a simple promise or a single program outcome. It is a long-term community commitment. Our behavioral health services are not separate from our empowerment model; they are part of it. Survivors come to us with courage, expertise, and the desire to reclaim their lives. Our role is to walk alongside them with services that support safety, self-determination, emotional healing, parenting, advocacy, leadership, and long-term stability.

Our vision for the future is to more fully integrate behavioral health into every layer of our empowerment work, while preserving the survivor-centered advocacy that has always been central to C4DP's identity. That means a survivor seeking emergency support can also be connected to trauma-informed counseling if and when they choose it. A parent rebuilding after abuse can receive therapeutic support for themselves and their children. A child who has witnessed violence can access care early, before trauma becomes a barrier to learning, relationships, or well-being. And our advocates, clinicians, prevention educators, and community partners can work together as one coordinated team.

To make that vision real, behavioral health funding must be intentionally earmarked for victims of domestic violence and their children at the county, state, and national levels. Domestic violence is not only a crisis response issue. It is a public health issue, a children's well-being issue, a mental health issue, and a prevention issue. Without dedicated funding, survivors and children too often fall through gaps between systems that may address one need at a time but are not always designed around the realities of abuse, coercive control, trauma, family safety, and healing over time.

Dedicated funding allows community-based domestic violence organizations to do what they do best: provide trusted, survivor-centered care rooted in safety, cultural humility, advocacy, and empowerment. It helps ensure that clinical services are not available only after trauma has become severe, but early enough to support healing, stability, and prevention. It also recognizes that children exposed to domestic violence deserve specialized support, and that supporting their healing is one important part of building safer communities for generations to come.

Our Community Supporting Survivors ~ Thank You!

Hope begins with community. Every contribution to Center for Domestic Peace helps ensure that survivors and their children have access to safety, support, and the opportunity to rebuild their lives free from violence. The generosity of our supporters strengthens our ability to provide shelter, advocacy, counseling, prevention education, and critical resources throughout Marin County. We are honored to recognize the following donors, funders, and partners whose gifts of \$5,000 or more between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, help make this work possible. Thank you for standing with survivors and helping create lasting change in our community.

\$100,000+

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California Department of Housing and Community Development
California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services
County of Marin
Department of Housing and Urban Development
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The Freitas Foundation
The Outdoor Art Club
The Schultz Foundation
The Walter Family
Town of San Anselmo
Dennis Whipp

Healing Today. Preventing Violence Tomorrow

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The County’s investment in our clinical program is a powerful affirmation of what we know to be true: survivors and their children deserve more than crisis intervention. They deserve pathways to healing. They deserve services that meet them where they are and stay with them as they rebuild. And they deserve a community willing to invest in both immediate safety and long-term change.

As we expand our clinical program, welcome new clinical interns, and hire a clinical supervisor, we are building the foundation for a more integrated model of care—one that honors the strength and self-determination of survivors, responds to children with care rather than stigma, and helps prevent violence by investing in healing, relationships, and community conditions before harm is repeated.

BUILDING SAFETY, STABILITY & HOPE FY 25/26

Together, we support children and families on their path to safety, healing and brighter futures.



What Children May Need After Exposure to Domestic Violence

Safety + Stability

A calm environment, consistent routines, and trusted adults.

Caregiver Support

Support for the nonoffending parent or caregiver as the family heals together.

Healing + Expression

Age-appropriate ways to talk, play, draw, or process what happened.

Early Intervention

Therapeutic support before trauma becomes a barrier to learning, relationships, or well-being.

Finding Her Voice Through MAYA

How one young woman found confidence, connection, and leadership through Center for Domestic Peace’s youth prevention program.



Every young woman deserves a safe place to discover her strength, trust her voice, and imagine a future filled with possibility. For many teens, adolescence brings social pressure, changing relationships, uncertainty, and choices that shape who they are becoming.

For Elanor, MAYA became more than a program. It became a circle of support, a source of confidence, and a pathway to leadership—helping her grow from a quiet participant into a young advocate with something powerful to say.

MAYA (Marin Against Youth Abuse) helps teen and young adult girls build the knowledge, confidence, and leadership skills to create healthy relationships and safer communities. Through workshops, peer activities, and school partnerships, participants explore self-worth, boundaries, communication, leadership, and violence prevention in ways that are relevant to their lives.

At its heart, MAYA gives young women more than information. It gives them language for their experiences, tools to protect themselves and others, and the confidence to believe their voices can create change.

Elanor’s Story

When Elanor first joined MAYA, she was thinking about college, independence, and the person she wanted to become. She had not spent much time considering dating abuse or how deeply it can affect young people, but she was ready to learn, stretch



STAFF PROFILE Gayle Shearman

Behind the Scenes,
Creating Pathways to Safety

At Center for Domestic Peace, much of the work that changes lives happens in counseling sessions, support groups, shelter services, and advocacy programs. But behind every one of those services is a strong foundation of systems, facilities, and technology that make the work possible. For the past 10 years, Gayle Shearman has helped build and maintain that foundation.

