



Domestic Violence Prevention Advances

St. Agnes of Bohemia school in Chicago's Little Village is ACDVO's first school to complete all three years of the curriculum on healthy relationships, Dating Matters (DM). Todd Williamson laid the groundwork three years ago when he enthusiastically taught the course to his 6th graders. Those students completed their three years with the curriculum when they finished 8th grade this past June. The curriculum is now part of the school's ongoing teaching. Principal Claire Zaffaroni and Jen Rogers, the DM teacher who replaced Todd, were both very pleased with the curriculum because not only did it change the students' understanding of abuse in relationships, but it changed their behavior. As Ms. Rogers reported, "The students were excited about participating in the curriculum, especially when they heard it was not a talk about sex education but a chance to discuss their relationships. You could tell they were enthusiastic because there were no moans and groans but an interest in getting right into reading and discussing the material."



Ms. Rogers noted, "Some students came out of their shells. What seemed to work best was the small groups students formed after reading the lesson in their workbooks. There, they had the freedom to discuss and raise questions." Ms. Rogers also noted that 6th graders started using the vocabulary used in the curriculum. The students especially liked participating in role plays. In the last class, they used their own creativity to develop a project; some prepared skits, designed posters and one wrote a comic series. When the 5th graders heard about what 6th graders were learning, they expressed excitement for their opportunity next year. DM has become part of the curriculum of St. Agnes.

DM was developed after eight years of research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is validated, meaning it changes students' thinking and behavior. Ms. Rogers found the curriculum well planned and presented; she always had material to teach the class and answer questions and was grateful to ACDVO for its training. This fall, ACDVO is implementing the curriculum in eight Catholic and six public schools in Chicago. For more information, contact John Monaco at jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com.

The **8th Annual Domestic Violence Survivors' Mass** will be September 30 at 5:15pm CST at Holy Name Cathedral. Free parking is available in the garage across the street; the Mass will also be streamed at www.holynamecathedral.org. We encourage everyone to attend in one form and invite friends and family. We urge parish ministries to inform their parishes and organize their committee. Let us pray for victims, their children, and those who cause harm.





October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a nationwide push for advocates and parishes to raise awareness in their communities. We encourage all parishes to organize activities: invite a speaker, show a movie and then discussion, hold a prayer service, decorate the Church in purple, have prayers of the faithful for victims and their children, write an article for the parish bulletin, have a testimony of a survivor, etc. For more ideas, visit us online at bit.ly/DVAMInfo. Follow along on ACDVO's social media channels for 2023's theme, call to action days, ways to get involved, and events around the diocese.



Recent Increase in Domestic Violence

The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network) published its annual report assessing documented instances of gender-based violence in Illinois. The report gathers experiences from survivors and gender-based violence service providers to depict both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the types of challenges and safety nets survivors encounter through their experiences.



The Network
ADVOCATING AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A snapshot of Chicago Police Department (CPD) data shows domestic violence (DV) related homicides increased in the last three years. This increase in lethality disproportionately affects communities of color. Contacts to CPD related to DV continue a downward trend, reflecting a 12% decrease in 2022 compared to 2020, even as contacts and referrals to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline (IDVH) increase.

Calls to the ILDV increased 15% from 2021 and 50% from 2019. Contacts continue to grow from outside of Chicago and Cook County demonstrating an increasing awareness of the Hotline across the state. These two statistics, decreasing and increasing, suggest that non-police response systems are needed to intervene for survivors who do not feel police are the right agency to meet their needs.

Survivor needs are centered around housing and financial independence. Shelter requests composed 34% of all calls to the Hotline, the highest need for three years in a row. Contacts requesting financial assistance increased by 475% in 2022 over 2021, likely due to several factors, including the reduction of COVID-19 related financial support systems like extended unemployment benefits. The constant need for mental health services is also reflected in the 74% increase in calls requesting group counseling services, underscoring both the limited capacity of individual counseling but also the desire for mental health services.



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Study: Hospitals Need to Respond Better

Using new data from a large urban trauma center in Chicago, a substantial under-reporting of domestic violence (DV) at the time of receiving medical care has been documented. The analysis studies patients at the University of Chicago Medical Center from 2008 through 2018 with information on crime victimization from the Chicago Police Department. The study focused on adult ER patients who had received an x-ray.



