

OUR VOICE

SPRING 2023



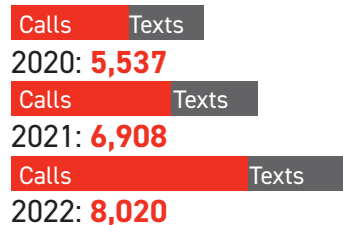
A Refuge.
An Advocate.
A Strong Voice
Against Domestic
Violence.



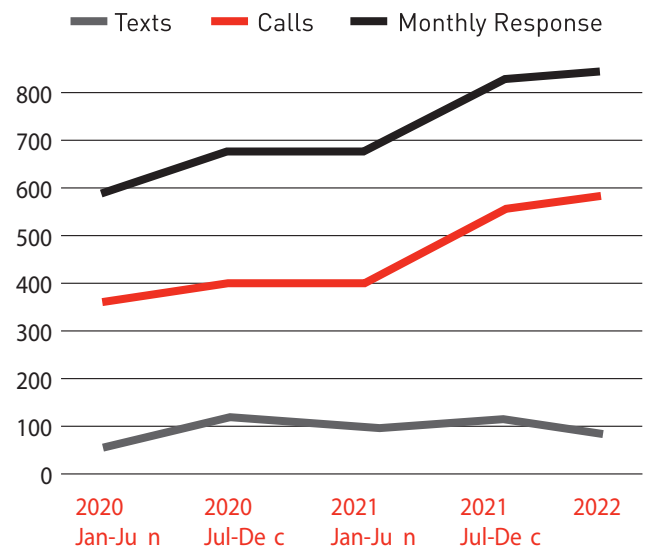
Shining a Light on Crisis Response

When the pandemic hit, and people began sheltering in place, calls to La Casa slowed down. But only briefly. By the end of 2020, texts skyrocketed 200% from an average of 58 per month to 117. Telephone calls inched up from 350 per month to 392. By the end of 2021, however, our confidential hotlines were ringing 537 times each month. This grew to 586 calls per month – 20 per day – in 2022, when La Casa answered 7,042 hotline calls + 986 texts. **In what appears to be a new normal, we're fielding 43% more calls and texts for help.**

La Casa has long provided around the clock access to safety planning, options counseling, resources, and referrals. At 12 A.M. or 12 P.M., our skilled advocates are at the ready. Unique in San Francisco, we also provide access to confidentially-located shelter 24/7 for domestic violence victims who are in imminent danger as a result of domestic violence and have no safe place to turn.



REACHING OUT FOR HELP, MONTHLY AVERAGE



Inside:

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DEAR FRIENDS OF LA CASA DE LAS MADRES,



**A Refuge.
An Advocate.
A Strong Voice
Against Domestic
Violence.**

On behalf of La Casa de las Madres' Board of Directors, we are delighted to introduce Lusero Arias as La Casa's new Executive Director. Effective January 31, 2023, Lusero succeeds Kathy Black, who is retiring after over 25 years with La Casa de las Madres.

La Casa was founded in 1976 by a coalition of Bay Area women and is San Francisco's oldest and largest shelter dedicated to women and children escaping domestic violence. Kathy joined La Casa in 1997 as Director of Development and was promoted to Executive Director in 2001. Under her leadership, Kathy has deepened La Casa's roots in the San Francisco Bay Area and built on La Casa's strong foundation in serving victims and survivors across the Bay Area. Kathy has recruited exceptional staff, at all levels, and created an outstanding relationship with the board of directors. She and her leadership team have successfully grown our base of supporters over the years.

