



# OUR VOICE

SPRING 2019

## Healthcare as a Tool for Independence

La Casa was founded by a group of women who recognized that individuals in their community were often denied a fundamental right: the ability to choose. Over forty years later, we still see that this holds true for survivors of abuse. Caught in cycles of violence, power, and control, survivors can't always access safety. La Casa works to build hope and support survivors in making decisions about their bodies, lives, and relationships.

*My husband limited my decisions related to my reproductive health. I didn't matter what I wanted. He decided when we would have sex, when I would get pregnant, and the number of children that we had. If he had known I was using birth control, he would have been so angry.*

When survivors don't have decision-making power they may be unable to make decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Reproductive coercion can take many forms including not having a say in when and how someone becomes a parent, being unable to access or being forced to take hormones, forced sexual activity, and being forced to forgo barrier methods. One in four women report experiencing some form of reproductive or sexual coercion.

We believe that to end reproductive coercion and, more broadly, domestic and partner violence, we must support a future where there is reproductive justice for all. Founded by a group of black women, the Reproductive Justice Movement seeks to ensure every person's right to maintaining personal bodily autonomy. This includes: deciding how to have children and the conditions under which to give birth, parenting children in a safe and sustainable community without the threat of violence, and the right to self-expression free from any form of oppression.

The Reproductive Justice Movement believes that advocating for reproductive rights alone is not enough. While it is legal for anyone to seek out healthcare, the reality is that lower-resourced and marginalized communities are disproportionately burdened by obstacles when accessing services. An abuser may use these barriers to establish and exacerbate dynamics of power and control. If a survivor has a partner who already controls their finances, emotions, body, and wellbeing, the survivor's ability to make decisions about their reproductive and sexual health free from coercion and violence is further constrained, or altogether curbed.

As we see options for accessible reproductive and sexual healthcare reduced in certain states and communities, La Casa's programs continue to champion survivors' independence. Reproductive justice can only be achieved, and reproductive coercion can only end, when all people have the social, political, and economic power to make decisions about their health and bodies.



## WE MOVED!

**OUR NEW ADDRESS**  
**1269 Howard Street,**  
**San Francisco, CA 94103**

# LETTER FROM THE Executive Director

Dear Friends of La Casa,



We are thrilled to have moved into our new home at 1269 Howard Street. As of early April, we have opened our doors to survivors across San Francisco. Our ability to purchase this permanent home was only possible because of dedicated community support. As rent in San Francisco continues to climb and we compete with some of the most-resourced companies in the world, this move helps ensure that victims and survivors of abuse will always have a safe place to get the help and support that they need. It is a historic moment for our small-but-mighty organization.

When I began at La Casa over 20 years ago, I found a group of fearless advocates working to make women and children safe across our great City. The safety and confidentiality these survivors required, often lead us to be very internally focused. While safety and confidentiality are our two highest priorities to date, we have also worked to grow our voice and message in the community. Our logo states it best...La Casa is "A Bold Voice Against Domestic Violence." Our mission to expand and grow our voice is exemplified by our transit campaign, running across muni lines in San Francisco as I type. It is exemplified by the public stances we take on violence in our community—like calling for accountability within major league sports. And, it is exemplified by our robust education and outreach efforts, in person and across media platforms.

Our ability to make this building purchase is a testament to this voice, and the support that each of you put behind it to make it echo loud and clear. After all, our voice is not simply La Casa's. It is the voice of each of you. You are a community that believes that no woman, no child, no teen should be unsafe in their own home. When obstacles stand in our way, or it feels as though hope is running out, we are lifted by the support, strength and voice each of you give to La Casa. For it is our community (yes, you!) that ensures the doors of La Casa remain open, and that we aren't just simply holding an open door, but opening new ones. The key to brighter and safer futures lies within each of us.

As we continue to grow our voice and our physical presence here in the Bay Area, we are reminded that we stand on the shoulders of giants; on the shoulders of the tireless and brave advocates who started this work when hardly anyone would listen; on the shoulders of those who came together for survivors of domestic violence when "domestic" and "violence" weren't really two words that went together.