As Operations Manager, Gayle oversees many of the behind-the-scenes functions that keep C4DP running smoothly. From facilities and technology to building improvements and workplace operations, her work helps ensure that survivors, families, volunteers, and staff have safe, welcoming, and accessible spaces where healing and support can take place.

Before joining C4DP, Gayle spent 30 years in the trade show industry, managing facilities, technology, and event operations. Throughout her professional career, she also remained deeply committed to community service, including serving eight years on the national board of United Methodist Women.

Over the last decade, Gayle has played a key role in numerous projects that have expanded and strengthened C4DP's ability to serve survivors. She helped oversee the installation of the elevator and upgraded entry system at the A Street office, improving accessibility and security for clients and staff. She supported accessibility enhancements at shelter facilities, helped manage the construction of a new office building at the shelter site, and contributed to converting former office space into additional shelter housing for survivors and their families.

Her leadership was especially critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through ongoing technology improvements and operational planning, Gayle helped ensure staff could transition seamlessly to remote work while continuing to provide essential services and emergency housing without interruption.

Reflecting on her work, Gayle shares:

"One of the greatest joys of my work is seeing survivors and their children move from crisis to stability. Watching families arrive seeking safety and later secure permanent housing, rebuild their confidence, and create a strong foundation for their future is incredibly rewarding."

What continues to inspire Gayle after 10 years at C4DP is both the mission and the people.

"I am grateful to work alongside such dedicated and compassionate colleagues. Supporting their work through safe facilities, reliable technology, and strong operational systems allows me to contribute to the incredible impact they make every day."

Outside of work, Gayle enjoys spending time with her husband, family, and friends, traveling throughout Northern California, volunteering through her church community, and caring for their miniature wire-haired dachshund.

Making an Impact

Though often behind the scenes, Gayle's impact is felt across C4DP every day. Her dedication, leadership, and commitment to strong operations help make our work possible. Thank you, Gayle, for 10 years of outstanding service.

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herself, and step beyond the shyness that had often held her back.

Through MAYA, Elanor began to see the world—and herself—differently. She learned to recognize the many forms abuse can take, respond with care when someone is in crisis, and connect survivors with support. Then she put that learning into action: distributing educational materials across the county, representing MAYA at outreach events, strengthening her public speaking skills, and stepping into leadership with growing courage and purpose.

"During my senior year, MAYA helped me feel connected with my community and closer with my peers, especially during college applications and the decision process. I will miss being a part of this program and am forever grateful for the opportunities I've been given because of it."

Now attending a prestigious college, Elanor is carrying MAYA's lessons forward. She hopes to continue serving as an advocate and resource for her peers—bringing with her the confidence, compassion, and leadership she strengthened through the program.

Why It Matters

Elanor's journey shows what is possible when young women are supported, encouraged, and empowered to lead. Through programs like MAYA, Center for Domestic Peace is helping shape a future free from abuse. Join our community and subscribe to our e-newsletter to follow these stories of hope and transformation. **Find the link at the bottom of our homepage: centerfordomesticpeace.org**

Champions for Change: Engaging Young Men in Prevention

What Real Strength Looks Like

How Champion Men's Zone is helping young men build healthy relationships, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills.



What does real strength look like? For almost a decade, Jon Deras, C4DP's former Prevention Specialist, has been helping young men answer that question through Champion Men's Zone (CMZ). By creating space for honest conversations about masculinity, relationships, accountability, and leadership, he has challenged participants to rethink what it means to be a man and empowered them to become allies in preventing violence.

At the heart of Champion Men's Zone is a simple but transformative idea: young men need space to openly discuss the pressures, expectations, and messages they receive about masculinity. Through honest conversation and prevention education, participants are encouraged to think critically about what strength, leadership, and respect truly mean.

"Real strength could include self-control, vulnerability, accountability, emotional intelligence, healthy relationships, and leadership," Jon reflected. For many participants, that perspective challenged long-held assumptions and opened the door to healthier ways of relating to themselves and others.

That message has resonated with young people throughout the program's history. When Champion Men's Zone first launched at Marin Oaks High School, organizers expected only a handful of participants. Instead, 33 students enrolled, signaling a need for conversations many young men were not having elsewhere. After one discussion about the "mask of masculinity" and the pressure to hide emotions, students stayed nearly 30 minutes after class simply to continue talking.

Over the years, Jon watched participants grow into leaders who challenged harmful behaviors, supported one another, and created peer-led prevention campaigns on their campuses. Some students began holding each other accountable during discussions, questioning disrespectful behavior and encouraging one another to engage more deeply. Those moments demonstrated that the lessons were extending beyond the classroom and becoming part of how young people related to one another.

For Jon, engaging young men is essential to violence prevention. "Young men are half of the population, so we cannot seriously talk about preventing violence while leaving them out of the conversation," he said. By helping participants recognize unhealthy behaviors, develop empathy, and build relationship skills, the program empowers young men to become allies, advocates, and future leaders in creating safer communities.

