



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

## Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network, Inc.

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## Agency Overview

Peaceful Paths, Inc. is the state certified center that serves adult and child survivors of intimate partner violence in Alachua, Bradford, and Union counties. Peaceful Paths provides a wide range of free and confidential programs including emergency shelter, supportive housing, crisis helpline, trauma counseling and support groups for adults, teens, and children, high risk victim advocacy, child welfare advocacy, financial literacy and economic empowerment programs, legal services, professional education and training, violence prevention education, and community awareness. Peaceful Paths leads the coordinated community response to domestic violence in this region, and engages a comprehensive group of partners who collaboratively address system services and gaps. The agency promotes an empowerment-based philosophy of service delivery aimed at creating safety, support and a path to self-sufficiency for survivors and their children. Using advocacy and intervention, Peaceful Paths strives to create social change that impacts survivor safety and batterer accountability.

## History of the Agency

Peaceful Paths began its mission in the Gainesville area in 1974 as the Rape Information and Counseling Service (RICS), a grassroots organization that was formed to fight against sexual violence. In 1976, RICS began to expand its services to include battered women, and in 1977, established a spouse abuse hotline. In September of that year, the name of the organization was changed to the Sexual and Physical Abuse Resource Center to better reflect the changing mission. In January of 1978, SPARC was granted a lease on a shelter site and the shelter opened with its first client on March 30 of that year. In 1997, the agency acquired a transitional housing facility that expanded focus to include supportive housing for survivors. In October of 2000, SPARC underwent another name change to refocus the community on the mission of ending domestic violence. In October of 2015, Peaceful Paths opened the Dutton-Schilling Emergency Services Campus, a 72 bed housing community for shelter and supportive housing for survivors and their children. Peaceful Paths continually works to expand comprehensive services to adult and child victims and survivors of intimate partner violence.



Peaceful Paths  
Campus

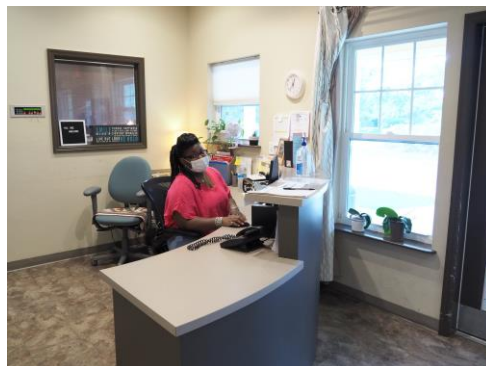


### **A Word from our Executive Director**

No one could have predicted the difficult year that 2020 presented to the world. The COVID pandemic has created an entirely new way to work and serve, and I am proud to say that Peaceful Paths staff rose to the challenge, never closing our doors to outreach or shelter participants throughout the past year. By altering services to accommodate social distancing and instating safety protocols, we have been able to effectively prevent any community spread on our campus. This has allowed us to continue to the critical services that adults and children have needed through this chaotic period.

Domestic violence occurs in the best and worst of times because it is not caused by external forces. It is choice behavior. Additional stresses, like employment loss or addiction or a pandemic, may exacerbate the situation, but the choice remains under the control of batterer. Most individuals facing these difficulties do not resort to relationship control and violence as a coping mechanism. Batterers frequently use external factors as an excuse. But the reality is that they have control but they choose to exert their power in harmful, hurtful ways.

This year has seen many obstacles to services and many funders, donors and supporters step up to help us overcome these obstacles. Pivoting to online and virtual programming, fundraising and education all led to unexpected positive outcomes. These included access for individuals who had otherwise been unable to attend services in person, entire grade level student populations being exposed to the Healthy Relationship Skills curriculum, and the Guest Chef Cocktail Party Virtual Auction being a huge success. The lessons of the past year included remember that our commitment to social change requires perseverance and flexibility, and ability to adapt and a willingness to commit even when the outcomes are uncertain. We have always dedicated ourselves to values that focus on the present moment and the long term result, and they served us well during 2020. We anticipate that they will continue to carry us forward in the coming year's adjustment to another new normal!