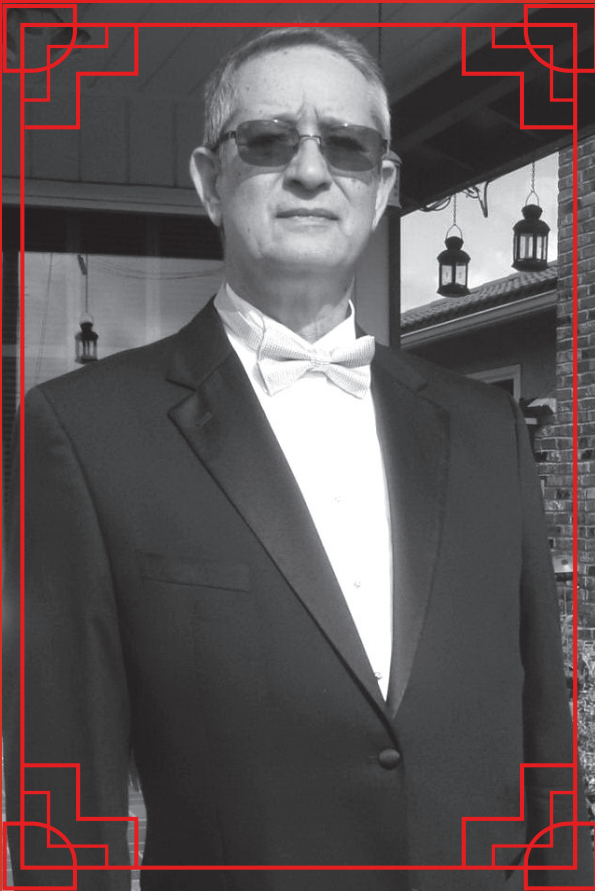
Our duty today, standing alongside each of you is to be a bold voice against domestic violence. But we also must continue to pass the proverbial megaphone to those who need it most—those who suffer at the hands of abusive partners. Far too often, these are the individuals that are overlooked by systems that reinforce the power dynamics perpetuating inequity and injustice.

I hope you will continue to join us in our work to end domestic violence and injustice in our city. I believe that each of you are living the principle taught to us by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "What affects one directly, affects all indirectly." Until all individuals are safe in their relationships and their homes, our work is not done.



Kathy Black  
Executive Director

## Remembering Carlos



On February 3, 2019 La Casa lost a long-time volunteer, advocate and friend, **Carlos Vadillo Roca**. Carlos was deeply dedicated to ending domestic violence and we are so amazed by all that he did during his life to support victims and survivors of abuse. We will always remember the warmth, creativity, energy, and light Carlos brought to our small-but-mighty organization. It is rare to find individuals like Carlos, who so naturally radiates kindness, compassion, intellect and dedication. We are humbled that Carlos carried the banner of La Casa so far into the community. It was so much farther than we could have asked, imagined or done without him. He was an Engineer, Inventor, Artist, Musician and leaves a legacy of care, compassion and love. Survivors across San Francisco are safer and our community is much stronger because of Carlos' bravery, kindness and passion for peace.

## This Mother's Day, Empower the (S)Hero Within

WHO IS YOUR  
**(S)HERO?**

Mother's Day is a special holiday at La Casa. It is a time to celebrate our super-powered mothers and remember our proud 43-year history of helping moms in need.

On this special holiday, we ask you to join us in empowering survivors of domestic violence. Who is your (s)hero? Honor your mother—or another caregiver—by making a donation to La Casa to help another. We will mail your honoree a special Mother's Day card.

# LA CASA DE LAS MADRES' DONOR LIST

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 **July 1 and December 31, 2018**. Please excuse any inadvertent errors or omissions.

United Way & Corporate Campaign donors, please note that La Casa makes every effort to acknowledge support as soon as we are notified of a donation. External processing time may create a delay of several months but your support is vital and appreciated. Our United Way designation number is 44026.

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**A Refuge.  
An Advocate.  
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**Just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else.**

—Toni Morrison

## 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 esformzamos 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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