Starting as a volunteer in 2013, Lusero Arias has long supported La Casa. She has been a key member of the La Casa team for over nine years, rising to her most recent role serving as Director of HR and Operations in 2019. As a vital member of the La Casa leadership team, she has forged strong relationships within the organization and our community. Lusero's time at La Casa has cemented her understanding of our operations and programs and our mission's impact on the community. Lusero holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance,

certifications in Nonprofit Management, and Professional in Human Resources – California (PHRca®) and is working towards earning her Juris Doctorate from Golden Gate University, all of which will serve her and La Casa well in her new role as Executive Director. Lusero's appointment is the result of a nearly nine-month thorough and inclusive search process led by a board-appointed search committee.

It has been the pleasure of the Board to work side-by-side with Kathy, and we are immensely proud of La Casa's accomplishments under her leadership. We welcome her continued support and contributions as part of a smooth transition. While we will personally miss Kathy immensely, we are extremely excited about deepening the Board's relationship with Lusero.

Lusero has earned the respect and admiration of her coworkers, signaling her readiness to take on the leadership of La Casa. She brings a mission-centered and inclusive approach to decision-making and a track record of sustaining and contributing to an inspirational and motivational agency culture.

Thank you, Kathy, for successfully steering this organization for over 25 years and for your tireless commitment to furthering La Casa's mission. And congratulations, Lusero! We are confident that this strong and healthy organization rests in excellent hands. The Board and staff look forward to partnering with you in taking La Casa into its next chapter.

Sincerely,

Michelle Zauss, Chair
Board of Directors

Shawn Steel,
Board Member and
Search Committee Chair

OUR IMPACT in 2022

La Casa empowered 13,000+ Bay Area community members to see and stop abuse:

CRISIS RESPONSE

8,020 crisis line calls and text messages answered

2,105 victims received confidential victim advocacy and outreach following a police response to their abuse

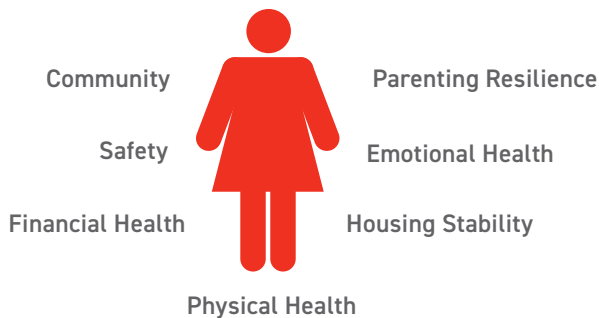
274 women and children confidentially sheltered

8,747 days and nights of safety and support

SUPPORT & INTERVENTION

2,349 survivors of all ages accessed La Casa's suite of community-based and residential programming

Counseling, advocacy and support services to build:



PREVENTION EDUCATION:

2,847 community members learned about seeing and stopping domestic violence through workshops and events

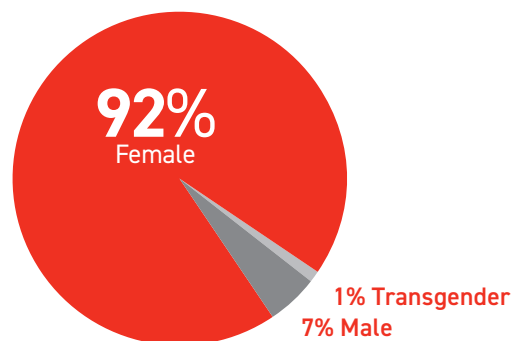
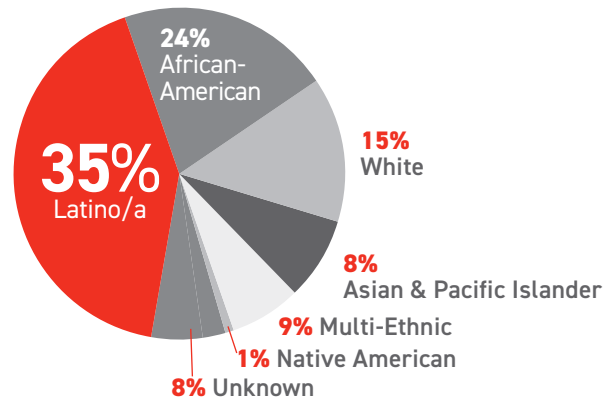
Breaking the Cycle of Violence:

Survivors come to us with needs and priorities as diverse as they are. We give them the tools to transform their lives – to be safe, empowered, connected, and supported.

