



ANNUAL REPORT

FY2019

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

Montgomery County Family Justice Center

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With Sincerest Gratitude

To the elected officials who believed in the mission, to the leaders who forged the way, to all those who work tirelessly saving lives, and to the community that believes in supporting those who are suffering: Thank you.

None of this happens without you.



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HISTORY

A Family Justice Center is a co-location of agencies and organizations that serve as a “one-stop shop” for domestic violence survivors to receive critical, wrap-around services. The first such center, established in 2002 in San Diego, CA, was hailed as a major step forward in addressing domestic violence in a more collaborative way. In 2006, Montgomery County established the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), a 19-member board with representatives from county and state agencies as well as the general public, to advise the County Executive on matters pertaining to domestic violence in the county. One of the first recommendations to come out of the DVCC was to create a Family Justice Center in Montgomery County. At that time, a domestic violence survivor would have to go to more than a dozen different locations throughout the county, re-telling and re-living their story each time, in order to receive all of the services available to them. Thanks to major collaborative efforts by numerous county agencies and community non-profits, with the support of the County Executive and County Council, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center opened in the Spring of 2009. Today, this collaborative center, under the auspices of the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, serves as the central hub for domestic violence services in the county, serving more than 1,600 individuals per year. Services are offered at no cost in a safe, family-friendly environment conveniently located in downtown Rockville within walking distance of the Circuit Court, District Court, and public transportation. Today, the Family Justice Center model, now considered a best practice by the U.S. Department of Justice in service delivery to families affected by domestic violence, continues to grow both nationally and internationally.

MISSION

The mission of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center is to promote safety, well-being and healing for victims of intimate partner domestic violence.



From the Desk of Sheriff Darren Popkin



April 27, 2009: the day the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) first opened its doors to the public. Now, 10 years later, I could not be more proud of all of the incredible accomplishments achieved by those dedicated professionals who work at the Center every day, having served nearly 12,000 victims of intimate partner violence representing 100 different countries of origin. That's 12,000 people who worked with a Sheriff's Office Client Assistant to develop a personal safety plan; 12,000 people who were able to access an array of government and non-government service providers in one safe place; 12,000 people who were offered support when they thought none was available; 12,000 people who were offered a lifeline to live free from abuse.

The dedicated Deputies and their civilian support staff in our Domestic Violence Section at the FJC work 24

hours a day, seven days a week keeping the community safe through the service of Protective Orders, Peace Orders, Emergency Evaluation Petitions, and Extreme Risk Protection Orders. Our civilian Client Assistants work during FJC operating hours providing coordinated, wrap-around services to survivors. Through our partnership with fellow government entities such as the State's Attorney's Office and the Police Department, as well as with our non-profit partners like House of Ruth Maryland and Catholic Charities, the FJC has seen many successes. In the subsequent pages of this report, we highlight data points that show the incredible extent of the work the FJC has done on behalf of victims in the 2019 Fiscal Year. You will read about exciting updates to our Safe Start Program and outcomes from our pioneering Video Conference Protective Order program. We also illustrate our Center's incredible impact by taking an in-depth look at the compelling story of a survivor who sought support from us.

Our work still continues today, as 1,600 people continue to walk through our doors annually. Whether they are in need of a Protective Order, whether they want to pursue a criminal case, whether they are seeking therapy for themselves or for their children, whether they need a helping hand getting into the workforce, or whether they just want to speak discreetly to someone about their situation and their options, the FJC is here for the people of Montgomery County, and will continue to be for many years to come. It has been an honor and privilege for the Sheriff's Office to serve as the lead agency for the FJC for the past 10 years, and I look forward to continuing our amazing efforts with this Center for another 10 years and beyond. Thank you to all of the incredible FJC staff, past and present, for your tireless efforts on behalf of victims, and thank you to the community for your unending support.

Darren M. Popkin, Sheriff

From the Desk of Director Tom Manion



One safe place. For the past 10 years, this is what the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) has been to nearly 12,000 people who were living in fear of their partner. The myriad of issues occurring in any abusive situation are such that no single program or agency acting alone can meet the entirety of a victim's needs. We know that the best way to keep someone safe is by building a rapport and keeping them engaged in services. By co-locating providers from both government and non-profit sectors, we maximize the efficiency of our collective resources, we reduce the number of stops a victim has to make, we build that supportive rapport, and we keep the individual engaged in their service and safety plans. This model saves lives.

