

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Safety. Healing. Hope.

# LETTER FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with both gratitude and determination. At DVCC our touchstone of providing safety, healing, and hope to survivors of domestic violence has never been more crucial—or more challenging—than it has been this past year.

Amidst global uncertainties and local challenges, our dedicated team at DVCC has continued to stand strong in our commitment to serve those impacted by domestic violence. We have adapted our services, expanded our outreach efforts, and bolstered our advocacy to meet the evolving needs of survivors in our community.

Throughout the year, we have achieved significant milestones and made a tangible impact in the lives of many:

- **Safety:** We have provided safe shelter to individuals and families fleeing abusive situations, offering them a secure environment where they can rebuild their lives free from fear.
- **Healing:** Through our comprehensive counseling and support programs, we have empowered survivors to heal from trauma, regain their confidence, and envision a future filled with hope.
- **Hope:** By raising awareness and engaging with our community, we have inspired hope and sparked conversations about the importance of preventing domestic violence and supporting survivors.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, community partners, and dedicated staff. Your generosity and commitment have been the cornerstone of our success, enabling us to make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

Looking ahead, we recognize that our work is far from over. As we navigate the road ahead, we remain steadfast in our dedication to advocating for survivors, challenging societal norms that perpetuate violence, and creating a community where everyone feels safe and respected.

Together, we can continue to build a future where domestic violence is no longer tolerated, where survivors are supported, and where every individual can live free from fear. With your continued support, we can achieve this vision.

Thank you once again for standing with us in the fight against domestic violence. Your compassion and commitment give hope to survivors and inspire change in our community.

*Suzanne Adam*

**SUZANNE ADAM**

Chief Executive Officer





## Our Mission

DVCC's mission is to prevent and eliminate domestic violence by educating our communities and supporting individuals in building safer lives.

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center (DVCC)** is here to support individuals on their journey to safety. DVCC advocates for individuals who are experiencing abuse in personal relationships. Our multiple services and professional staff help those experiencing any level of domestic violence and assist them in building a safer environment for the well-being of themselves and their families. All victim services are free and confidential. Services offered are multicultural/multilingual and inclusive of individuals of all identities.

# PILLARS OF SERVICE



## Advocacy

- 24/7 Hotline
- Crisis Intervention
- Lethality Assessment Program
- Safe Houses (Stamford and Norwalk)
- Individual and Group Counseling for Adults & Children
- Legal Advocacy
- Housing & Financial Advocacy
- Legislative and Systems Advocacy

## Education

- Peace Works Youth Prevention Education Programs
- Trainings for Professionals
- Adult Education

## Community Awareness

- Community Task Forces
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
- Media Outreach
- Corporate Partnerships
- Health Fairs
- Community Panel Discussions
- Outreach to Faith-Based Organizations



# OUR IMPACT

VICTIMS SERVED

3,254

VICTIMS RECEIVED  
HOUSING & FINANCIAL ADVOCACY

255

BED NIGHTS PROVIDED IN SAFE HOUSES &  
HOTELS

13,829

TRAINING & EDUCATION PROGRAMS

551

VICTIMS RECEIVED  
CIVIL & CRIMINAL ADVOCACY

2,613

ADULTS RECEIVED TRAINING &  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

2,061

VICTIMS RECEIVED  
YOUTH & FAMILY COUNSELING

117

YOUTH REACHED  
THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMS

11,336

FY 2023

# ADVOCACY

## Safe Housing

- DVCC provided shelter for **173** individuals, **81** of whom were children
- **50** days was the average length of stay at the safe houses
- **90%** of clients reported feeling safe from their abuser while residing in DVCC's safe houses
- **100%** of clients report that their basic needs of food, toiletries, and diapers were met while in DVCC safe housing



Lily is a hardworking, selfless immigrant who left her homeland as well as her beloved mother and siblings behind, seeking of a better quality of life in the United States. However, her life took a dark turn when she fell in love and married an American man who isolated her and took advantage of her situation as a new immigrant with few resources or support systems. He subjected her to emotional, verbal, financial, and physical abuse.

In the spring of 2023, Lily learned about DVCC from a friend and called the hotline for help. Recognizing the urgency of her situation, DVCC provided her with immediate support, offering the safe house as a secure refuge.

Lily was met with a warm and caring environment. Safe house staff addressed her immediate needs, safety planned with her and helped her set personal goals for her future. DVCC provided Lily with food donations and assisted her with costs for public transportation so she could continue getting to work. At first, Lily was very hesitant to take any of the food or bus tokens offered to her. She did not understand these resources were available for her and it was “okay” to utilize them. Safe house staff members encouraged her and helped her feel comfortable with accepting this help.