FROM SHELTER:

- > 78% of survivors moved into safer, next-step or permanent housing
- > 94% developed a critical sense of self-efficacy to meet their family's needs
- > 58% increased income and financial capacity

Who We Serve



Among our clients:

- 27% are immigrants
- 21% are limited-English proficient
- 14% self-identify a mental or physical disability
- 7% are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other
- 22% come to us homeless or unstably housed

WHO IS YOUR (S)HERO?

Give now to support (s)heros at La Casa and across the Bay Area

Every spring we celebrate mothers. La Casa de las Madres is literally Home of the Mothers, founded to ensure safety and an empowering community for women and families.

Our name reflects the loss of one founder's mother, murdered by her husband, before beacons of hope like La Casa existed. It invokes the tireless support survivors find inside our doors and roots us in the strength and passion of our trailblazing foremothers.

Please return the enclosed envelope, visit lacasa.org/shero or scan the code below to make a gift today. The (s)heroes at La Casa show up for survivors of domestic violence every day seeding hope, and resilience.

Your gift gives us strength. It will also transforms lives:

\$50 = 3 crisis calls answered on our 24-hour emergency hotline

\$100 = 1 day & night of safety for a mother and their child at shelter

\$500 = 6 weeks of breakfast for the entire shelter totaling 1,350 warm meals

\$1,000 = A ten-week support group cycle for 10 survivors



If you have a special (s)hero in your life, make a gift in their honor and La Casa will send them a special Mother's Day message!



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

When I reflect back on my first days as a volunteer at La Casa de las Madres, it grounds me in the heart and soul of our community. We are here to make change. Not only do we respond around the clock to people in crisis and concerned about safety because of domestic violence. We listen. We create a web of support. We empower new expectations.

Right now, domestic violence impacts 1 out of 3 women across her lifetime. We can change this.

In the rearview mirror, the red flags may be clearly visible: a mounting pile of evidence that a relationship is not healthy. In the moment-to-moment of our lives, the survivors among us know that it is never easy to break the cycle. It's not a single act. It's a commitment. It's hard work. Community is key to getting through to valuing and fighting for ourselves.

La Casa's purpose, and my North Star as Executive Director, is to ensure that hope and community are readily accessible to anyone in the San Francisco Bay Area who needs it. **La Casa is answering 43% more calls for help than we were before the pandemic.** With your help in the months and years ahead La Casa will redouble our efforts to throw open the door to safe and healthy relationships.

We'll accomplish this by forming linkages across San Francisco's diverse neighborhoods, workplaces and community hubs. We will continue leaning into key partnerships and build out community access points. Among the 2,300 directly served in 2022, La Casa reached nearly half of those survivors and their families through our partner locations. I look forward to building on La Casa's advocacy and strength to reach more people in need to stop the cycle of violence.



This summer, our newest collaboration will co-locate La Casa at St. Mary's Medical Center to launch the Medical Safe Haven Program in San Francisco. Our patient advocate will be dedicated to providing confidential services to human trafficking survivors, working side-by-side with Medical Safe Haven primary care and behavioral health leadership to ensure trauma-informed, accessible medical care and critical connections to needed services.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with La Casa's incredible team of advocates and educators—and you—I am excited to dig in and continue La Casa's transformative work. I invite you to reach out to me with any questions and thank you for being a critical part of the movement to end domestic violence. Together, we are leading the way to empowered, healthy relationships and breaking the cycle of abuse for survivors across the San Francisco Bay Area.

