Building Resilient, Healthy Kids & Families:
The Intersection of Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

An unflinching force for change, La Casa is thrilled to announce our newest program is launching this fall in partnership with the City and County of San Francisco’s Family and Children’s Services (FCS), formerly known as Child Protective Services. With funding from San Francisco’s Human Services Agency, La Casa’s charge is to champion resilient, healthy kids and families from inside the child welfare system when indicators of domestic violence and child abuse are discovered. The intersection of child abuse and domestic violence is far from new: research demonstrates 60% of abusive adult relationships expose children to harm and up to 40% of kids experience family violence directly.

Across our 45 years of service, La Casa has long recognized that every child in an abusive home is affected by the abuse, even when they are not directly targeted or used as instruments in the perpetration of power-over and control. They hear it from the other room, experience stress in the household, see the aftermath of abuse, and learn to survive in its midst. In fact young children who experience or witness domestic violence often meet the diagnostic criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

While this might be hard to fathom, consider this: from a child’s perspective, parents – and especially mothers – are the center of the universe, providing food, warmth, safety and love. So witnessing her belittled or assaulted creates powerful feelings of fear, helplessness, guilt, shame, and confusion, especially when you also love the one who is doing the harm. Chronic exposure to high stress environments can also physically reorganize the way a brain processes stimuli or information, and research shows a direct correlation between abuse in childhood and learning difficulties, lower IQ scores, and visual-motor deficiencies.

Critically, abuse is not a child’s only defining experience – or a family’s. Children are remarkably resilient, and protective factors like a stable, committed relationship with a supportive adult, access to concrete supports, hopefulness, and problem-solving skills work in concert.
Hope, refuge, and resilience. These past 18-months have tested all of us, bringing new constraints, new fears, and new recognition of vulnerability. For the domestic violence victims we serve and those we strive and stretch to reach, there was nothing ‘new’ about fear, constraint, isolation, and vulnerability. These dynamics are very familiar. The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified the risk and the violence that many people in our community experienced.

When La Casa opened our doors 45 years ago, we made a promise that there would always be a safe place and ready support for survivors of domestic violence in San Francisco. Despite disruptions in access points and strategies, the closure of community partners, and the risks survivors faced calling out for help, La Casa’s mighty team delivered resources to over 13,000 people in the past year. La Casa’s Drop In Center re-opened its doors as early as it was safe – in August 2020 to ensure vulnerable women and children, unable to call or text, had a place to turn.

Our non-stop response is a direct result of both our commitment to mission and our community’s support. We are so grateful.

Because of your support, we are constant – and forward thinking. La Casa is launching a new partnership with Family and Children’s Services right now. It’s a critical opportunity to protect and support vulnerable children and survivors of abuse, to stabilize families and build resilience. We are also thrilled to build upon the success of our Domestic Violence Housing First Program and move 20 more survivors, over the next 24 months, from homeless and insecure housing to self-reliance and firm financial footing.

Amid our focus on resilience, it’s important to call out just how hard experiencing domestic violence is, and the incredible struggle and courage it takes to end or escape abuse.

When you join us at the redHOT* party on October 28th, you’ll hear first-hand stories that drive home the role of community and the lifetime journey of healing. I look forward to seeing you there! Return the enclosed envelope or register online.

One survivor, one child, one family at a time, this community is changing lives.

Sincerely,

Katharine Berg,
Director of Community Partnerships and Philanthropy

CRISIS RESPONSE
6,062 crisis line calls & text messages
We responded to 17% more help seekers – 17 people every day of the week – through our 24-hour hotlines
Messages to our Text Support Line skyrocketed ↑112%

INTERVENTION
2,094 survivors of all ages accessed La Casa’s suite of community-based and residential programming to address safety, emotional, financial, housing and health needs

PREVENTION
5,183 community members learned about seeing and stopping domestic violence through La Casa’s presentations, events and workshops

How Do We Help?
Survivors of domestic violence come to us with needs and priorities as diverse as they are. We meet them in their unique circumstances and give survivors the tools to transform their lives:

- Improving Safety
- Developing Connection
- Building Knowledge about the Dynamics of Domestic Violence
- Strengthening Personal Agency
- Increasing Stability and Self-Sufficiency
Children and adults are remarkably resilient.