Lily was determined to leave her abuser and build a new life on her own. The safe house provided her with a lifeline – a place to stay, free from the abuse, while she worked to build up her savings with a goal of moving to her own apartment. One challenge Lily identified while talking with a safe house staff member was that she was sending a large part of her meager earnings back to her native country to help pay her mother's medical bills and support her two siblings. DVCC assisted Lily in applying for and receiving one-time cash assistance from DSS. This provided her much-needed relief during this challenging transition. Additionally, DVCC's Housing & Financial Sustainability department worked with Lily on budgeting, savings, and connecting her with resources including working on modules from the Allstate Foundation's Moving Ahead curriculum.

Lily finds support from safe house staff and has built a strong camaraderie with the other residents in the safe house. When not working at her job she often helped other residents by watching their children. The safe house staff provided Lily with emotional support, and has helped her to overcome some of the shame and hesitation she felt about accepting help and donations. This hardworking, brave survivor is making the most of the resources available to her at DVCC and continues to make progress in achieving her goals.

# ADVOCACY

## Housing & Financial Advocacy

**94%** of clients enrolled in housing assistance programs gain understanding of housing law and their rights as domestic violence victims.

**80%** of clients gained access to affordable housing resources or resources to maintain existing housing.

In Fiscal Year 2023, DVCC was selected by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence to receive a grant from the Allstate Foundation to support our housing and financial advocacy work with victims. This grant has been a critical resource for our clients recovering from financial abuse, as it allows DVCC to utilize a financial education curriculum specifically designed for survivors and provides flexible funding. DVCC was able to establish an MOU with Mutual Securities Credit Union (MSCU) where clients give MSCU permission to accept funds from DVCC on their behalf to participate in a Match Savings Program and a Secured Credit Card Program, allowing them to repair and build credit and savings plans.

The following stories illustrate how the DVCC's Housing & Financial Advocacy program helps victims of financial abuse recover and build financial stability.



Marcia, a victim of financial abuse with a damaged credit score, was struggling to start her own small business. She completed the first three modules of the curriculum. She opened a match savings account and obtained a secure credit card through MSCU. She also opened a business savings account. Marcia was approved for an NNEDV micro loan. She needed more design skills in order to grow her business. Allstate provided funding for her to complete a degree program at Norwalk Community College in design which will help her grow her business.



Tanya, a single mom with two children, was severely physically abused and suffered financial abuse. Her abuser was sentenced to prison and she is the sole provider for the children. She completed three modules of the curriculum, opened a match savings account and obtained a secure credit card through MSCU. She was approved for an NNEDV micro loan and has been able to raise her credit score by more than 100 points! She needed additional childcare to continue working through the summer. Allstate provided her with funding to pay for an aftercare program for her children enabling her to continue to work.

# ADVOCACY

## Counseling

90% of adult group counseling clients reported a decreased sense of isolation and loneliness

“

Before DVCC I felt lost and hopeless. Thanks to DVCC, I now know that isn't my fault and that me and my kids deserve be happy and safe.

”

**117** clients served through our Youth & Family Counseling Program, including **55** parents and **62** children

**90% of child clients** were able to identify one aspect of their safety plan

**90% of child clients** able to identify healthy emotion regulation skills when feeling "big emotions"

**80% of parents** reported that they have seen positive changes in their child's coping skills since they started counseling



Jonah is a five-year-old boy who has endured significant trauma as a result of witnessing years of physical violence in his home. For the majority of his life, he lived with his mother and her abusive boyfriend. The severity of the abuse escalated when the boyfriend attempted to burn down their home with their beloved family cats inside. As a result of these traumatic experiences, Jonah began exhibiting violent behavior in school, displaying violent, aggressive behavior toward his peers. Jonah's mother suffered a traumatic brain injury at the hands of the abuser and faces cognitive impairment that limits her ability to work. She is currently homeless

To address Jonah's emotional well-being and behavioral issues, DVCC's youth and family counselor met with him weekly since January 2023. The counselor focused on helping Jonah identify his emotions and regulate his moods. In order to provide him with a structured and supportive environment during the summer, the advocate secured funding for Jonah to attend a day camp program. This program offers transportation and meals and enables Jonah to continue working on his social and emotional skills. Recognizing the need for long-term therapy, the advocate referred Jonah to a local behavioral health agency for children. This referral ensured that Jonah received more intensive and ongoing therapeutic support tailored to his unique needs. The counselor also referred his mother to our Housing and Financial Sustainability program to assist her in finding affordable housing for herself and Jonah.