In Community,

Lusero Arias, Executive Director

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The Board of Directors would like to thank all of our generous contributors for making La Casa's work possible. The following list reflects pledges made and gifts received between **January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022**. Please excuse any inadvertent errors or omissions. We welcome your comments and corrections. For contributions through a corporate campaign or third party processor, please note that external processing time may delay our receipt and recognition of funds by several months, but your support is vital and appreciated! **Together, we are building pathways to an abuse-free future.**

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“ I will never forget you. Thank you so much for everything! Violence is no longer a part of my life, and I am much happier because of you guys.”

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“ I learned to
value myself. ”

- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

Shining a Light on Crisis Response

continued from page 1



WHAT HAPPENS ON THE HOTLINE?

3:30am - La Casa's hotline rings, and a live, trained counselor answers the phone from La Casa's confidentially located shelter. Hello. How can I help you?

It's a woman on the line, calling from San Leandro. There was another escalation with her partner. He got physical. She's scared. She threatened to call the police this time, and he left – angry.

Are you safe right now? No. She doesn't feel safe staying at home, and she's looking for shelter.

The counselor asks several questions to help the caller assess risk, danger, and resources. She doesn't have a car or money to get to into the city on her own right now, and BART is not running at this time of night. Together they think about options, and La Casa's counselor continues to safety plan with her.

The counselor and caller make a plan for her to gather her critical belongings in a small bag. The caller decides that she can probably stay with a friend tonight, and La Casa's advocate holds while she calls the friend to confirm. She can get to BART in the morning and come to La Casa's Drop In Center as early as 8:30am to talk with a counselor about options, resources, and what's next.

The next morning, she calls the crisis line back to let La Casa know she's on her way. Her call was expected by the morning shift counselor, and they reiterate her plan to get there safely. When she arrives they will talk more and decide what she wants to do next.



WHAT HAPPENS ON THE TEXT LINE?

INCOMING: Hi – I'm a therapist at XXXXXXXXXXXX and hoping to get information on behalf of a client. Do you offer any kind of connections to free legal advice or support for women related to custody questions in a domestic violence situation?

OUTGOING: Thank you for contacting us. If you are in danger please call 9-1-1. We typically respond to texts Monday – Friday from 830am-5pm. If you need immediate assistance please call our hotline: 877-503-1850.

Si usted esta en peligro por favor llame al 9-1-1. Usualmente contestamos los textos de Lunes a Viernes de 830am-5pm. Si necesita asistencia inmediata, llame a nuestra linea de crisis que se atiende 24 horas al dia. El numero es 877-503-1850.

OUTGOING: Hello – yes. We have advocates that can assist the client with resources. Would client be able to come to meet with one of our advocates in person or call our line?

INCOMING: I think phone would more likely be possible for her.

INCOMING: Should she call the hotline?

OUTGOING: Yes please. Our line is available 24/7: 1-877-503-1850.

INCOMING: Ok thanks so much



INCOMING: Good morning

OUTGOING: Thank you for contacting us. If you are in danger please call 9-1-1. We typically respond to texts Monday – Friday from 830am-5pm. If you need immediate assistance please call our hotline: 877-503-1850.

Si usted esta en peligro por favor llame al 9-1-1. Usualmente contestamos los textos de Lunes a Viernes de 830am-5pm. Si necesita asistencia inmediata, llame a nuestra linea de crisis que se atiende 24 horas al dia. El numero es 877-503-1850.

OUTGOING: Hello. Can you tell me a little bit about your situation and what kind of support you're looking for?

INCOMING: I'm looking for a place for me and my 6 year old daughter. Right now I'm staying with my sister.

OUTGOING: Okay. For confidentiality and to inquire about emergency, confidentially located domestic violence shelters (ours or other referrals) you will need to call our hotline at 1-877-503-1850. If you don't feel like it's an emergency, I might be able to help you connect with other options. Does that sound okay?

Preventing Abuse – Healthy Teen Relationships

February marks National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, but year-round La Casa shines a critical light on resources young people need to stay safe.