While the brain and other biological systems are most adaptable early in life, capabilities that underlie resilience can be strengthened at any age. It’s never too late. Protective factors championed by La Casa’s Resilient Families Program include:

- Concrete resources like safe environments & financial resources
- Secure relationships
- Stress management
- Social connections
- Social and emotional competence

[Child Welfare Information Gateway 2020]

So much more than physical and sexual violence, domestic violence is an escalating pattern of abuse in which one partner controls the other through force, intimidation, or the threat of violence. It includes threats to harm others, isolation, using privilege, jealousy, economic abuse, and using children and systems to exert power. Abusers commonly use systems like Child Protective Services, the legal system, immigration enforcement or CalWORKS to control their partner, demanding compliance or punishing attempts toward independence. It’s a key reason why La Casa seeks out alliances within such systems to advocate for system-wide domestic violence training and survivor-informed and survivor-centered responses.
### $1,000 to $2,499

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| JCF | | In To End It 2020 |

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The Board of Directors would like to thank all of our generous contributors for making La Casas work possible. The following list reflects pledges made and gifts received between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Please excuse any inadvertent errors or omissions. We welcome your comments and corrections. For contributions through a corporate or nonprofit fund or a payroll processor, please note that external processing time may delay our receipt and recognition of funds by several months, but your support is vital and appreciated! Together, we are building pathways to an abuse-free future.
Why: It’s been a year like none other, and through it all, La Casa has been supporting survivors.

What: We’re excited to invite you to join us for an action-packed, virtual hour-long celebration to raise funds to continue our critical mission. The 2021 redHOT* party will bring you inspiration, community, entertainment, and exclusive local travel, experiences and auction packages.

La Casa has been fielding calls for help around the clock—17 people seeking our help every single day. How are domestic violence survivors’ needs changing as a result of public health, economic, and housing conditions? How are we launching new pathways for safety and support? Join us to learn more about the work we have been doing throughout the pandemic.

As California’s first shelter founded as a refuge for people escaping domestic violence, La Casa needs YOU to celebrate 45 years of leading our city to safety. Your support drives our impact, and every dollar contributed will directly support our 24/7 life-saving services. We hope to “see” you on October 28th!

QUESTIONS: Call Katharine Berg at 415-503-0500 x 306 or email us at donations@lacasa.org

When: Thursday, October 28th, 2021, 6-7pm
Where: Your computer, tablet, or smartphone
How: Register at https://tinyurl.com/redhot21 or return the enclosed envelope

“What was the most important thing I did at La Casa? Stay away from my abuser, and feel safe.”
- SURVIVOR IN EMERGENCY SHELTER

“I am becoming a better version of me and who I used to be. I owe my success to La Casa and my own self – for my determination!”
- HOUSING FIRST CLIENT
Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers are the heart and soul of La Casa’s fierce advocacy, and we’re excited to highlight two people who are bringing our mission to life. At La Casa, we know it takes all of us to prevent domestic violence. Thank you to all of you—over 450 individuals this year—giving your compassion, time and skills to break down cycles of violence and create a culture in which healthy, safe relationships are the norm.

HALLIE ROTH
Text Support Line Volunteer

1. What inspired you to want to volunteer at La Casa?
I was inspired to volunteer with La Casa for a few reasons. I had witnessed the mental impact of domestic violence in my own community and recognized just how critical a female support network is for recovery. As someone that moved to the Bay Area as a young adult, it was also important for me to give back to my new community in an impactful way. I then found La Casa and was inspired by the way the organization supported survivors. I have always been passionate about ensuring access to resources for women, and La Casa became the perfect place for me to do that.

2. What’s been meaningful to you about volunteering at La Casa?
The most meaningful part of volunteering is having the privilege to hear someone’s story and hold space for survivors.