As we look to the future of our Center, we have a lot to be excited about. For starters, we are working diligently with our fantastic team of IT specialists to implement fully electronic Intake and filing systems. Through

the use of touchscreen tablets, FJC Clients will be able to complete Intake and consent forms and check in for appointments quicker than ever before. Better yet, the content will be available in dozens of different languages with the simple press of a button. Montgomery County has a large and growing immigrant population, and in the 2019 Fiscal Year, the FJC served Clients who spoke 20 different languages. It is our responsibility to ensure that our services are accessible to all County residents, regardless of what language they speak, and that starts with the very first form they fill out. In conjunction with our tablet-oriented Intake process, our electronic record keeping system will allow our team to maintain all Client records electronically in real time. Through these initiatives, the Montgomery County FJC will be fully paperless, thereby improving efficiency and reducing waste.

We are also exploring ways to fill some of the gaps that currently exist in our operations. For example, research shows us that victims of one type of family or sexual violence have likely also experienced or been

exposed to other types of violence as well. This is called polyvictimization, and since many of our partner agencies serve victims of different types of family and sexual violence already, the FJC is in a unique position to assist polyvictims. Montgomery County has so many incredible service providers, including the Sheriff's Office, State's Attorney's Office, Department of Health and Human Services, Police Department, and a host of dedicated non-profits ready to tackle these issues head on. By bringing more service providers together, reinvigorating existing connections, and forging new ones, Montgomery County can repeat the successes we have had in addressing intimate partner violence, and continue to be at the forefront of the Family Justice Center movement, which continues to evolve and flourish on a global scale.

To our elected officials, our dedicated staff, and our supportive community, thank you for making our first decade such a success. I can't wait for you to see what we do with the next one.

Thomas Manion, Director

FJC PARTNERS

Anchor Fund

Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project

Ayuda

CareerCatchers

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Washington

Chesapeake Counseling Associates, LLC

Court Watch Montgomery

DVS Legal Services

ElderSAFE Center, Charles E. Smith Life Communities

Family Services, Inc.

Friends of the Family Justice Center

Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center

House of Ruth Maryland

Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse

Korean Community Services Center

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Montgomery College

Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Montgomery County Police Department

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office

Muslim Community Center Medical Clinic

Panera Bread

Pro Bono Counseling Project

Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County

Women Who Care Ministries, Inc.



THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

Volunteer and Internship Program

25

Interns and Volunteers
Contributed

3,316 hours

to the mission of the Family
Justice Center this year!

Our Interns have come to us
from all over!

- ✓ University of Maryland-
College Park
- ✓ Montgomery College
- ✓ George Washington University
- ✓ Georgetown University
- ✓ Boston College
- ✓ Indiana University

*"The entire staff was very
friendly and welcoming to
me. This has been such a
great experience!"*

-Spring 2019
FJC Intern



The FJC Volunteer and Internship Program was created in 2016 to promote volunteerism and community service among professionals, retirees, and college students. Volunteers assist with essential tasks from covering the Reception desk to hospitality and childcare services for clients at the Center. Through the internship program, undergraduate and graduate students are provided practical learning experiences while contributing to the ongoing work of the FJC. In addition to their routine work at the Center, our interns have the opportunity to shadow FJC staff, observe court proceedings, participate in law enforcement ride-alongs, and more. We hosted a record number of volunteers and interns this year, and we are so grateful for each and every one! For more info on the FJC Volunteer and Internship Program, please send an e-mail to: mcfjcvip@gmail.com





1,627

Clients Served
in FY2019



Montgomery County has a large, diverse population of more than 1 million people from all over the world. Clients served at the Family Justice Center this year reflect the diversity of the County. Thanks to our multi-lingual staff and our language line interpretation service, we served Clients in 20 different languages this year:

Amharic	Dutch	Hindi	Spanish
Arabic	English	Korean	Tigrinya
Armenian	Farsi	Mandarin	Turkish
Bengali	French	Portuguese	Urdu
Cantonese	Haitian Creole	Russian	Vietnamese

Clients by Age

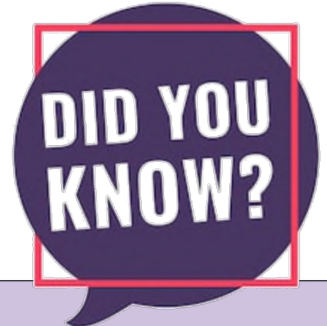
Age 17 and Younger	1%
Age 18-25	19%
Age 26-35	39%
Age 36-45	24%
Age 46-55	13%
Age 56-65	3%
Age 65 and Older	1%

Clients by Relation to Offender

Married (with/without children)	38%
Formerly Married (with/without children)	4%
Child(ren) in Common (Never Married)	28%
Dating/Sexual/ Cohab. (No Children)	25%
Formerly Dating/ Sexual/Cohab. (No Children)	5%