Data tells us to expect that 1 out of every 10 San Francisco high schoolers will experience physical or sexual violence at the hands of a dating partner in 2023. This is simply unacceptable.

HOW CAN WE MAKE CHANGE?

Young people need us to talk with them about relationship abuse: dating and domestic violence. They need us to call unhealthy behaviors what they are and to call out the hallmarks of healthy relationships.

Possessiveness is not a sign of love; it's a sign of insecurity.

Reckless driving is not stress and insensitivity; it's intimidation and control.

Healthy relationships have boundaries, mutuality, and open communication.

La Casa has worked directly with youth since 1999, when we launched our Teen Intervention & Prevention Program alongside San Francisco's Wellness Initiative, a campaign promise by then Mayor Willie Brown to support the students of San Francisco's Unified School District. La Casa still operates a 24-hour Teen Crisis Line, and we field texts Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm to make asking questions and getting information as easy as possible.

The adult survivors we help at La Casa—seeing red flags in their rearview mirror—commonly tell us about the series of abusive relationships they have experienced since childhood. To give young people the tools they need – information, guidance, practice and support – La Casa's teen-focused prevention and intervention services help young people, and the adults that care for them, see the signs of unhealthy relationships and know where to turn for a gut-check and non-judgmental support.

With so many unhealthy behaviors normalized in the media and messaging that saturates youth culture, it's critical that we talk directly with kids and empower our youth for relationship health now and into the future. La Casa's Community Education & Outreach Department provides prevention education directly to teens and to the adults who guide and mentor them.

Send a message to ComEd@lacasa.org to find out about hosting a conversation or workshop at your workplace, book club, or school!



La Casa's team wears safety orange, the color of teen dating violence awareness

One Survivor's Story



Beatriz Vazquez, La Casa's Community Programs Manager and supervisor of the Domestic Violence Response Team

Crisis Response: DVRT Program

The 8th time the police arrived at her door, Grace* was distraught. For the past 20 years, Grace's partner, the father of her children, had berated her, demanded the money she earned, destroyed her credit, and given her too many bruises to count. She didn't feel like she lived in fear every single day, but she was tired – physically and emotionally.

When Grace had tried to leave him in the past, her partner tracked her down, stalked her, sweetened her up, and then made her feel like no one else would ever have her. But Grace really didn't like the way he talked to the children and, sometimes, the rough way he treated them. She knew she wasn't the only one being harmed.

Her oldest daughter was in a relationship now, and Grace worried about what "love" looked like in her home and the behaviors her daughter had learned to put up with.

So, when the police arrived that 8th time, she agreed to talk with an Advocate. The officer on the scene connected Grace to La Casa's Crisis Line, and soon she was gathering up some of her family's belongings to bring with them to La Casa's confidentially-located shelter. Inside that safe space, Grace and her children began to process their trauma, access counseling, and seek help to move forward on a new path.

GRACE AND HER FAMILY'S JOURNEY TO SAFETY WAS JUST BEGINNING.

La Casa's Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) is a partnership with the San Francisco Police Department which launched in 2003. A domestic violence counselor is onsite Monday through Friday during regular business hours at the Hall of Justice alongside the staff in the Special Victims Unit. She is available to talk with victims of abuse confidentially, triage their needs, and help them access domestic violence and other resources.

Through this longstanding collaboration, we also try to connect with anyone who experiences a police response, flagged for intimate partner violence. The purpose is to make sure they know about La Casa and organizations like us and to make access to help as easy as possible. Officers also call our hotline from a crime scene 24/7 to connect victims of abuse to domestic violence counseling and confidential shelter. **Our DVRT Program's goal is to connect survivors to the support they need as early as possible.**

Ending an abusive relationship is not easy or simple. You can think back to your own experience leaving a bad job to recognize that there can be many ties that keep you feeling trapped—emotional, financial, social expectations, one more project deadline, or a perceived lack of options. It requires a huge amount of internal and external strength to make big changes and push in new directions.

