



Stewardship REPORT

SPRING 2021 DONOR UPDATE

Advances in Shelter and Housing at WEAVE

The need for safe and confidential shelter for victims of domestic violence has always been a driving need. Before we incorporated in 1978, creating safe shelter was a challenge and call to action. In our earliest years, we relied on an informal network of shared rooms or rented housing. Now, during the pandemic, we have risen to the current situation and turned to partnerships with local motel chains to allow us to safely shelter families temporarily, while keeping families at the Safehouse safely distanced and all of our cottages and apartments full.

WEAVE's ability to provide as much shelter and housing as possible is

essential — now more than ever. Our 125 beds of emergency and transitional housing reflect more than 85% of all the shelter capacity for victims of domestic violence in Sacramento County.

Given the significance of shelter and housing to creating stability for survivors and their children, the pages of this Stewardship Report are devoted to these services. It is vital that you — our generous supporters — know that you are funding much more than just a building. With your gifts, comprehensive supportive services are wrapped around every family. Your donations transform the wood and nails into a safe haven, with programs that are continually adapting to the changing needs of survivors.

WEAVE has been a pioneer in building shelters that respond to the needs of victims, and we can't do this work without you by our side.



Thank you!

With you by our side, we can find the most effective ways to meet the challenges of survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.

Your support ensures we can adopt the innovative solutions necessary.

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Starting with Emergency Shelter

In 1986, we built our first Safehouse. It was the first shelter created for the needs of victims of domestic violence in California, and it was only the third such shelter in the nation.

Our original Safehouse used a communal model that maximized occupancy, with two to three families sharing a room, shared bathrooms, and a single kitchen. While the approach tried to maximize space, the design was not centered around those who have been dealing with trauma. Families in crisis struggled, and they lacked space of their own.

When we built our current Safehouse in 2009, we sought balance. Each family has their own room, with shared kitchens and bathrooms over three wings. There is comradery without compromising privacy.

These adaptations have been crucial during the pandemic, as they allowed isolated space for each family. Even with the improvement, we

have had to reduce our shelter capacity to allow for social distancing. In response, we turned back to our earliest solutions — this time using hotel rooms with kitchenettes, as safe temporary shelter for families in crisis.

While in the Safehouse program, victims are safe from the recent violence and are offered a place of respite to evaluate their immediate and long-term needs. While here, survivors are matched with a case manager and have access to therapeutic counseling and support groups. While COVID-19 requires that services be delivered remotely, we ensure that survivors can access the technology needed to connect with their case manager by phone or secure video services.

In 2015, WEAVE opened a second location — Open House, to ensure a safe place for those who lived near the existing Safehouse. Open House is comprised of one-bedroom apartments, which provide for greater privacy and autonomy. This model offers an alternative for survivors for whom communal bathrooms may be challenging, for those with medical conditions that require greater control over living space, and for those with service animals and pets that must move with them.



Transitional Housing

Our Transitional Housing program has been crucial to being able to maximize access to housing. Since we opened the first cottages on the Safehouse campus in 2012, we have had greater demand than capacity. This is why we designated two of our Open House apartments as transitional housing in 2015, and in late 2019, we completed construction of two additional cottages. Each unit has been full since the onset of COVID-19. When families were able to move

onto permanent housing elsewhere, we quickly completed maintenance and moved in a new family.

While staying in transitional housing, survivors continue to be supported by a case manager. Together, they build on the survivor's strengths and accomplishments to move towards a stable future where the entire family can thrive. For some, this means focusing on job readiness and improving job skills — in *(see next page)*

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some cases with clients completing paid internships at WEAVE's thrift stores. For others, it means seeking promotions at current jobs to increase pay and opportunities. Many families have faced temporary setbacks and job loss due to the pandemic.

Regardless of where a family is at on their journey, knowing they have safe housing, at no cost for up to 24 months, enables them to save precious funds and rebuild their financial lives. Even with expansion of transitional housing, we continue to have multiple families applying every time there is a vacancy.