## MISSION AND THEORY OF CHANGE

### MISSION STATEMENT

Peaceful Paths exists to save lives and create change

### Value Statements

\*Autonomy\*Choice\*Communication \*Community\*Courage\*Diversity\*Empathy \*Equality\*Flexibility

\*Growth\*Honesty & Integrity \*Hope\*Independence\*Innovation\*Patience \*Peace

\*Respect\*Safety\*Teamwork\*Trust

### THEORY OF CHANGE

- Expert Safety Planning process
- Collaborative advocacy
- Community resources and referrals
- Innovative outreach, residential, and prevention programs
- Connecting with survivors where they are to meet needs and identify barriers
- Open to change and feedback to close gaps
- Robust community partnerships
- Non-traditional approaches
- Stewardship of resources to maximize client benefits
- Strong community reputation and presence

### SERVICES UTILIZED FOR 2020

Total adults in residential services	197
Total children in residential services	124
Outreach clients	1002
Safety Plans Completed	4765
Hours of Counseling	6833
Days of Shelter	34335
Total Client Contacts	29633

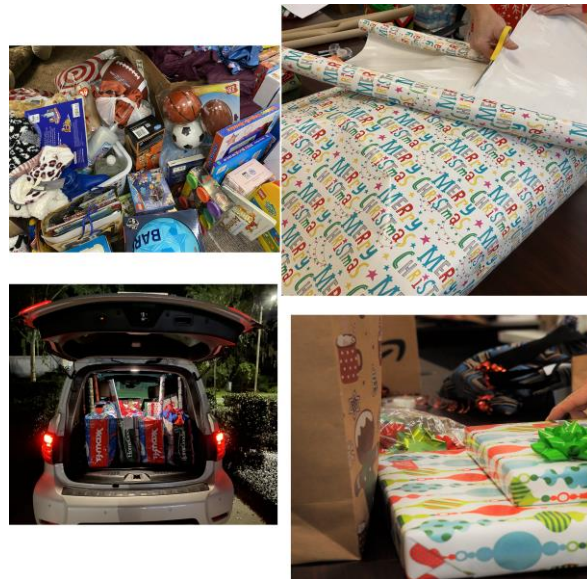
### Highlights from 2020

Peaceful Paths expanded critical core services for survivors and their children again this year. Legal services for injunctions were enhanced by adding new attorneys, and increasing pro bono partnerships. Economic Empowerment programs continued to make an impact as COVID created financial crises for survivors and the agency pivoted to meet the needs with an increase in the scope and number of financial literacy classes offered throughout the year. Child and youth programs reached a record number of students in programs from Head Start to High School. Permanent Housing advocates were able to find community housing for 46 families and relocated an additional 187 survivors into safe housing through the Attorney General’s Office project. Fundraising also experienced a record year, with tours, events, and pledges moving the agency forward with vital client services support.

### Six Feet Walk



### Holiday Giving



## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM SERVICES

### **Emergency Shelter Services**

Peaceful Paths provides safe, confidential emergency housing on the Dutton-Schilling Housing Campus. Advocates provide services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to the adults and children who need intervention and support to address the violence in their lives.

Shelter services provided but not limited to:

- Safety planning.
- Individualized service plan for survivors who are in shelter 72 hours or more.
- Emergency food, clothing, and hygiene products.
- Resources for survivor to fill prescriptions.
- Transportation either by bus or agency vehicle.

### Eligibility for services

Peaceful Paths will provide services to eligible individuals regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, citizenship, immigration status, marital status or language spoken. Male survivors will be sheltered on the campus. To be considered eligible for emergency shelter services, individuals should be:

- Experiencing abuse by their current or former intimate partner or who are in danger of being abused by their current or former intimate partner.
- Victims of Sexual Assault who have been screened by Alachua County Victims Services or Victims Advocate from Bradford, or Union Counties.
- Residents of Alachua, Bradford, or Union counties or referred by another certified center because of safety issues.

Special needs and special circumstances are dealt with on a case by case basis and decisions are made based on the best interest of the client as well as the ability of the shelter to meet their needs.