The journey continues...

With the safety and support inside La Casa's shelter, Grace found herself more and more determined to push forward. La Casa connected her with legal services that helped Grace gain full custody of her children and set up custody exchanges with her batterer that prioritized the safety of Grace and the children. She found a steady job that helped her qualify for La Casa's Housing First for Domestic Violence Victims subsidy and support program. So, she pushed hard to find a rental unit she could afford that was also a reasonable distance from her employment. Her subsidy would pay partial rent for up to 12-months, helping her ramp up savings and build financial capacity.

From their new home, Grace and her family continued to engage in therapy. Her family's journey was not easy, but Grace was determined they would stay safe on a new path. They adopted a pet to support the family's emotional needs, her son started a new school, and Grace learned to be independent, budget expenses, and carve time out for her self-care to stay on track. She accessed food pantry programs, domestic violence and parenting support groups, and signed up for the affordable housing lottery.

When the time came for Grace to take on the full burden of her rent, Grace and her family were ready. She tells us she feels so much stronger, that has gained many skills and so much confidence in her ability to do what she needs to do and where to go for help when she needs it.

Healing from abuse is a journey. Building stability from scratch in one of the most expensive cities in the world is a feat. We at La Casa are so proud and so honored to walk with and empower survivors in all stages of life, and from all backgrounds every day.

*Identifying information altered to protect survivor confidentiality

“With La Casa's help I got back on my feet. I also had time for my arm, and my heart, to heal.”

- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR

“Here at La Casa I could clear my mind as I figure out my next step. Muchos gracias.”

- SURVIVOR IN EMERGENCY SHELTER

“As someone who experienced teen dating violence, I wish I knew an organization like La Casa growing up. So, today I volunteer to help share resources with other people in need.”

- ANGELLYNN, VOLUNTEER,
WINTER 2023 40-HOUR DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE TRAINING COHORT

La Casa de las Madres' redHOT* party

Thursday, October 19th from 6-9PM

The Green Room, 401 Van Ness Avenue

SAVE THE DATE for this year's cocktail party for a cause – an evening of celebration and activism to end domestic violence and support survivors like Grace. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you're ready to make a commitment to safe and healthy intimate relationships across the lifespan right now, we're ready to hear from you:



Donate an auction item



Volunteer on the event planning and fundraising committee



Demonstrate your values through sponsorship

redHOT*
for CHANGE

Employee teams and resource groups, businesses, and individuals are invited to learn more at lacasa.org/redhot or reach out to donations@lacasa.org.



**A Refuge.
An Advocate.
A Strong Voice
Against Domestic
Violence.**

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CA
Permit #12151

Business Office/Drop In Center
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San Francisco, CA 94103

Tel: (415) 503-0500
Crisis Line: 1-877-503-1850
Teen Line: 1-877-923-0700
Text Support: 1-415-200-3575
www.lacasa.org

**The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it.**

— Amanda Gorman

La Casa de las Madres

**A Refuge. An Advocate. A Strong Voice Against
Domestic Violence.**

The mission of La Casa de las Madres is to respond to calls for help from domestic violence victims, of all ages, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We give survivors the tools to transform their lives. We seek to prevent future violence by educating the community and by redefining public perceptions about domestic violence.

La Casa de las Madres

**Un Refugio. Un Consejero. Una Voz Fuerte
en Contra de la Violencia Doméstica.**

La Casa de las Madres ofrece amparo a mujeres que han sido víctimas de la violencia doméstica, y a sus hijos e hijas. Nosotros nos esforzamos en ayudar tanto a las mujeres como a los niños a descubrir su fuerza interior, manejar los riesgos que se les presentan y tener más control sobre sus propias vidas. Nuestro objetivo es restaurar la dignidad de nuestras clientes, fomentar su esperanza, evocar su valor y ayudarles a desarrollar su mayor potencial.

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