The interventions and support have had a significant impact on his well-being and resilience. Jonah has made progress in recognizing and managing his emotions. The day camp program is providing a safe and structured environment for him to continue developing his social and emotional skills.

Jonah's case underscores the importance of addressing the emotional well-being of children who have been exposed to domestic violence and providing them with comprehensive support. DVCC's youth and family counseling program is helping break the cycle of violence and contributing to the healing and resilience of children like Jonah.

## 2023 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

PUBLIC ACT 23-106, AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTIONS AGAINST AND RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Domestic Violence GPS Monitoring Statewide Expansion:**

expands GPS monitoring of certain domestic violence offenders to all courts by 10.1.25

**Alimony Prohibition:** prohibits award of alimony for domestic violence offenders convicted of certain crimes

**Study of Restraining Order Representation Grant Program:**

requires study of possible statewide expansion of grant program for restraining order representation

PUBLIC ACT 23-136, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DUTIES OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE AND ENHANCEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Establishes the Domestic Violence Criminal Justice Response and Enhancement Advisory Council:** amends, expands, and renames existing Family Violence Model Policy Council and outlines duties

**Alimony Prohibition:** prohibits award of alimony for domestic violence offenders convicted of certain crimes

## 2023 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

PUBLIC ACT 23-204, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE AND OTHER ITEMS IMPLEMENTING THE STATE BUDGET

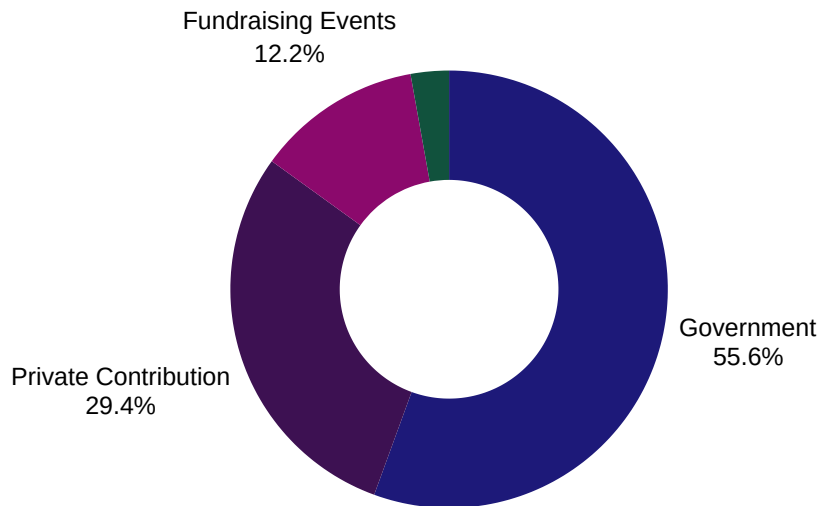
**State Funding Allocations** - relevant budget allocations for Fiscal Years 2024 (7.1.23 - 6.30.24) and 2025 (7.1.24 - 6.30.25) include:

- **Maintains \$7,459,941 in state funding** through the Department of Social Services for domestic violence shelters, services, and child & family advocates. (Section 1)
- **\$13,175,000 in FY24 and \$20,000,000 in FY25 in one-time American Rescue Plan Act funding** through the Judicial Department to enhance funding for victim service providers. [Note: this funding is intended to cover losses in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) for various victim services funded through the Judicial Department; approximately \$3.8 million in both years will be used for domestic violence services.] (Section 48)
- **Approximately 2.5% COLA** for nonprofit providers, including those providing services through the Department of Social Services. (Sections 1)

# FINANCIALS

## Income

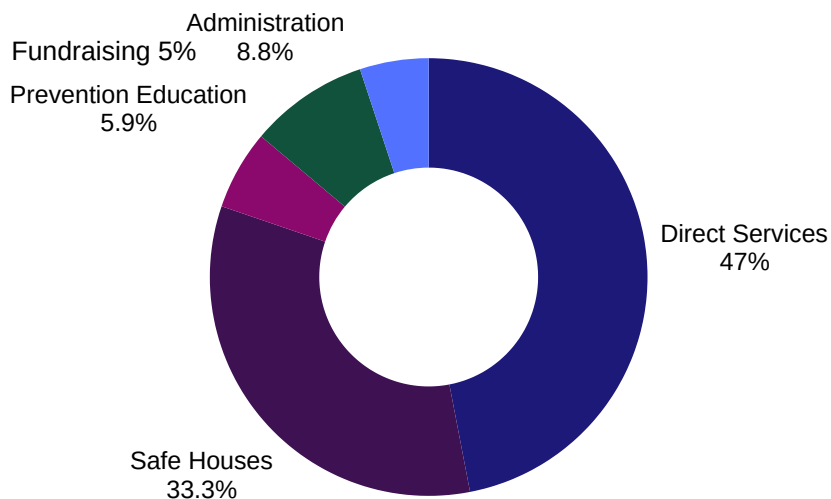
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**Government:** \$2,003,032  
**Private Contribution:** \$1,059,573  
**Fundraising Events:** \$440,405  
**Other Income:** \$101,892  
**Total Income: \$3,604,902**