Clients by Gender

FEMALE	95%
MALE	5%



When an initial Protective Order is first filed at Court or at the Commissioner's Office, there is less than a 50% chance that it will ultimately become a Final Protective Order. This is often due to the Petitioner failing to appear for the Final Protective Order Hearing, or requesting dismissal of the order. However, initial Protective Orders filed at the Family Justice Center (FJC) become Final Protective Orders **nearly 70% of the time**. Why is this? Because for victims of domestic violence, court can be an incredibly intimidating experience, requiring them to detail, out loud, highly personal acts of abuse that have been committed against them, all in front of a group of strangers. By having the initial Protective Order hearing at the FJC, the victim is in a safe, secure location, the hearing is private, and our dedicated staff walk them through the process so they know what to expect. We are also able to provide most Petitioners with a pro bono attorney to represent them at the Final Protective Order hearing thanks to our partnerships with DVS Legal Services, House of Ruth Maryland, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, and Ayuda, in addition to an array of other supportive services. We also have a comfortable Family Area where Clients can wait for their case to be called, complete with kitchen, complimentary food and beverages, and a play room for children. We look forward to continuing this pioneering, trauma-informed program for years to come.

Assana's Story



March 19, 2011: Assana and her two children, five-year old Gisele and nine-year old Ibrahim, came to the United States from Togo to join Antoine, Assana's husband and the children's father, who had been living in the United States for nine years. According to Assana, Antoine had won an immigration lottery in Togo nine years ago, so this was the first time that they would all be living together as a family. She knew that there would be challenges, but she was so excited about the family finally being reunited. She says that for the first three years were happy enough, although Antoine tended to be verbally harsh towards her and the

children. Then, Assana began to notice that Antoine was becoming more controlling. At first, she thought that his behavior was normal for their culture and rationalized that she and the children just weren't used to it because they hadn't lived with Antoine until now. But then she slowly began to realize that Antoine's behavior was more than that. He would not allow her or the children to have friends over to the home, wouldn't allow them to go anywhere, wanted to know who they were with and where they were at all times, and was verbally abusive. Over time, the abuse escalated and Antoine became physically

violent towards Assana and the children. She called the police several times, but Antoine was never arrested and the abuse continued. Assana states,

“My children and I were afraid every day, never knowing when he was going to explode and hurt us again.”

Antoine also began to threaten Assana's and the children's immigration status, telling them he would send them back to Togo if they didn't do what he wanted. Gisele and

Continued on next page —>

(Continued from Page 7)

Ibrahim would call her while she was at school or working and beg her to come home because they were afraid to be alone with Antoine. She tried to keep herself and her children safe, but she didn't feel like she could leave Antoine because she had nowhere to go and didn't know where she could turn for help. Assana had obtained her Certified Nursing Assistant certificate and was working, but she didn't make enough money to leave Antoine and support the children on her own.

While attending Montgomery College, Assana started to learn about domestic violence, and worked up the courage to speak to one of her teachers about the situation she was experiencing at home.

Assana was referred to the Montgomery

County Family Justice Center (FJC). When she first arrived at the Center in June 2016, she recalls, "I was feeling so scared, so down, and so alone, I knew there was no one that would be able to help me or my children. I had completely lost hope." Assana soon realized that she was not alone, and that she had just taken her first steps toward a new life for her, Gisele and Ibrahim.

Over the next year and a half, Assana met with an FJC Client Assistant many times to help her figure out how to leave Antoine safely and to engage in services. "It was such a relief to be able to go to one place for multiple needs," she says. Not only did Assana's designated Client Assistant help her develop a safe exit strategy and an ongoing safety plan for her and her children, but she also helped Assana obtain a protective order and connected her with countless other services from a variety of partner agencies. She worked with DVS Legal Services regarding her family law case, House of Ruth of Maryland for legal

representation for her protective order, Catholic Charities for assistance with her immigration status, Career Catchers for assistance with employment, House of Ruth for individual counseling, and the Safe Start Kids Group for Gisele and Ibrahim to work through what they had been exposed to for the last several years.

Today, Assana and the children are all doing well. They are in their own apartment and Assana's divorce from Antoine has been finalized. She obtained her driver's license, bought a car, and they have all become U.S. Citizens. Gisele is happy and doing well in school, and Ibrahim graduated high school and is enrolled in college studying Computer Science. "I am so grateful for the support I received from the incredible people who work at the Family Justice Center," she says, "Without them, my children and I truly would not be where we are today, safe and happy."

Note: All information is shared with the consent of the Client. Names have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved.



THANK YOU FJJC



A Safe Start for Kids Exposed to Domestic Violence

SAFE START 2014



Did You Know...?

Children exposed to domestic violence experience mental and emotional trauma that can lead to excessive worry or sadness, guilt, fear of abandonment or harm, the inability to experience empathy, low frustration tolerance, and low self-esteem. That's why Montgomery County created the **Safe Start Program**. Funded through the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Safe Start serves children ages 3 through 17 who have been exposed to domestic violence. Using talk, play and art therapies, specialized therapists work with children in group, individual and family settings. Kids learn coping skills, positive communication, and positive behaviors, all while gaining new friends along the way!

Remember when you were little and you got to go to camp and play all day during the summer? Unfortunately, many families dealing with domestic violence are also dealing with financial hardships. The Family Justice Center is very excited to partner with the Safe Start program and Bar-T to develop the first ever **Safe Start Camp** for kids! This camp will allow dozens of children to attend summer camp during July and August 2019 absolutely free at 2 Bar-T Kids Camps locations in Montgomery County. This program gives parents a stress-free

solution to the pressures of summer childcare and gives children an opportunity to have fun and enjoy the summer. The Bar-T camp experience is filled with arts and crafts, music, sports, games, swimming, and field trips. The children will receive therapy, art play and mindfulness exercises with Safe Start Therapists weekly to continue their healing journey. The Family Justice Center is grateful for the generous donation and partnership with Bar-T to allow children to attend for free. We hope this camp will become a recurring

program, providing fun and healing to children in Safe Start for years to come!





In the Community

FJC staff have been busy this year tabling at resource fairs, giving interviews to the media and giving tours to visitors at the FJC.



Our team has been honored to participate in so many community events! Throughout this year, we've had the opportunity to talk about our Center and distribute materials at World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the Choose Respect Conference, the Latino Health Fair, the School and Community United in Partnership Conference, the Women's Legislative Briefing, the Montgomery County Public Schools Mental Health Resource Fair and more.



Tom Manion, FJC Director, has spoken about domestic violence and the Family Justice Center model throughout Montgomery County and to visiting delegations from Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and Uganda. In November 2018, Mr. Manion teamed up with the Forensic Nursing Unit at

Shady Grove Adventist Hospital to speak at the International Forensic Nursing Conference in Aracaju, Brazil.

The Family Justice Center also welcomes organizations and agencies to come and take a tour of the facility. This year, our visitors included Maryland Secretary of State John Wobensmith, the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention's Executive Director Glenn Fueston, the Washington Hebrew Congregation, local Girl Scout Troops, and staff from the Montgomery County Circuit Court, Legal Aid, and Stepping Stones Shelter just to name a few. To request a tour, please contact Tom at:

Thomas.Manion@montgomerycountymd.gov

Bethesda BEAT

After Plea, Furry Friends Arrive in Drove to Family Justice Center

More than 200 stuffed animals have been delivered to domestic violence resource center since Monday

Have you seen us in the news? This year, Bethesda Magazine published two articles about the Family Justice Center, MyMCMedia and County Cable Montgomery both produced videos on domestic violence featuring the FJC, and Tom Manion was interviewed alongside DVCC Member Cheryl Kravitz on the Montgomery Talks Podcast with Doug Tallman.

Montgomery County
FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

Montgomery County
**Family Justice
 Center Foundation**



Every year, the **Family Justice Center Foundation** receives donations for clients who receive services at the FJC. These donations enable our clients to take home emergency supplies such as toiletries, school supplies, diapers, wipes, winter coats, gloves and scarves. Children who accompany their parent leave with a brand-new stuffed animal and a brand-new book or toy to bring some comfort to them during a scary time. These donations come from a variety of generous individuals, corporations, organizations, agencies and student groups. We are so appreciative of the community support!

A huge THANK YOU to the following community partners for their incredible generosity this year:

- 4H Kids n Dogs Club
- Adventure Theatre MTC
- Akhmedova Ballet Academy
- American Sewing Guild - Rockville Pinups
- Bar-T
- Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department
- Center for Veterinary Medicine
- Congregation Or Chadash Social Action
- Covenant United Methodist Church
- Emergent BioSolutions
- Enterprise Holdings
- Farquhar MS National Junior Honor Society
- Glen Echo Fire Department
- Daughters of the American Revolution, Hungerford's Tavern Chapter



- Inspiration Community Church
- Jack and Jill Montgomery
- Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington
- Leidos
- Lerch, Early and Brewer
- Lions Clubs Burtonsville and Sandy Spring
- Marriot - Social Impact Division
- McLean Bible Church in Rockville
- MetroBethesda Rotary
- Miller, Miller and Canby
- Moms Club of Olney
- Moms Demand Action
- Rockville Morning Pinups – American Sewing Guild
- Shockwave Allstars
- Stephen Gould
- Unity of Gaithersburg
- Victims Rights Foundation

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