



# Metro Office of Family Safety

*Metropolitan Government of Nashville  
& Davidson County*

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

# Comments from clients

This program made me feel for the first time in my life SAFE, LOVED and WANTED.  
She (advocate) did not judge – she just wanted to help. Please tell Mayor Barry that this

Doy las gracias, por su  
excelente trabajo y orientación

I feel confident and safe

I had such a great  
experience  
I should have  
done this sooner

This is a wonderful facility. I was  
extremely nervous and unsure before  
walking through the door. The  
waiting area is clean, inviting and  
comforting. The staff is warm and  
reassuring. Thank you for providing  
the community with a safe place.

I have never  
experienced this  
before in my life. This  
pace relieved me of my  
fears and nervousness.

I feel so much better  
and safer going home

(my advocates) – como ángeles de la guarda

Thank you for all of  
your help. I thought I  
was alone. But I'm not  
and I thank you for that

**This is a helpful program.  
Wish it had been  
available when my sister  
was killed in 2002.**

All I can say is  
thank you so much

I needed this today

Muchas gracias dios los  
bendiga hoy y siempre

I came to support my neighbor.  
This place was amazing! I am  
hopeful that after being here  
she will attend the support  
group and call for counseling so  
much good advice was given to  
her during this wait time

Extraordinario  
servicio muy  
informativo  
todo lo que  
aquí se me  
enseñó

I love what is being done here  
to help with domestic violence

Thank you for making a  
difference in my life

It seems like a weight  
has been lifted off my  
shoulders

Everyone made this  
nightmare situation  
bearable

I think of all the women in my  
family who have been victims.  
Now through you I HAVE A VOICE  
AND WILL NO LONGER BE AFRAID.

The JCAC is a blessing to this city. I am grateful for the establishment and for the staff that  
dedicate their time to women that come here. I am hopeful in general after being here today.

# JEAN CROWE ADVOCACY CENTER

## IN THE PAST YEAR, JCAC assisted 8,586 people:

- ❑ 5,664 Victims (472 per month)
- ❑ 1,723 Supportive Family & Friends (144 per month)
- ❑ 692 Witnesses (58 per month)
- ❑ 617 Children (51 per month)

## IN THE PAST YEAR, JCAC provided meaningful assistance:

- ❑ 2,494 Ex Parte Order of Protection (OP) assistance (208 per month)
- ❑ 3,959 Safety planning assistance (330 per month)
- ❑ 1,325 Danger assessments (110 per month)
- ❑ 2,761 Follow-up call contact (230 per month)
- ❑ 1,997 Needs assessment & resource connection (161 per month)
- ❑ 2,273 Court escorts (189 per month)
- ❑ 2,039 Client meetings with partners at the JCAC (170 per month)
- ❑ 3,863 Volunteer hours (322 per month)

## Top 10 Zip Codes Served by the JCAC:

37207 - 10%	37211 - 7%	37076 - 6%	37206 - 6%	37209 - 5%
37013 - 10%	37115 - 6%	37208 - 6%	37217 - 5%	37214 - 4%

Other Davidson County zip codes - 25%

Non-Davidson County zip codes - 10%

## IN THE PAST YEAR, JCAC services have made a difference:

Client survey results: Changes in how victims felt before and after receiving services at the JCAC:

- ❑ Supported: 18% before – 73% after
- ❑ Knowledgeable: 6% before – 51% after
- ❑ Nervous: 74% before – 8% after
- ❑ Afraid: 36% before – 3% after
- ❑ 92% of victims felt that the JCAC was a safe and comfortable place to receive services

## IN THE PAST YEAR, JCAC worked closely with partners:

- ☐ Daily - Morning Star Sanctuary advocates working at JCAC
- ☐ Daily - MNPD Domestic Violence Division detective presence at the JCAC
- ☐ Daily - District Attorney Office's pre-court victim meetings held at the JCAC
- ☐ Daily - YWCA crisis line receiving JCAC after-hours calls
- ☐ Daily - Victims escorted to JCAC by police and District Attorney Office Investigators
- ☐ Daily - Sheriff's Office guard posted outside the JCAC
- ☐ Weekly - In-court collaboration with Legal Aid Society
- ☐ Weekly - YWCA support group meetings at JCAC
- ☐ Weekly - Martha O'Bryan Center advocate working at JCAC

We are thankful for the support we have received from the Mayor's Office, Metro Council, Metro Departments, and our many nonprofit and community partners.

