FAMILY CRISIS

OUR INVESTMENT: $795,000

OUR APPROACH

The Family Crisis programs we fund help women, children, and families prevent, survive, and thrive in the wake of domestic violence and sexual abuse. These programs provide safe shelter, counseling, and medical care to those who have experienced domestic or sexual violence, advocacy for those in the court system, and support for families at risk of breaking apart. Our partner agencies cast a wide net of support for those in need, serving the most vulnerable members of our community at the most critical times in their lives.

THE PEOPLE

Nationally, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical violence from a domestic partner. Every 9 minutes, Child Protective Services finds evidence supporting a claim of child sexual abuse. These statistics are a stark reminder of how vulnerable so many in our community are to abuse – and how badly they need our support. In the last year, the Family Crisis programs we fund served 7,683 people in Kent County, including 4,484 women and girls cared for following domestic or sexual violence. Our programs also support children in need of a stable home and families fighting to stay together. In the last year, our funding supported 95 adoptive families and provided 4,907 hours of legal advocacy for children.

WHAT’S WORKING?

Reaching the Hard-to-Reach: Our partner agencies serve those with difficulty accessing services, either because they live far from a center or outside the bounds of the legal system. YWCA offers counseling sessions by Skype, while Arbor Circle serves children, parents, and individuals in northern Kent County. Meanwhile, Migrant Legal Aid reaches out to victims of domestic violence within the migrant community, many of whom would never contact the police for help for fear of being deported.

Thriving After Trauma: Many adopted children have experienced trauma and struggle with behavioral issues as a result. That’s why D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s coordinates adoption support groups to give parents guidance and resources so they and their adopted children can thrive. Working directly with young adults who have been expelled or committed a first offense, Ingenium helps them understand and correct their negative behaviors – often arising from trauma – so that they can stay on track in school and lead fulfilling lives.

WHAT IF WE COULD DO MORE?

With additional funding and volunteer support, we could:

• Work with school districts and school support networks to identify and serve kids in need.
• Equip more teachers, guardians, and agencies with Ingenium’s character skills curriculum.
• Support abuse-prevention programs including youth-led anti-violence campaigns.
• Recruit additional volunteer advocates for children in the court system, especially advocates of color.
• Provide healthcare coverage to uninsured or under-insured women and families in domestic violence shelters.
ROBERTO’S STORY

Roberto was three years old when his parents brought him to the U.S. so they could work in agriculture. His father, an alcoholic, regularly beat his mother and abused Roberto and his sister. The abuse continued until Roberto was 12. But when his father threatened to kill his mother if she ever reported the abuse, Roberto decided he’d had enough. Covered in bruises, he reported what was happening first to his teacher, then to the police.

Migrant Legal Aid took up their case, representing Roberto and his mother and sister. In his declaration, Roberto told the government he was "so sad for what my mom has had to go through for us. My mom works hard to give us a better life. She wants us to study and for us to be somebody in life. And that is why I work hard in school.”

Because Roberto and his mother and sister assisted in the prosecution, Migrant Legal Aid was able to successfully petition for U-Visas for them, meaning they could finally live as legal residents of the United States. Free from abuse and the threat of deportation, Roberto now describes a life that is filled with joy: "I go to school and I like to study and play the violin. My mom feels proud of me and my sister. I have a guinea pig.”

WHAT WE CAN DO WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER

Collaboration is key in addressing child sexual abuse. That's because recovery involves not only physical and psychological healing, but often a need for legal remedies as well. When the Children’s Advocacy Center of Kent County begins working with a child, they often bring in an expert medical examiner from the YWCA to determine if the child has contracted an STI or become pregnant. The Children’s Advocacy Center is then able to refer the child’s case to detectives at local law enforcement agencies who use the exam's findings to pursue the perpetrator. If the child needs to appear in court, a volunteer advocate from CASA will be on hand to walk by their side and speak on their behalf.

These situations are often unthinkable. But thanks to partner agencies like CAC, YWCA, CASA, and allies in law enforcement, children can recover from abuse and imagine a bright future for themselves.

FAMILY CRISIS AGENCY PARTNERS

**Arbor Circle**
North County Family Skills and Stability: $109,000
Crisis intervention, counseling, and service referrals for families in or near poverty in northern Kent County.

**Children’s Advocacy Center of Kent County**
Medical Care Program: $35,000
Specialized medical services, examinations, and pregnancy and STI screening for children who have experienced sexual assault

**Court Appointed Special Advocates of Kent County**
CASA Volunteer Advocacy: $31,000
Expert volunteer advocacy and support for abused and neglected children in the courts.

**D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s**
Adoptive Family Support Network: $60,000
Peer-to-peer support groups and resources for adoptive parents to build resilient families.

Family Preservation Services: $90,000
Behavioral and mental health services to decrease and prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, and neglect.

**Legal Aid of Western Michigan**
Legal Services for Family Crisis: $90,000
Free legal counsel for abuse survivors and parents fighting to retain custody of children.

**Migrant Legal Aid**
Migrants Overcoming Violent Environments: $50,000
Outreach and education for women and children experiencing violence and sexual abuse in the migrant worker community.

**Ingenium Coach**
Strong Character Training: $100,000
Online and print curriculum to help youth and young adults overcome personal challenges and stay out of the juvenile justice system.

**YWCA West Central Michigan**
Domestic and Sexual Violence Comprehensive Services: $230,000
Non-residential programs, including a 24-hour crisis hotline, counseling, medical exams, and advocacy, for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking.