

It Takes *All of Us*



**HELP IS OUT
THERE FOR:**

YOUTH
page 4

ADULTS
page 5

SENIORS
page 6

One visit to the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center connects victims of domestic violence with the myriad of resources they need to heal and thrive.



How one team studying violence led to a solution: the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center

BY RODNEY OROSCO

The goal of the Sacramento Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT) is clear: Use the details of disturbing cases in the area to create new policies that can protect citizens.

“The team looks at ways we can prevent domestic violence homicides,” says Sacramento County Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney Paul Durenberger.

DVDRT began their work in 1998 and reached a major conclusion early on: The Sacramento community needed help to prevent domestic violence. Durenberger notes the name of the team may seem a bit morbid but the gravity of their work keeps them focused on how they can better serve victims — often times, resulting in very positive and tangible change.

The team found Sacramento’s justice system was hard to navigate, especially for the vulnerable victims of domestic violence. Thus, the people who most needed help felt the most isolated from services they desperately needed.

But there was an answer.

“One recent recommendation our team made to the Board of Supervisors was to create a Family Justice Center,” Durenberger says. “Our research showed that cities and counties with Justice Centers had reduced domestic violence homicides.”

DVDRT advocated to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors that a Family Justice Center be brought to the region. Based on the team’s research, the Board agreed and acted.

Since its founding, the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) has significantly impacted the area — helping thousands of people safely navigate instances of abuse without them escalating into fatal outcomes.

“The team is really about the power of collaboration.”

Paul Durenberger
Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney, Sacramento County



But the team’s work is far from over.

Currently, DVDRT includes members from the Kaiser, My Sister’s House, Sutter Medical Center, UC Davis Medical Center, Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE) and SRFJC, alongside various other county law enforcement agencies. Together, these members continue to pour over cases collected from throughout the county and strategize what can be done to prevent similar cases in the future.

“The team is really about the power of collaboration,” says Durenberger. “We need that different perspective each team member brings.”

One of the team’s most recent findings inspired the SRFJC to offer free safety planning to victims applying for restraining orders at the family courthouse. DVDRT found that one of the most lethal times for victims is when they file a restraining order. Now, instead of being handed a 50-page document and sent on their way, SRFJC attorneys can assist with preparing temporary restraining order petitions, and case managers will help victims develop a safety plan during a sensitive and important time leading to their new life.

Though Durenberger states the team would prefer it didn’t need to exist, as long as it does, it’s going to try to make a difference.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abuse used by one partner in a relationship to gain or maintain power and control over another partner. Domestic violence can be **physical, sexual, emotional** or **psychological**. It can involve actions or threats of actions.

Domestic violence **can happen anywhere** and **to anyone**. It can occur in any type of intimate relationship — between family, friends or lovers of any race, age or gender. Another phrase for it is “intimate partner violence.”

Domestic violence **does not need to be physical to be destructive**. Psychological abuse can be just as devastating to the victim. Psychological abuse is often a secondary result suffered by children in families experiencing abuse.

Often, the aggressor in these relationships feels a high level of ownership over their victims. If the abused tries to end the relationship or protect themselves, **all too often the situation can end in injury or death** because the victim tries to navigate things on their own.

In Sacramento, help is within reach! Keep reading to learn how the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center helps victims become survivors.

Everyone Deserves to Heal

Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center and its partners work together to keep the region safe

BY COREY RODDA

More than 3,800 victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and child and elder abuse have walked through the doors of the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) since its founding in 2016 — and all have received help instrumental to their healing.

Part of a national model designed to inspire collaboration between organizations who help victims, SRFJC brings together nonprofits, law enforcement, the justice system, social workers and public services to save lives in the Sacramento region. Through these interwoven services, victims are able to cut through logistical red tape and instantly receive the help they need during a stressful and disorganized time in their lives.

“What is great about a Family Justice Center is that it allows nonprofits to be in collaboration rather than competition, and ensures that victims are able to access every avenue of help,” says CEO of SRFJC Faith Whitmore.