## Family Justice Center Building Project on Murfreesboro Road

**What is a Family Justice Center?** *"A Family Justice Center is not, at its core, about a building where professionals are co-located. Instead, a Family Justice Center is about what happens as a result of that co-location. It is about transforming the way services are provided to victims. It is about relationships and communication. It is about agencies holding each other accountable and letting survivors hold us accountable. It is about improving outcomes, as defined by the survivors we serve."* (Alliance for Hope International)

**Where are we in the process?** On May 11, 2016 the Office of Family Safety kicked off its Family Justice Center Strategic Planning Session with an expert team of volunteer facilitators from North Highland Worldwide Consulting. Over 75 attendees spent the day brainstorming and discussing trauma informed design, workflow, client-centered services, mission and vision. Six teams emerged from this highly successful day and have continued with their hard work. Many of these team members have toured Family Justice Centers, Child Advocacy Centers, and rape exam clinics across the country such as: Milwaukee, Ft. Worth, Austin, San Diego, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, Huntsville, and Boston. Everyone is looking forward to the actual building taking shape over the course of this next year as well as the many partnerships that will work within the Family Justice Center walls.

\*The building contract was awarded to Messer Construction Company and their team includes Hastings Architecture Associates and Thomas Miller Partners. Construction is projected to begin in November, 2016 and completion by Spring of 2018.

## Firearm Dispossession

### **Excerpts from Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence September 2016 Report, *Keeping Illegal Guns out of Dangerous Hands, America's Deadly Relinquishment Gap*:**

- One of the most glaring gaps in the Nation's gun laws is the lack of an effective firearms relinquishment policy. Few state legislatures have taken any meaningful steps to actually enforce their criminal gun restrictions by ensuring that armed offenders give up their firearms after they are convicted of a serious crime. As a result, states often rely on the honor system to manage the relinquishment process, trusting violent criminals and other prohibited people to voluntarily turn in their weapons.
- Only five states provide any statutory process for disarming people prohibited from having guns (Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania).
- Tennessee has enacted a clear, mandatory and somewhat enforceable relinquishment process for domestic abusers who become prohibited from possessing firearms in both protective order and criminal conviction contexts. However Tennessee has no law requiring relinquishment of firearms by other persons who have been prohibited from possessing them.

### **Excerpts from Nashville's 2013 Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment:**

- Federal and Tennessee law prohibit possession of a firearm while subject to a qualifying Order of Protection or following a domestic violence conviction.
- Pursuant to TCA 36-3-625 judges have the authority to monitor the removal of firearms through mechanisms such as compliance hearings.
- The current system for removing firearms from offenders appears to be the "honor system"
- Davidson County courts do not have an effective compliance mechanism through which the courts can determine 1) if firearms were relinquished; 2) if relinquishment was to a law enforcement entity or an individual (e.g. family member); and 3) if relinquishment was made to a person legally permitted to possess a firearm.

The Office of Family Safety has assembled a Domestic Violence and Firearms Committee to evaluate best practices and ways that Metro can better enforce firearm dispossession laws. In addition, the Office of Family Safety serves as a member on the Tennessee Firearm Dispossession Taskforce and trained all members of the taskforce on dispossession practices around the country.

## Other Office of Family Safety Special Projects

**LAP:** As a top recommendation from Metro's Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment, Metro Nashville Police Department's roll out of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) will begin November 1, 2016. The LAP is an innovative strategy to prevent domestic violence homicides and serious injuries by providing an effective method for law enforcement to identify victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk of being seriously injured or killed by their intimate partner, and immediately connecting those individuals to crisis counseling.