The data reveals a failure to support DV survivors: 74 women of every 10,000 adults receiving an X-ray go on to report a DV victimization to local law enforcement within a few days of the ER visit. But only 8 women of 10,000 adults disclosed DV to medical professionals.

These findings indicate many survivors report to law enforcement which is not well-equipped to handle complex medical and social needs of DV survivors. Meanwhile better equipped institutions—such as medical providers and related social service agencies— are unaware of these opportunities to help. Furthermore, almost half of DV survivors do not report the abuse to law enforcement. The vast majority of DV survivors are unknown to the social service agencies who might help.

Southside Parishes Meet

The joint ministry on domestic violence among the committees at the parishes of Sacred Heart, Incarnation and St. Alexander organized a gathering for DV committees from other parishes on Chicago's south side on July 22. Thirty-one people



participated from 15 parishes. Participants were energized to return to their parishes and continue their ministries.



Presentations included an update on the work of ACDVO by Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P.; reports on the public policy work of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence and The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence. Also included was a report on the expanding work of Catholic Charities. Three service providers, all of which are connected to one or more of the parishes, presented their materials for participants to take back to their parishes. Present were Pillars, Crisis Center of South Suburbia, and Anew. St. Damian and St. Catherine of Alexandria parishes joined for the first time. For more info, contact Diane O'Brien, quiltsnow@icloud.com.

Resource Review: *From Where Shall Come Our Help?*

A wonderful book in 2023, *From Where Shall Come Our Help?*, by Henry Onwusoro Ogbuji, a diocesan priest in Nigeria, is a shoutout for the Catholic Church to respond to the scourge of domestic violence in Africa.

The author saw pervasive domestic violence in his 12 years of pastoral ministry and decided to speak out against the complicity of Church and civil authorities in maintaining a culture and structures that violate the dignity of women. "In Nigeria, the state and church seem to serve the culture of men's subjugation of women."

Fr. Ogbuji presents a primer for Church and civil authorities to help them understand the nature, prevalence and durability of domestic violence, as well as steps on a path toward gender equality and justice. His scholarly approach includes numerous sources. He particularly references Mercy Oduyoye's book, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*. May Church authorities in Africa, hear and heed his lament.



ACDVO Seeks Associate Director

ACDVO seeks a person to serve as its full-time Associate Director. ACDVO's mission is to raise awareness of intimate partner violence, connect victims to services and promote prevention. The associate director must be collaborative, energetic, flexible and possess excellent management, fundraising and communication skills. The person selected should also enjoy working in the community. Outreach to parishes and schools is a principal responsibility. For more information about ACDVO and to see the full job description, consult ACDVO's website: www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org. Applicants should send their resume, letters of reference and questions to Charles W. Dahm, O.P., Executive Director, at cdahm13@gmail.com.

Initiate or Renew Preaching on Domestic Violence

ACDVO has preached on domestic violence at all weekend Masses at 178 parishes. After the preaching, ACDVO met with parishioners interested in working in their parish on raising awareness about domestic violence, connecting victims to professional services and promoting prevention, particularly among youth. Approximately 100 parish ministry groups were formed.



Unfortunately, many parish ministry committees declined or ceased functioning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some ministers left their parishes, and no one replaced them. ACDVO is interested in resurrecting or rejuvenating these committees and wants to return to parishes to preach on domestic violence once again and to invite new volunteers to join the parish ministry. Many parishes have not had anyone preach on domestic violence since Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P. or Deacon Peery Duderstadt were there. Please contact us if your parish is willing to have ACDVO return to preach on domestic violence at 312-371-7752 or cdahm13@gmail.com.

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Thank You for Your Generous Support

The Archdiocese of Chicago does not fund ACDVO. We thank you for your donations and urge you to consider enhancing your support. There are many ways to offer support: mailing checks, donating on our website, transferring stock, including ACDVO in wills and living trust, donating from a rollover IRA. Securing ACDVO's future is critical for upcoming generations.

For a complete list of **Ways to Give** please visit ACDVO's website and select the **Support Us** tab or contact Naomi Gutierrez at 773.895.6674 or ngutierrez.acdvo@gmail.com for additional information or forms. With all giving opportunities, it is important to direct your gift to the **Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach**. Send a check or credit card donation for ACDVO to Fr. Charles W. Dahm, O.P., 1914 S. Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL 60608. May God continue to bless you.