Throughout his years with Champion Men's Zone, Jon has seen firsthand that prevention often begins with a conversation, a trusted relationship, or a young person who finally feels safe enough to be heard. His hope is that future participants leave with stronger emotional intelligence, healthier relationship skills, and the confidence to challenge harmful norms, support their peers, and lead with empathy. Because when young men are equipped to model respect, accountability, and healthy relationships, the impact extends far beyond a single classroom, creating safer families, stronger communities, and a future where violence is prevented before it begins.

"That is how cycles get broken and legacies get built."

Community Impact & Recognition

Each October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness, support survivors, strengthen prevention efforts, and connect community members with resources and education.

The 2nd Annual Panel Discussion & Purple Ribbon Awards builds on the success of the inaugural event in 2025, which brought together community members, students, healthcare professionals, advocates, educators, civic leaders, and service providers for an evening focused on prevention, education, and action.

The event will feature a prevention-focused panel discussion, recognition of community leaders through the Purple Ribbon Awards, and opportunities for attendees to learn, connect, and engage in efforts to prevent violence before it occurs.

Our Second Annual Purple Ribbon Awards recognize individuals and organizations whose leadership and partnership have strengthened prevention, safety, and support for survivors.

2026 Purple Ribbon Award Recipients:



Champion for Change / Prevention Leadership Award – Jon Deras, Community Education Supervisor, Canal Alliance

In recognition of his leadership and commitment to prevention programming, youth engagement, and community education.



Law Enforcement Partnership Award – Lieutenant Ronda Cordero, San Rafael Police Department

In recognition of her longstanding partnership, responsiveness, and leadership in strengthening community collaboration and support for survivors.



CCR Partner Award – Haley Mears, Children and Family Services (CFS)

In recognition of her outstanding partnership, collaboration, and commitment to supporting children and families impacted by domestic violence through a coordinated community response.



Community Impact Award – Kaiser Permanente

In recognition of its philanthropic investment and valued partnership in advancing prevention, intervention, and support for survivors of domestic violence.

Panel Discussion: When Risk Increases: How We Recognize Warning Signs and Prevent Violence

This year's discussion will focus on preventing domestic violence fatalities and reducing the lethality of intimate partner violence. Our panelists will include experts who will be speaking about firearm-related violence and restraining orders, the dangers of strangulation and its connection to homicide risk, and the disproportionate impact of intimate partner violence within vulnerable communities, including the African American community.

Join these respected leaders as they explore how we can identify warning signs, strengthen prevention efforts, and work together to build safer communities:

- ♥ Pelli Anderson – Co-Chair, Marin Gun Safety Collaborative
- ♥ Kari A. Cordero, RN – Executive Director, SANE-SART
- ♥ Paméla Michelle Tate, Ph.D. – Executive Director, Black Women Revolt
- ♥ Meghan Kehoe – Children, Youth and Community Prevention Division Director, Center for Domestic Peace

Together, these experts bring perspectives from prevention, healthcare, gun violence prevention, and community leadership to an important conversation about stopping violence before it occurs.

As Center for Domestic Peace prepares to celebrate 50 years of serving Marin County, we invite you to join us for an evening of education, inspiration, recognition, and action.

2nd Annual Panel Discussion & Purple Ribbon Awards

Tuesday, October 6, 2026 | 6:00–8:00 pm
College of Marin, Kentfield Campus

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

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October — IS —

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

AWARENESS MONTH

SUPPORT. ADVOCATE. EMPOWER. | Together, we can end the violence.

One Sip Closer to Ending Domestic Violence

For the fourth consecutive year, Center for Domestic Peace is turning one of Marin's favorite daily rituals – coffee and tea – into an opportunity to raise awareness during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Throughout October, participating cafés will feature C4DP coffee sleeves carrying our hotline number, creating a simple but powerful way to spark conversations about healthy relationships, recognize the signs of abuse, and connect survivors, concerned community members, and those seeking to change harmful behaviors with support and resources. Join us! Visit our website for the full list of participating coffee and tea shops: www.c4dp.org/dvam

2nd Annual Panel Discussion & Purple Ribbon Awards
October 6, 6:00–8:00 pm
College of Marin, Student Success Center, Kentfield

This event brings together our community for an evening focused on prevention, education, and action. The event will feature a prevention-focused panel discussion, recognition of community leaders through the Purple Ribbon Awards, and opportunities to learn, connect, and take action to prevent violence before it occurs. Join us!

RSVP using this QR Code or visit www.c4dp.org/dvam



Annual Día de los Muertos, Day of the Dead
October 16, 12:00–1:00 pm
734 A Street, San Rafael

Hosted by C4DP, the children of C4DP staff, and Voces de Cambio (Voices of Change, a volunteer activist group of former service users), our annual event honors the memories of those lost to domestic violence and celebrates the strength, resilience, and healing of survivors. All are welcome as compassionate witnesses, joining us in remembrance, healing, and solidarity.

For more information visit www.c4dp.org/dvam

BFF Night

October 22, 5:30–8:00 pm | Cavallo Point Lodge – Mercantile & Art Gallery, Sausalito, CA

Join us for a networking night of wellness, shopping and fun, while supporting Center for Domestic Peace. The evening promises plenty of pampering, shopping, and connection. For more information visit www.c4dp.org/bff

CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE®
Stand with Survivors. End Domestic Violence.

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