### **Helpline**

Trained advocates answer the Peaceful Paths Helpline 24 hours 7 days a week. Advocates are trained to immediately assess a caller for danger and lethality, complete a personalized safety plan, screen for admission for shelter and provide information and referrals that are appropriate to meet a caller's need. Staff will maintain confidentiality.

### **Counseling and Support Services**

Peaceful Paths provides a range of counseling services to adults and children/youth in the three county area aimed at providing education and support to individuals and families dealing with domestic violence. Individuals requesting services from Peaceful Paths must be domestic violence survivors, either in the past or present. This counseling is designed to act as a method of education and support, which can help to empower the survivor in making healthy choices. Counseling is not designed to be professional therapy, but instead to facilitate personal growth and sharing between survivors and with staff. Peaceful Paths does not recommend or practice couples counseling in any form or any family counseling that includes the presence of an alleged batterer.

Counseling services include:

- Adult support groups
- Teen support groups
- Parenting groups
- Trauma counseling
- Crisis counseling
- Lethality Assessments and safety planning
- Specialized Support Services (Spanish speaking, high lethality, men's groups, advanced groups)

### **Case Management**

Peaceful Paths is committed to providing quality advocacy to all clients that we serve. This includes safeguarding confidential information, supporting clients through agency/court proceedings, accompanying clients to court and testifying on their behalf as requested, making needed referrals, providing follow-up as necessary, and maintaining accurate records to ensure continuity of services. This commitment to advocacy also means adhering to interagency agreements and collaborative agreements in place with other agencies. By working interactively with partners, we can ensure that client needs are met in more comprehensive way than we alone can provide. Emphasis includes:

- Identifying resources available to survivors.
- Supporting survivor to identify goals and set priorities. Survivor's goals will be documented in a service plan.
- Providing internal and external referrals to assist in goal/objective achievement.
- Establishing appropriate length of stay based on goals.
- Identifying progression toward completion of survivor's goals and objectives.
- Adapting survivor's goals as other needs emerges.

### **Supportive and Permanent Housing Programs**

The mission of the Supportive Housing Program is to provide survivors of domestic violence a low barrier option for housing first services as they work to secure permanent housing. Using the 6 units of Extended Shelter on the Emergency Services Campus, survivors of domestic violence and their children can access free, supportive housing for up to 12 months. The program is designed to provide residential services while survivors work to obtain permanent housing in the community. The units may be single family or communal as needs and demands require. As a part of their stay, Peaceful Paths will provide survivors with transportation assistance, employment counseling, life planning groups, individual and group counseling, housing advocacy, and links to community and mainstream resources.

### **Victim Advocacy Program**

Outreach Victim Advocates are present in the judicial system in Alachua, Bradford, and Union Counties. Advocates work with our attorney and local partners in Law Enforcement and the judicial system to provide injunction assistance, safety planning, lethality assessment, case management, crisis intervention, and information and referral services. Advocates are also present for all court proceedings for injunctions, and for dependency and mediation services as needed. The agency also provides High Risk advocacy services known as INVEST (Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team) and HRT (High Risk Team) that work with local law enforcement agencies to identify high risk perpetrators victims for enhanced support and services. This program is designed to reduce domestic violence homicides and increase victim safety.

### **Children's Program**

Children's programs are available at both outreach and shelter facilities. Peaceful Paths' children's programs serve to protect and empower children who have either witnessed or been the targets of domestic abuse by teaching children and parents tools for violence free living. Advocates are mandatory reporters of abuse. Peaceful Paths' Children's Program provides services to children and parents who are affected by domestic violence. Services are designed to educate, support, and empower the children in participation. These services include:

- Educational and social support groups
- Childcare
- Children's case management
- Individual counseling
- Child and Youth Assessment



### **Violence Prevention Program**

The Peaceful Paths Violence Prevention Program is designed to end violence through primary prevention activities. Primary prevention works to stop violence before it begins and educate individuals about healthy relationship skills. The program partners with community agencies and local schools to provide education through collaborative curriculum development and presentations. The program also offers trainings to students, teachers, and agencies regarding social change and the elements of popular education. The curriculum and activities, which coordinate with FL Sunshine State Standards, include topics such as:

