

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTREACH — ARCHDIOCESE of CHICAGO — AWARENESS - SERVICES - PREVENTION



Good News About the Fight to End Domestic Violence

Winter 2023

SAVE THE DATE: ACDVO Annual Benefit Gala



The ACDVO Annual Benefit Gala returns to Crystal Sky Banquets, 7941 W. 47th Street, McCook, Illinois, for brunch and Father Chuck Dahm's 86th birthday celebration on Sunday, March 19, 2023 at 10:00am. Tickets are \$70/person and available online at bit.ly/ACDVOGala2023 or with your reservation form and check mailed to ACDVO, 1914 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60608. Mark your calendar and invite your friends for a wonderful morning of cocktails, brunch, an informative presentation, guest speaker, and our traditional "Happy Birthday" song to Father Chuck.

Victims' Services in Metro Chicago

The Chicago metropolitan area is fortunate to have at least 35 domestic violence service providers. These agencies, scattered over city and suburbs, provide counseling for victims, and most include services for victims' children. Some have shelters, and some offer counseling for those who cause harm. Most of these agencies are members of a coalition headed by The Network: Advocating against Domestic Violence (312) 527-0730.

The Network staffs the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline (877-863-6338), which operates 24/7 in many languages. It publishes an online monthly newsletter and provides various trainings for service providers and the public. Its public policy committee works on legislation to reduce domestic violence and assist victims. For more information, visit www.the-network.org. Download a Directory of DV Resources on the ACDVO website at www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org under "Service Agencies."



The Network
ADVOCATING AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



ACDVO Ministers Reflect on Experiences

ACDVO parish ministries have been active even during Covid-19. Asked to share reflections on their experiences, many wrote about the challenges and successes in raising awareness, connecting victims to services and promoting prevention in their parishes.

Has the domestic violence ministry been important for your parish?



Sally Wills

On the North Shore, people feel domestic violence doesn't occur because of economic opportunities, yet we know domestic violence occurs everywhere. We dispel myths and help offer resources for support. *Elizabeth Swider, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Glenview*

Most in our communities are ignorant of the profound prevalence of domestic abuse. Many turn their backs, thinking it's not real, certainly not where they live. By raising awareness, we might touch a life in silent need. Our bulletin states: "Domestic violence is closer than you think." *Sally Wills, St. Patrick, Lake Forest*



Diane O'Brien

We have been surprised by the resistance and denial we have faced. Domestic violence awareness is a "hard sell." *St. James, Arlington Heights*

One of most gratifying moments for me is being able to assist an individual. I'm comfortable listening, asking the right questions, giving information, even my contact info- and encouraging them to seek help. I'm prepared to meet them anywhere. *Diane O'Brien Sacred Heart, Palos Heights*

Many relayed how much they learned serving in the ministry.

Living in Chicago has made me aware of the inner struggles of women, mainly, victims of domestic abuse. Growing up, I never heard the phrase since in the Philippines, there was no name for it. I thought yelling and hitting in the home was normal. Martyrdom has been the rule for many married Catholics. This ministry is truly rewarding. I carry the voice of those who cannot cry for help in their silent agony. *San Padre Pio Parish, Chicago*



San Padre Pio Ministry

There is unresolved pain out there. When I preach on domestic violence, almost every woman thanks me for speaking truth to justice and asks why the Church took so long to address the issue and help victims. *Deacon Peery Duderstadt, St. Norbert, Northbrook*

All issues of justice have violence prevention as a common theme. Whether by physical aggression, omission of emotional, spiritual or monetary support or willful neglect. Consequences to victims are devastating. *Queen of All Saints, Chicago*



Deacon Peery Duderstadt

We are making a difference. People reach out to us, and we connect them to professionals for help. It's also a healing experience for those of us affected in the past. *St. Hubert, Hoffman Estates*



ACDVO Making a Difference

Many parishes have been very creative in their ministry.