Each person who walks into SRFJC is connected with a caseworker who assesses the exact areas where they need assistance. This assistance is easily received due to SRFJC’s new facility, which also houses its partners — allowing victims access to multiple resources and services all at one time.

“People don’t come in here with just one issue,” Whitmore says. “They often experience many types of victimization: their children may be traumatized by their abuse, they might have a medical issue. So being in a setting of collaboration allows us to deal with multifaceted crises.”

SRFJC’s new home is strategically located across from the William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse on Power Inn Road. Onsite, SRFJC has offices for the Special Assault Forensic Evaluation Center, which works through Child Protective Services to interview children who have been abused or witnessed abuse. The facility also has space for domestic violence

“People don’t come in here with just one issue. ... So being in a setting of collaboration allows us to deal with multifaceted crises.”

Faith Whitmore
CEO, Sacramento Regional
Family Justice Center

detectives from the Sacramento City Police and Sacramento County Sheriff’s departments, as well as a victim advocate from the District Attorney’s Office. Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE) and My Sister’s House are the newest members to join together under SRFJC’s roof, with space for more community members as well.

Adorned with soothing art, several fountains and comfortable furniture, SRFJC gives victims a safe space while they put together the pieces of their lives. Children have their own space to play, be distracted and just be kids during a time when innocence can be lost.

SRFJC is also home to the team’s four-legged staff member, Buddy. His job is to give visitors strength during an emotional time.

“Buddy is a year-and-a-half labradoodle, paid for by a grant through the Office of Emergency Services,” Whitmore says. “He wanders around the center and greets people. He can often tell who is the most anxious and will spend time with them. He is a calming factor.”

Putting the safety of victims first can have a big impact on the wellness of a community. In Sacramento, there are approximately 40 organizations positioned to keep victims safe through the collaborative model of SRFJC.



Faith Whitmore and her team put victim comfort and safety first and foremost at the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center. That team also includes, Buddy, a specially trained comfort dog.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATION

Family Justice Centers are a proven method to not only help the victims of domestic violence, but to prevent abuse from escalating into fatalities. This impact can be felt in surrounding areas in a variety of ways:

Access

According to national estimates, a victim may have to access as many as 32 different agencies for help, repeating their traumatic story each time. Family Justice Centers bring public and private agencies under one roof to offer wraparound care, getting victims the help they need faster.

Emotional health

Children who are exposed to the trauma of domestic violence can suffer long-term consequences that cause them to act aggressively, struggle with friendships, perform poorly in school and be severely impacted by anxiety and depression. Family Justice Centers assess the emotional well-being of entire families — not just victims — and offer referrals for productive methods of healing, such as counseling and art therapy.

Hope

Domestic and sexual violence victims are more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, social isolation and addiction — making them more prone to suicide than the general population. But an assessment funded by Blue Shield of California Foundation revealed that Family Justice Centers increase the hope and well-being of victims, turning them into survivors. After working with a Family Justice Center, victims feel more satisfied with their lives and experience more positive emotions.

Children who visit the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center receive help from experienced social workers, like Dawn Morris, in a calm and kid-friendly environment.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF



The Road to Healing

Youth-oriented programs help children regain control of their futures

BY COREY RODDA

A teenage girl covered in bruises and wearing only a T-shirt and shorts arrived at the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC). Kayla* was accompanied by a police detective who hoped she could escape human trafficking to reconstruct the life she'd led before she was trafficked across state lines into California.

Thanks to the Center's unique collaborations with public and private organizations, she was able to escape her abuser.

"If the Family Justice Center wasn't here, I don't know what she would have done — she was so vulnerable," SRFJC CEO Faith Whitmore recalls.

The teen was immediately referred to Dr. Ron Chambers' Human Trafficking Clinic at Dignity Health's Mercy Family Health Center at its Methodist Hospital in South Sacramento, where staffers are specially trained to meet the emotional and medical needs of trafficking victims.

After Kayla received medical care, SRFJC arranged for her to stay at a safe shelter in an undisclosed location where she could undergo some much needed rest and healing. When she was ready, Kayla was also connected to the Bridge Network to receive counseling through SRFJC's Mobile Trauma Therapy Team, a team funded by Dignity Health. These steps were crucial as trust and strong therapeutic relationships are vital to ensuring that human trafficking victims don't return to their abusers.

Kayla, like other victims of human trafficking, received help to work through her trauma with art therapy in addition to individual and group counseling. Victims who are assisted

by the Mobile Trauma Therapy Team obtain help at various area nonprofits, including A City of Refuge, Bridge Network, Community Against Sexual Harm (CASH), My Sister's House, Chicks in Crisis and Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE).

"Therapy is expensive, and some of these organizations and the individuals who are trafficked could never afford to hire a therapist," Whitmore says. "Dignity offers a great gift to the community through this grant for the mobile team."

While Kayla was going through therapy, law enforcement arrested her former pimp, who was tried in criminal court. Throughout the process of healing, she rekindled her relationship with her family and returned home to live with them.

Six months later, Kayla returned to Sacramento for the trial. The teen, who had gained healthy weight and recovered from her wounds, was greeted by an SRFJC social worker, who remained by her side during her tormentor's trial.

"A lot of people don't know that you can have a support person in court where an attorney would traditionally sit," says SRFJC social worker Dawn Morris. "It is grounding and helpful for our clients to have one of our staff members be with them, especially when they are [nervous or] frightened by their abuser's presence."

Kayla's abuser was found guilty and incarcerated. His victim returned home a survivor, ready to start life anew.

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

"It is grounding and helpful for our clients to have one of our staff members be with them."

Dawn Morris
Social worker, Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center

HELPING YOUTH

These partners help the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) provide care and healing to youth in need:

- Birth & Beyond Family Resource Centers
- Bridge Network
- Camp HOPE America
- Chicks in Crisis
- City of Refuge
- City Police Departments of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento
- The Child Abuse Prevention Center
- Community Against Sexual Harm (CASH)
- Sacramento County Department of Child Protective Services
- Sacramento County Department of Child Support Services
- Sacramento County District Attorney
- Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
- The Special Assault Forensic Evaluation (SAFE) Center

... and many more!

Contact SRFJC to learn about even more resources and services available to area children and teens.

Protection Comes First

How the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center keeps families safe and away from abuse

BY COREY RODDA

A 12-year-old boy alerted police that his father would kill his mother if they didn't come quickly. Though his parents had been together for 13 years, his father was becoming more abusive as his drinking and drug use spiraled out of control. When law enforcement and Child Protective Services (CPS) arrived, they encouraged his mother, Mia*, to contact SRFJC for further help and resources.

"It was physical abuse as well as years of power and control," says Marine Kalashyan, case manager at Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC). "The [mother] was essentially imprisoned in her own home. She was only allowed to leave to drop off the kids at school and pick them up."

Late in the afternoon before the onset of a three-day weekend, Mia and her children arrived at SRFJC in crisis and with nowhere to go. SRFJC sprang into action.

SRFJC contacted its partners at Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE), which provided safe shelter for Mia and her two children over the long weekend.

Kalashyan herself transported the family to WEAVE, and picked them back up the following Tuesday when courts reopened after the holiday — so Mia could file a restraining order petition. This legal work was easily done at SRFJC, where an onsite attorney provided assistance. While the family waited for their court date, Mia and her two children were able to stay in WEAVE's transitional

shelter program where they were kept safe from harm.

However, safety is more than just a place to stay. SRFJC also created the family a safety plan to keep them safe from further abuse. Kalashyan also educated Mia on the cycle of abuse, which empowered her to speak to family members about her abuse, and prepared her for her court date.

When Mia went to her court hearing, she was not alone — Kalashyan was right there by her side, providing support.

"We are there for extra protection and to help shield them from their perpetrator," Kalashyan said. "Stakes are high, and we often have to remind them to breathe."

Mia won a permanent restraining order and was able to find an apartment through Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency with the help of WEAVE, further stabilizing her freedom.

Currently, Mia is working part-time while her children are in school.

"All is well with them," says Kalashyan, who credits SRFJC's many collaborations with keeping the family safe.

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

"We are there for extra protection."

Marine Kalashyan
Case manager, Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center



Case managers like Marine Kalashyan assess each person who comes into the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center and stay with them for strength and help as long as they need.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

HELPING ADULTS AND FAMILIES

These partners help Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) to provide care and healing to adults and families in need:

- City Police Departments of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento
- Community Against Sexual Harm (CASH)
- ManAlive-Sacramento Inc.
- My Sister's House
- NorCal Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Sacramento County District Attorney
- Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
- WEAVE
- ...and many more!

Contact SRFJC to learn about even more resources and services available to area adults and families.

Giving Victims a Voice

Elderly victims of abuse can turn to Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center for help

BY RODNEY OROSCO

When Mr. Adams* first shuffled into the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC), he was covered in spaghetti sauce — the result of the latest in a long string of violent outbursts by his alcoholic son who had been living with him.

“He was afraid to go home,” explains Carlos Romero, SRFJC case manager. “He was not sure his son was still there. He was so afraid.”

Mr. Adams, an older man, had been referred to SRFJC by Elk Grove Police, as a result of the collaboration SRFJC has developed with law enforcement and social services agencies throughout the Sacramento region. These local agencies know that victims of domestic violence, including elder abuse, will find the appropriate services and resources at SRFJC.

Romero listened to Mr. Adams’s story and put a plan into place. SRFJC attorneys were able to file a temporary restraining order petition that same afternoon because Mr. Adams was afraid for his safety. Mr. Adams was safely transported to a senior safe house run by Volunteers of America, where he received new clothes and was met by a member of Adult Protective Services (APS). The following day, Mr. Adams — accompanied by Romero — received a restraining order against his son in court. Once it was determined his son had left, Mr. Adams was let back into his home with APS by his side. SRFJC also facilitated communication

Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center case managers like Carlos Romero know the first step to helping someone is to listen to their needs.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF



between Mr. Adams and his daughter, who lived out of state and was previously unaware of the abuse her father was suffering. With his daughter’s help, Mr. Adams was able to take his life and home back. Throughout the entire process, he was never alone.

While sharing Mr. Adams’s story, Romero pauses several times. Although he has been a case manager at SRFJC since its inception in 2016, he still finds elder abuse hard to fathom.

“What we see is elderly people often let people come into their homes because the elderly are so lonely and just want company,” he says.

Unfortunately, this opens the door for abusers to take advantage of the elderly, physically or financially.

“The crazy thing,” Romero says, “is it is often the elderly person’s family doing the abusing.”

Each case and person is different, but SRFJC responds to whatever their need may be. SRFJC puts the elderly in touch with the appropriate care provider, providing something SRFJC calls wraparound care. Victims may need counseling services, a safe space to stay, transportation or free legal assistance.

“We sit down and listen to them,” Romero says, noting that sometimes these small acts are the most important of all.

As for Mr. Adams?

“Mr. Adams is doing well. He sent us a Christmas card last year,” he says.

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

**“We sit
down and
listen.”**

Carlos Romero
Case manager, Sacramento
Regional Family Justice
Center

HELPING SENIORS

These partners help Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) provide care and healing to seniors in need:

- City Police Departments of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento
- Legal Services of Northern California
- Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Sacramento County District Attorney
- Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department
- Volunteers of America/Sacramento Senior Safe House

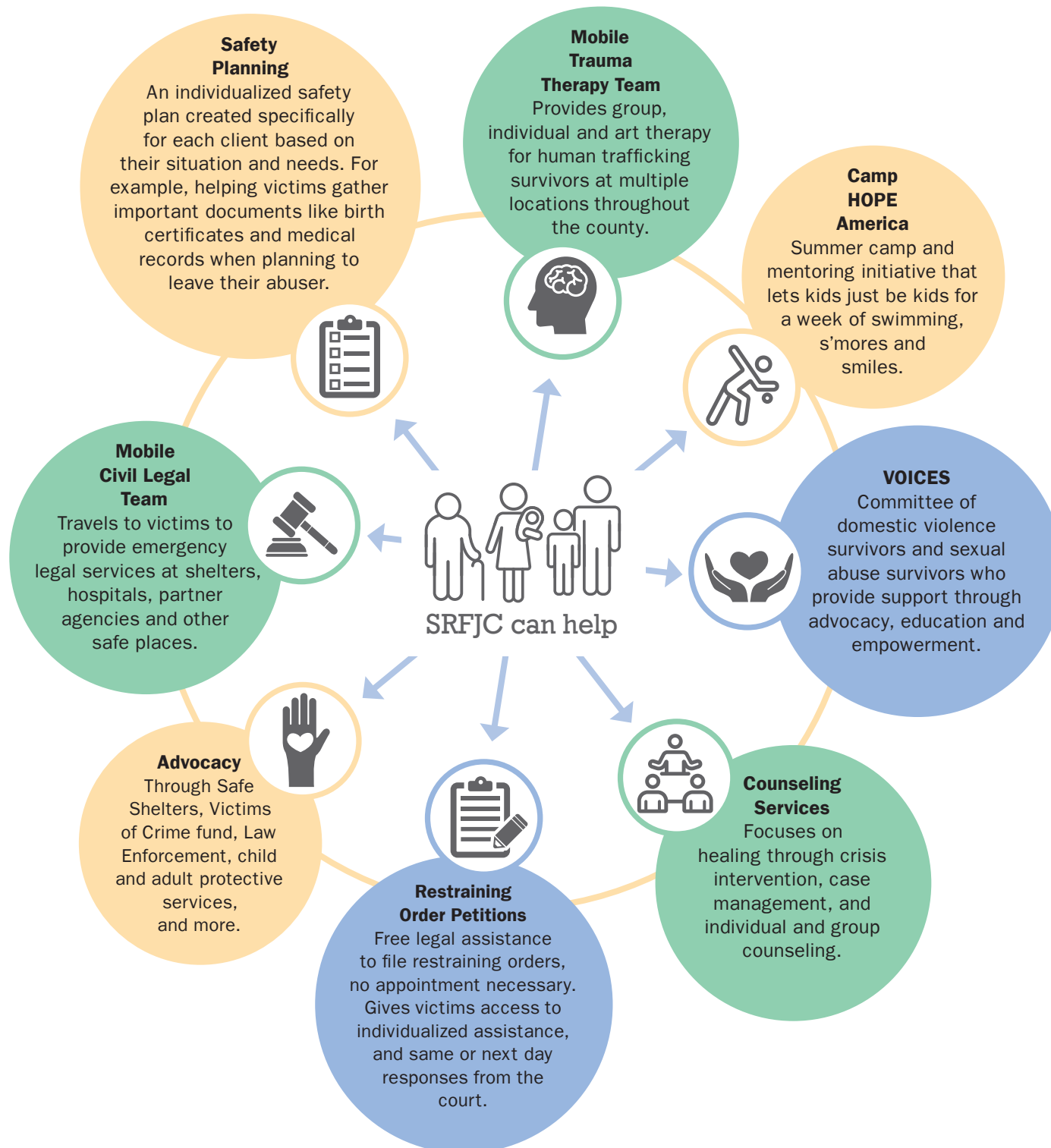
... and many more!

Contact SRFJC to learn about even more resources and services available to area seniors.

The Power of Collaboration

Between Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center and its partners

BY RODNEY OROSCO



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Donating time, money and resources to the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) directly impacts and improves the lives of survivors.

"Volunteers and donors are a huge part of who we are as an organization," says SRFJC Director of Client Services Joyce Bilyeu.

For instance, in addition to its own legal team, other attorneys in the community volunteer their time in SRFJC's legal clinic. SRFJC is in the process of developing a Hope Givers volunteer team to help with fundraisers, provide hospitality services in its Center and participate in Community Advisory Teams.

In addition, volunteers also get to support Buddy.

Buddy is SRFJC's specially trained comfort labradoodle. He found his new home snuggling next to victims and giving them the strength to tell their stories thanks to donations from the community and funding from the Office of Emergency Services.

"Money goes to help pay for transportation for victims and comfort items for our victims, for example," Bilyeu says. "And, money goes to get kids to our Camp HOPE America summer camp."

For instance, this year, 24 kids traveled to Camp HOPE America and had a fantastic time. One child was overheard telling another, "my childhood began when I turned seven, because that's the year I first went to Camp HOPE America." Respite from their chaotic worlds at home would not have been possible without generous donations by SRFJC's supporters.

"Our donors and our volunteers make a difference," says Bilyeu.

To volunteer or become a donor call Joyce Bilyeu at 916-875-4673. Or visit the SRFJC website at www.hopethriveshere.org

Hope Thrives



The Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC) offers a safe, healing environment for victims of domestic violence, child and elder abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking. Through the help of its partners in law enforcement, legal assistance and the community, SRFJC offers a “one-stop” center of comprehensive services for the Sacramento region. Whether at its main office or through one of its mobile services, SRFJC offers clients a place to start the healing process through counseling, protective measures or just someone who can listen.

WHERE TO TURN

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

3701 Power Inn Road, Suite 3100
Sacramento, CA 95826
916-875-HOPE (4673)
www.hopethriveshere.org



Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

- 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline: 916-875-KIDS(5437)
- 24-hour Parent Support Line: 888-281-3000
- Wind Youth Services (Housing): 800-339-7177
- Safely Surrendered Baby 24-Hour Information Line: 877-222-9723

Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Human Trafficking Services

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
800-799-7233 (SAFE)

- Bridge Network
916-244-1406
- CASH
916-856-2900
- Chicks in Crisis:
916-683-5537
- City of Refuge:
916- 970-5164

- My Sister’s House 24-Hour Multilingual Helpline:
916-428-3271

- WEAVE (Support & Information Line):
916-920-2952

Elder Abuse

- Adult Protective Services 24-Hour Hotline:
916-874-9377

Mental Health

Veteran’s Crisis Line:
800-273-8255

- Sacramento Mental Health Crisis 24-hour Line:
916-732-3637

Shelter Services

Volunteers of America 24-Hour Crisis Line:
800-584-3578

- A Community for Peace:
916-728-7210
- My Sister’s House 24-Hour Multilingual Helpline:
916-428-3271
- WEAVE (Support & Information Line):
916-920-2952

Suicide Prevention

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
800-273-8255

- Sacramento Suicide Prevention Crisis Line:
916-368-3111

Law Enforcement

- Citrus Heights Police Department:
916-727-5500
- Elk Grove Police Department:
916-714-5115
- Folsom Police Department:
916-355-7231
- Rancho Cordova Police Department:
916-362-5115
- Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department:
911 or 916-874-5115
- Sacramento City Police:
911 or 916-264-5471
- Sacramento City Police Department(non-emergency):
916-264-5471
- Sacramento Fire Department/ Ambulance:
911 or 916-808-1300

BREAK THE CYCLE

If you suspect that someone you know is being abused, speak up! Expressing your concern or reaching out for help may save their life.

WHERE TO START

- Talk to the person in private. Point out the things you’ve noticed and that worry you.
- Listen without judgment.
- Let the person know you will help in any way you can.
- Believe the victim. Because domestic violence is more about control than anger, often the victim is the only one who sees the dark side of the perpetrator.
- Reassure the person that you’ll keep whatever is said confidential, unless they give you permission to help seek services.
- Help form a safety plan — contact the SRFJC for help with this!
- Never verbally bash the abuser. Focus on behavior not personality.
- Never blame the victim.
- Call 911 if you know violence is happening.
- Contact the SRFJC for assistance and guidance.