Our dedicated staff builds relationships with landlords that allow them to advocate

on behalf of all clients. Through these relationships, we can secure housing even when a client's rental history may be blemished due to past evictions or late payments caused by the abuser. With this support, survivors can demonstrate their resiliency and commitment to rebuilding their lives and begin to establish a rental history of their own.

We know that more long-term housing solutions are needed for victims of domestic violence. We continue to work to expand housing options, advocate for stable housing for vulnerable victims, and encourage policy decisions that protect the families we serve.

We can secure housing even when a rental history may be blemished.

Honoring Resiliency & Strength

WEAVE's case management approach has long focused on identifying and dealing with barriers. We know that each of us has our own personal challenges to overcome. Focusing on obstacles can too easily result in a deficit-based outlook when working with vulnerable families. This orientation can perpetuate difficulties for victims who have repeatedly been told they are failures and at-fault for the abuse they endure.

However, the reality is that survivors of domestic violence

are incredibly resilient. It is their strength that allows them to navigate the complexities of an abusive relationship. It is this strength that enables them to leave — often with nothing — knowing they and their children deserve better. As a survivor-centered organization, it only made sense that our case management be anchored from a place of strength.

When WEAVE learned of the Strengths Model case management approach, we knew it was a better choice. This evidence-based approach was first used to support individuals with mental illness who struggled to remain stably housed. The program seeks to identify the unique strengths of each family and build the case management next steps based on these assets.

Expanding resources like this for survivors builds on our history of pioneering new solutions and opportunities. Our leadership and constant evolution is only possible because of donors like you. Your support gives us the stability we need to look deeply at what is working well for survivors and what can be improved.



Financial Abuse & Client Prosperity

Several years ago, we began looking deeply at the prevalence of financial abuse among the victims who turned to WEAVE for help. National statistics indicated that more than 90% of all domestic violence victims experienced some form of financial abuse. When we began screening for indicators of financial abuse more intentionally, we found that virtually every victim of domestic violence or sex trafficking we served experienced some degree of financial abuse or exploitation.

The range of examples was extensive. We served victims who were not allowed by their abuser to work, so they remained financially dependent. Others reported abusers harassing them at work, resulting in frequent job loss and difficulty finding work that would provide them with financial independence. Others talked about abusers taking out credit in their name, so they suffered from the damage to their credit rating. Victims of sex trafficking talked about being forced to engage in sex for money — money they were required to immediately give to the trafficker, leaving them completely dependent on the trafficker for food and shelter.

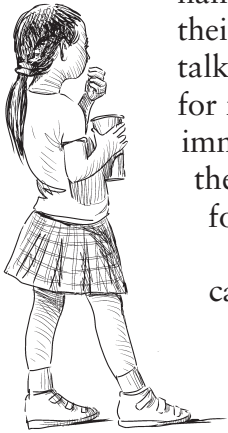
Our initial response was to create dedicated positions to work one-on-one with clients and address financial abuse. We advocated and secured the ability to pull credit reports on behalf of victims

— the first domestic violence agency in the nation to do so. We walked through those credit reports with victims, to challenge illegally obtained credit and to pay outstanding bills. Staff and trained volunteers provided assistance in creating family budgets and establishing savings plans.

As we talked with clients, we found they were grateful for the assistance in addressing the financial abuse, but they shared frustrations. They needed to repeatedly tell their stories and relive the trauma each time — first during the screening to enter the shelter, then to their case manager, and then again to the financial empowerment advocate. They also struggled with a sense that no one really knew and understood the full scope of their abuse.

While our intent was good, the impact was not as survivor-centered or trauma-informed as it could have been. Now, every Advocate receives training on financial abuse, in a shift to a Client Prosperity approach. By centering the survivor as the expert of their situation, we can improve our ability to best support them and improve the outcomes for them and their families.

Because of generous donors like you, we have been able to look deeply at the impact of financial abuse, create responses, and evolve. Without the flexibility of your support, our ability to serve victims would be limited.



Thank you!

It's only through your partnership that we can support survivors in healing and ending continued abuse and violence. Safe shelter and housing will always be a critical part of this equation. We strive to find the most effective solutions, and your support gives us the flexibility to provide the services for those coming to WEAVE for help.



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OUR MISSION is to promote safe and healthy relationships and support survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.