Lynn Fonsino, Pat Kellen, Terri McDonnell from St. James

We hosted candlelight vigils, written bulletin articles, created displays and a lending library, and purchased relationship-themed books for our school. Although results are not always apparent, we have been bolstered by: a woman who, on observing our Silent Witness display, shared, "This is my life;" a mother who said her daughter, after reading a bulletin article, admitted she was in an abusive marriage; watching parish members inscribing names of victims at our Clothesline Project. *St. James, Arlington Heights*

We participated in rallies against domestic violence, presented the movie, "Hunting Ground," with discussion for college bound students and raised awareness of teen dating violence by distributing pamphlets in our bulletins. We collect toiletries and personal items for women in shelters. Partnering with District 7 Police increased our understanding of the urgency to provide a safe haven for women and children. *St. Benedict the African, Chicago*



St. Benedict the African Ministry

In October, we have a table in the church foyer and a sermon on domestic violence. We host workshops, films, speakers, and a vigil "Shine the Light" with the Northbrook police and WINGS. We display a "Love Shouldn't Hurt" banner in downtown Northbrook, obtain a proclamation by the village declaring October DVAM, have the library display books and change external lighting to purple. *St. Norbert, Northbrook*

Power in numbers. Three years ago we began working with two parishes who had ministries, St. Alexander and Incarnation. We are now 12 members strong and coordinate activities. *Sacred Heart, Palos Heights*

What would you tell a parish that does not have a domestic violence ministry?

I urge pastors to reflect on how omitting any discussion about domestic violence leads to complacency on the part of parishioners and a fundamental lack of pastoral leadership. As the Church struggles to remain vibrant and relevant for youth, I urge leaders to speak on behalf of the vulnerable. *Queen of All Saints, Chicago*



Queen of All Saints Ministry

This ministry provides a valuable opportunity for volunteers to serve as God's presence to those suffering in their homes. It helps develop an informed vocabulary to recognize healthy and unhealthy traits in our own families and creates a safe place for victims to seek help. *Our Lady of the Rosary, Chicago*



Dating Matters From a Teacher's Perspective

by Todd Williamson



Nobody becomes an educator for the money or the fame. The only reason anybody becomes an educator is we love our kids and want to make their lives better. So, I think it is fair to assume that *all educators*, teachers, social workers, counselors, administrators; would be in favor of reducing domestic violence amongst their students. So how can we do it?

Well, we can do what we are best at... we can teach. We can teach children what defines healthy relationships. We can teach them the vocabulary they will need to understand the complex emotions that come along with romantic relationships. We can teach them to identify problematic behaviors before they escalate into violence. Dating Matters is a wonderful tool for these lessons.

First, it is good pedagogy. The curriculum is tightly written and research based. Dating Matters has been proven to reduce both domestic violence victimization (10%) and perpetration (8%) among participants. Second, it is practical. Dating Matters is full of actionable lessons for students. From identifying trusted adults, to modeling real world strategies for emotional responses, Dating Matters empowers students with skills they use their entire lives. Third, Dating Matters is engaging! As they begin the transition into young adulthood, students are excited to explore these themes. Students enter the classroom with the kind of giddy excitement reserved for holiday parties, or spirit days. Hands are consistently in the air, and discussions are many and meaningful.

The impact is potentially generational. Domestic violence is often cyclical. Teaching our children the skills they need to maintain healthy relationships can break the cycle of violence and impact the lives of our students and their children long after our careers as educators have ended. I implemented Dating Matters at St. Agnes of Bohemia in Chicago's Little Village in 2020. My kids loved the experience and so did I! It delights me to think of my students making healthy choices because of my classroom. I am proud to be a part of the continued growth of this program now as a member of the Dating Matters staff.

“ Dating Matters is an effective way to make real gains in the prevention of domestic violence. ”

Dating Matters Violence Prevention in Schools Advances

ACDVO is now implementing the CDC's Dating Matters (DM) curriculum on healthy relationships in 12 elementary schools - 6 Catholic and 6 public in metropolitan Chicago. The schools are Queen of Angels, Sacred Heart, St. Agnes of Bohemia, St. Benedict the African, St. Benedict Preparatory, and St. Paul of the Cross. Six public schools from the Englewood area and south Chicago are Edwards, Evers, Green, Henderson, Kershaw, and Seward. We anticipate that Chicago public and Catholic schools will incorporate DM after the successful pilot. For information, contact John Monaco at jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

Thanks to all who donate so generously to our ministry. Our work is moving forward; help us reduce if not eliminate domestic violence from our midst. May God bless you. Contact Charles Dahm, O.P., ACDVO Director, cdahm13@gmail.com, 312-371-7752, 1914 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60608.