The text line is an amazing resource for survivors and folks reaching out on behalf of survivors. Survivors will often reach out to La Casa for help having never spoken to anybody about their situation. Some survivors are more comfortable with the text line because it gives them the ability to share privately or quickly if they are not ready to make a phone call. A text line shift can vary from survivors needing safety planning to needing specific resources or shelter. Sometimes all a survivor needs is someone to acknowledge their experience with a few texts. I often volunteer after business hours, which is a great way to support survivors who cannot find the time to call during the workday.

3. La Casa’s text line serves as an alternative way to reach out for support and resources when calling may not be an option. Will you tell us about a day in the life of a text line volunteer and why you think it is an important resource for survivors?
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4. What would you say to a new volunteer or someone considering volunteering their time to La Casa?
I would give them the nudge to go through La Casa’s Domestic Violence Advocate Training to support survivors directly. Working with La Casa and survivors in the community has been an incredible experience. Dedicating even a few hours of your time during the week is meaningful. I am always here to answer questions from both survivors and prospective volunteers!

“With a community that is so determined, I am always motivated.”
— HALLIE ROTH

MOHABAT BARIKZAI
Community Education & Outreach Volunteer

1. What inspired you to want to volunteer at La Casa?
When I first found out about La Casa, I wasn’t aware that centers like this existed and I was impressed by the different resources and programs supporting survivors of domestic violence. Gender equality is something I am passionate about, in particular empowering women! I was raised in a single-parent household by an immigrant mother who worked tirelessly to provide the best possible life for herself and our family, all the while caring for two young children.

My passion for women’s rights resulted from witnessing the abuse my mother endured in her marriage. During this time, she didn’t have a clear understanding of domestic violence and access to resources available for survivors through organizations like La Casa de las Madres. Domestic abuse is very prevalent in the Afghan community and as a result this takes a huge toll on the well-being of our women and children. I was inspired to volunteer at La Casa through my personal experiences and in hopes of being more informed to know how to respond to different situations when hearing about an abusive person than being afraid to help.

2. What’s been meaningful to you about volunteering at La Casa?
For me, it’s been wonderful to work with others that are so passionate about helping others and working towards a shared goal—ending domestic violence. With a community that is so determined, I am always motivated. A particular moment I felt really encouraged was when a close friend of mine felt comfortable enough to reach out to me and ask me about resources for help around domestic violence. I believe that as more people raise awareness, we can create a culture of healthy relationships.

3. As a recent graduate, how has your volunteer experience helped guide you towards possible career paths?
In the future I plan to pursue a Master of Public Health in Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health. La Casa has helped me put my passion into action by being able to share resources with my own community and empower young women to be familiar with concepts such as the power and control wheel, the cycle of abuse, and especially red flags in relationships. I would love to continue being an advocate for women and see myself working at crisis shelters. While volunteering, I also engaged in discussions with the Afghan community about domestic violence and I found that many of us weren’t familiar with what healthy relationships looked like. I’m inspired to conduct more research on domestic violence in my community, to continue raising awareness about abuse and to be an advocate for safe and healthy relationships for all.

4. What would you say to a new volunteer or someone considering volunteering their time to La Casa?
La Casa provides unconditional support through any projects you take on. As I was still learning about the different languages appropriate to use when discussing domestic violence, I never felt that I would be judged or looked at differently for not knowing. Every moment was a learning experience, and I found myself continuously growing as I asked more questions that were applicable to my own experiences. I would recommend to anyone considering volunteering at La Casa to always ask questions! No question is wrong, and we only learn with continuous curiosity.
La Casa de las Madres

The mission of La Casa de las Madres is to respond to calls for help from domestic violence victims, of all ages, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We give survivors the tools to transform their lives. We seek to prevent future violence by educating the community and by redefining public perceptions about domestic violence.

La Casa de las Madres

La Casa de las Madres ofrece amparo a mujeres que han sido victimas de la violencia doméstica, y a sus hijos e hijas. Nosotros nos esformzamos en ayudar tanto a las mujeres como a los niños a descubrir su fuerza interior, manejar los riesgos que se les presentan y tener más control sobre sus propias vidas. Nuestro objetivo es restaurar la dignidad de nuestras clientes, fomentar su esperanza, evocar su valor y ayudarles a desarrollar su mayor potencial.

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