Under the LAP, when an officer arrives at the scene of an intimate partner domestic violence call for service, that officer will ask the victim a battery of questions found on the LAP screening tool. If a victim's responses indicate risk of homicide according to the Screen's scoring mechanism, the officer will privately inform the victim that the officer is concerned for the victim's safety, and that in situations like the victim's, people have been killed. The officer will then seek to connect the victim with a crisis counselor by calling the YWCA hotline. That crisis counselor will then assist in developing a safety plan. The LAP will soon be utilized by other Metro Departments that assist domestic violence victims.

### Quotes on the Lethality Assessment Program

*"Once victims in danger of being killed by an intimate partner engage with domestic violence services, their risk of re-assault diminishes greatly. This is why the LAP is needed – it gives law enforcement officers the knowledge they need to assess whether someone who is a victim of intimate partner violence is in danger of being killed, and connects those victims to services that are protective, services they may not have otherwise known existed or used."*  
(Mayor Megan Barry)

*"I am convinced that the Lethality Assessment Program now being taught to Nashville's police officers will afford better protection to victims of domestic violence and, most importantly, save lives. The program will help officers in the field warn high-risk victims in plain language of the potential dangers they face and how to get immediate help."*  
(Chief Steve Anderson)

This project is the result of coordinated work between Metro's Office of Family Safety, Metro Nashville Police Department, the YWCA of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, and the Office of Violence Against Women.  
(Arrest grant)

## **Civil Legal Advocacy (CLA) Program**

The Civil Legal Advocacy Program (CLA) was designed to increase the number of attorneys representing high risk domestic violence victims/petitioners at the Order of Protection hearing. Funded through an OVW Arrest grant and sub-contracted to Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland's, attorneys from Waller, Lansden, Dortch & Davis are providing pro-bono Order of Protection hearing assistance to domestic violence victims in court.

### **CLA Program Outcomes**

As a result of this program, there has been an 18 % increase in petitioners represented at the Order of Protection hearing. 75% of these victims report feeling an increase in their safety, knowledge of resources, satisfaction, understanding of safety planning instructions, and feelings of calm, safety and protection. 60% report feeling an increase in knowledge about the criminal justice system and feelings of empowerment. Only 11% of these high risk victims reported feeling confused and nobody reported feeling helpless, alone, anxious, vulnerable/afraid after being represented by their volunteer attorney.

Waller, Lansden, Dortch & Davis was awarded the Outstanding Business Award by the Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence for their work and participation in the CLA Program.

## **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Training**

As a top recommendation from Metro's Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment, the Office of Family Safety has been training Metro employees on domestic violence and sexual assault. The first training under this program was a Strangulation Outreach Symposium (SOS), accomplished in partnership with the District Attorney's Office and the Domestic Violence Division of the Metro Police Department. With strangulation being one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence and sexual assault, it was an important topic for all 136 attendees, that included police, prosecutors, advocates and nonprofit partners. This SOS training was recorded by the Metro Nashville Network and is available upon request. The trainer was Kelsey McKay, a national expert on strangulation investigation and prosecution. Other upcoming domestic violence and sexual assault trainings have been scheduled with the District Attorney's Office, Night Court Commissioners and the Metro Public Health Department.





## OFFICE OF FAMILY SAFETY

Diane Lance – Department Head

Whitney Blanton – JCAC Director

Becky Bullard – Lethality Assessment Program Manager

Anjenetta Cook – Advocate

Alysse Gregory – Advocate

Debora Lambert – Advocate

Kathryn Ledbetter – Lead Advocate

Bijal Mehta – Volunteer/Situations Manager

Ashlee Metilor – Advocate

Yvette Robinson – Office Support Specialist

Andrew Sullivan – Finance Officer

LaToya Townsend – Training Manager

Rhonda Yaeger – Senior Advocate

### **Volunteers**

Emily Askew

Maheen Hameed

Kathy Hurley

Laura Little

Joseph Mella

### **Local Donors**

Costco

Whole Foods

Produce Place

Nashville Food Project