- Healthy relationships
- Gender roles and stereotypes
- Media literacy
- Effective communication
- Conflict Resolution

### **Legal Services**

The Peaceful Paths Injunction for Protection legal project provides free legal services to survivors of domestic violence seeking restraining orders. These orders include domestic violence, stalking, dating violence, and sexual violence. Attorneys will work with survivors with the following legal needs:

- Injunction petition completion, filing, and revision;
- Review denied injunctions and refile;
- Representation at court hearings for actions for domestic, dating, sexual, or stalking injunctions;
- Representation of victims as respondents;
- Legal advice for any legal issue a survivor presents;
- Provide legal referrals for issues beyond the scope of the project;
- Provide follow up after court proceedings; and
- Provide legal services under the project to outside referrals.



## Financial Overview

### Peaceful Paths

Draft Agency Budget - FY20-21

INCOME	
Grant Income	
Federal	\$ 1,767,090
State	\$ 218,051
Local	\$ 359,357
<b>Grant Income SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,344,498</b>
Fundraising	\$ 150,000
Donations	\$ 196,888
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 2,691,386</b>

EXPENSES	
Personnel	\$ 2,019,969
Professional Fees	\$ 165,280
Travel	\$ 28,090
Maintenance	\$ 30,675
Client Expense	\$ 205,964
Office Expense	\$ 127,827
Capital Outlay, Taxes & Licenses	\$ 6,400
Rent	\$ 9,818
Insurance	\$ 44,613
Interest	\$ 12,000
Fundraiser Expense	\$ 39,250
Misc Expense	\$ 1,500
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$ 2,691,386</b>

		Summary
Annual Budget FY19-20	\$ 2,396,295	<b>Notes:</b> Federal Grants increased by 16% HUD Housing Position and DV Bonus - \$56K ESFP (FEMA) increased by \$42K - client assistance funds
<b>Annual Budget FY20-21</b>	<b>\$ 2,691,386</b>	
Percent Change	12%	
Grants FY19-20	\$ 1,895,747	VOCA - New positions, possible project money for infrastructure and vehicle(s)
<b>Grants FY20-21</b>	<b>\$ 2,208,311</b>	
Percent Change	16%	
Salary FY19-20	\$ 1,860,917	Local Grants increased by 15% Children's Trust, CHOICES, and ElderCare Funding
<b>Salary FY20-21</b>	<b>\$ 2,019,969</b>	
Percent Change		
<b>Fundraising FY20-21</b>	<b>\$ 150,000</b>	Lost Fundraising/Donation Revenue Guest Chef, Amazing Give, Beer Fest, Medici, Etc. Corporate Sponsorship Development Plan
FY19-20 Fundraising	\$ 95,712	
<b>Donations FY20-21</b>	<b>\$ 202,502</b>	
FY19-20 Donations	\$ 189,046	

#### Highlights

- Audit report had no findings and demonstrates no going concerns
- Funding growth consistently over the past five years
- Reserves of \$200,000
- Land for Sale under contract
- PPP and Cares Act funding

## Impacts



LK came to us with her son after they had been held captive by her husband for some time. She came to with a lot of medical needs and very little outside support. We were able to work with her and get services set up for her disabled child, who had been largely neglected due to the abusive partner. After months of receiving support in our Emergency Shelter, mom and child were able to move into our Supportive Housing on campus. Using our network of resources and support, she received a vehicle from one of our donors, financial literacy support, and has since gotten a full-time job. Thanks to great community partners, her child is in school, and she has moved on to safe, permanent housing and is once again independent.



SC came to us this year seeking support. She is over 80 and met with an attorney for injunction for protection after an incident occurred and her partner was incarcerated. An intake for advocacy and counseling provided support and put her into contact support group and more safety planning. We provided movers to assist getting her belongings into a place that she owned. Advocates also encouraged her to get her children involved. She has since had her children take her home to be safe with them. She stated that she could not have done this on her own and is appreciative of all the support and assistance from Peaceful Paths.