## Expenses

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**Direct Services:** \$1,565,812  
**Safe Houses:** \$1,109,115  
**Prevention Education:** \$195,727  
**Administration:** \$293,592  
**Fundraising:** \$169,365  
**Total Expenses: \$3,333,611**

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# DONORS

We thank you for the financial contributions that enable DVCC to continue its important work. Every effort has been made to list names accurately. Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions.

## **\$25,000+**

Dede and Jim Bartlett  
New Canaan Community Foundation  
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## **\$20,000+**

Anne S. Richardson Fund  
Michael and Betsy Greene  
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## **\$10,000+**

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## **\$5,000+**

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Craig Schiavone  
Sahul Sharma  
Elizabeth Sorstein  
Amanda Staffier  
Victorija Sugurova  
Audie Szymanski  
Tye Thedford  
Shriya Tiwari  
Joey Tolentino  
Michael Walker

Kaylee Wong  
Leonora Yokubinas

## Gift In-Kind

Art Muse  
Beauty Quest Group  
Bella Vista Resort  
Ben Larrabee Photography  
Bespoke Veterinary Service  
Nicole Billowitz  
Bling's The Thing  
Brad & Vandy Reh Fine Jewelry  
Margaret Cellar  
Champagne Taste  
Elizabeth Chatel  
Check Body-Mind  
William and Doreen Conley  
Craft Kitchen & Bar  
Darien Sport Shop INC.  
Diageo North America  
Dooney & Bourke  
Dave and Rebecca Downey  
Eleven 11  
Elm Street Books  
Elm Street Restaurant  
Empowered Aerial Fitness  
Filling In The Blanks  
Fahey Fine  
First Congregational Church  
on the Green  
The Flow Fine Art  
Gap/Athleta  
Get Joy  
Kendall Genzburg  
Alyssa Goralski  
Greek Ladies Philoptochos Society,  
Church of the Annunciation  
Greenwich Water Club  
Gurneys Montauk Resort  
Vasso Gyftopoulos  
Marcia Hamelin and Dennis Tracey  
Hayvn  
Leslie Heinen  
John and Christina Hodson  
Shira Honigstein  
HRB Brands  
Elizabeth Huffine  
Hyatt Regency Greenwich

Courtney Ingarra  
Mr. and Mrs. Leon Joseph  
Keller Williams Realty  
Amber Kemp  
Scott Kerner  
Kind Fine Jewelry  
Kosta Jewelers  
Claudia Kraut  
Anita and Lip Lai  
Susan Law  
Ms. Jennifer Leahy  
Letizia, Ambrose & Falls, P.C.  
Lynn Mercein Fine Jewlery  
Lauren Marcello Renza  
Natalie Martin  
Mrs. Trish McQuillen  
Me Time Skin Care  
Jessica Melman  
Mia Wagner Salon  
Patricia M. Miller  
Deb and Vincent Morelli  
Sarah and Bryan Murphy  
Kelly M. Overbeck  
Wendy Herrick and David Owens  
The Pajama Company  
Pajama Program HQ  
Palmer's Market  
Chelsea Piers  
Private Portraits  
Stacy Reilly  
Ann Rice  
Ring's End  
RISE Brewing Co  
R.L. Albert & Sons, Inc  
Rowayton Seafood  
Victoria Ryan  
Kristen Scherb  
Mr. Gabriel Scimeme  
Trudy Selib  
Janill and Sahul Sharma  
Ellie Shaver  
Simply Earth  
Stamford Police Department  
Amy Tisler and Jason Stipanov  
Unilever  
Lisa and Jake Watkins  
Westport Domestic Violence Task  
Force  
XPO Logistics, Inc  
Deborah Ziskin

# DVCC LEADERSHIP 2022-2023

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**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS CENTER  
SINCE 1980**



**Stamford Office**  
**1111 Summer Street, Suite 203**  
**Stamford, CT 06905**

**Norwalk Office**  
**16 River Street, 1st Floor**  
**Norwalk, CT 06850**

**DVCC Hotline: 203-588-9097**  
**CT Safe Connect: 888-774-2900 (call/text)**  
**National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233**

**[www.DVCCCT.org](http://www.DVCCCT.org)**