



# The Friendship Center

NEWSLETTER | FALL 2020



Right after the stay at home order was announced this spring, we heard from a client who had been planning to move in with friends to escape her abusive relationship. Her friends were now quarantined, and this was no longer a viable option.

Another client had fled an abusive relationship in another state and arrived in Montana not only needing to find somewhere to live, find a job, and

completely start over, but she also had to quarantine with her children for 14 days.

Even without the challenges of this pandemic, escaping an abusive relationship is fraught with decisions around safety, finances, legal issues, and shelter.

Domestic violence is a "Shadow Pandemic," affecting one in four women and one in ten men. For most of us, do-

mestic violence lurks in the shadows of our lives, but for too many it is a daily reality.

Last year, The Friendship Center served 670 clients, individuals seeking lives free from violence.

The only way to significantly address this issue is to shine a spotlight on it. We cannot, must not, look away. We must, as a community, **Face the Violence.**

We hope you will join us to help raise awareness in our community about domestic violence and to raise funding to ensure that victims of domestic violence will continue to find safe haven and hope through the services provided by The Friendship Center.

The Friendship Center is the only DVSA shelter in Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, and Broadwater Counties. Our mission is to be a safe haven for those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and to empower our community to flourish in relationships free from violence.



**Open to the Public:** Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Location:** 1430 Sanders, Helena MT 59601

**Call:** 406-442-6800 (Anytime) | **Email:** [officem@thefriendshipcenter.org](mailto:officem@thefriendshipcenter.org)

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## Face the Violence cont'd

Our goal is to raise \$100 for every one of the 670 clients we served last year, people who have faced the violence.

Examples of what a \$100 contribution provides include:

- A night of safe shelter and food for one client
- A phone that cannot be traced by an abuser
- Two crisis counseling sessions with an advocate.

To Face the Violence, our community, individually and collectively, must bring this issue out of the shadows and into the spotlight.

Domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking thrive in darkness. Let's face these issues head on together by learning how to be intervening bystanders. Let's learn the warning signs of domestic violence. Let's talk to our children about what consent means and the pillars of healthy relationships.

Remember, you do not have to do these things alone. The Friendship Center is the community's resource, and we hope you will contact us for information, for resources, for partnerships, and for support.

### Know the signs of an abusive relationship

Domestic violence, also called intimate partner violence, domestic abuse, or relationship abuse, is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. (See the power and control wheel on page 4 for examples of these behaviors.)

There are many signs that might in-

dicate a friend is in an abusive relationship. For example, a partner doesn't like when your friend spends time with you, your friend often cancels plans, or your friend is just noticeably unhappy or has unexplained injuries or bruises.

If you are concerned for a friend, let them know gently and with compassion that you are there for them. Listen patiently without judgement. Help them develop a safety plan. And remember that an advocate is available to help 24/7 at The Friendship Center.

### Be an intervening bystander:

Behaviors like sexist jokes, innuendo, and catcalling all contribute to a culture that promotes and condones domestic and sexual violence, even if it is not intentional. Individually and as a

community, we must Face The Violence and practice calling out these behaviors.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center suggests intervening in a respectful, direct, and honest

way. For example, if you hear victim blaming, they suggest using one of these examples:

- You need to stop.
- That's so inappropriate.
- What you just said made me feel uncomfortable. Here's why...
- Do you understand how problematic that is?
- We need to talk about what you just said.
- What do you mean by that?
- Why would you say that?

We know it won't be easy, but if we want to change our culture, we have to

help change the behaviors that promote oppression and violence.

### Promote Consent & Healthy Relationships

Consent has risen to the surface in a whole new light as a result of the pandemic. Covid-19 has offered us an opportunity to practice gaining consent almost daily as we navigate people's comfort level with in-person interactions and understand each other's risk of exposure.

In healthy relationships, it is essential to discuss and respect each other's boundaries.

From a young age, learning consent not only helps protect children from predators but also sets them up for more success in their relationships later in their lives.

According to [loveisrespect.org](https://loveisrespect.org), there also are some red flags that indicate your partner may not respect consent. These red flags include if they:

- Pressure or guilt you into doing things you may not want to do
- Make you feel like you "owe" them — because you're dating, or they gave you a gift, etc.
- React negatively (with sadness, anger or resentment) if you say "no" or don't immediately consent
- Ignore your wishes and don't pay attention to non-verbal cues that show you aren't consenting like pulling away

In this day and age, modeling healthy relationships, respect for other people, and demonstrating asking for consent can be just what our community needs to bring this pandemic of domestic violence out of the shadows and help us all Face the Violence.

We have the power to inoculate our community from this shadow pandemic. Join us and be part of the movement to Face the Violence. 🌈

**Sponsor one or more "Faces" to help us bring domestic violence out of the shadows. To make a donation to the Face the Violence campaign, go to [friendshipcenter.org/donate](https://friendshipcenter.org/donate).**

## Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear friends,  
I hope this finds you safe and well. As you may recall, last spring our newsletter went out just after the pandemic had become a reality in Montana, and there were so many unknowns. I am proud to say that we have kept our shelter open and have continued to serve our clients in a way that has kept everyone healthy and safe.

We have settled into a new routine and are preparing ourselves for the long winter ahead. “Settled” is probably not the right word. There is nothing settling about these times we are living through. I’m sure you’ll agree that this “new normal” isn’t normal at all. The best analogy I can come up with is that it’s like driving on ice: we are all now subject to an ongoing baseline of stress which runs beneath everything else we have to manage each day. As we all do our best to cope, let’s give ourselves – and each other – extra grace and understanding as we each navigate these turbulent waters.

This pandemic has provided each of us a taste of what it is like to lose control in our lives. This lack of agency can lead us to behave in ways we have not experienced before, and it can further entrench our tendencies. Control is an issue we talk about a lot at The Friendship Center because power and control are the underlying forces behind domestic and sexual violence (please see the Power and Control Wheel on page 4).

When an abusive person feels a loss of power and control in their world, they may respond by escalating their abuse, in a violent effort to exert control over something or someone. At The Friendship Center, we are finding that in many cases, this pandemic is leading to an escalation in the level of

violence that victims of domestic and sexual violence are experiencing. Simultaneously, COVID-19 has created increased barriers for these victims to access services.

Every one of us is experiencing increased isolation in one way or another. Isolation is a very common way in which abusers try to

maintain control over their victims. This pandemic provides ample opportunity for abusers to not only isolate their victims from their friends, family, and other support systems, but also to keep tabs on their victims throughout the day.

As we work with clients, we are finding that some of the avenues for support and aid which would normally be available to them have been altered or cut-off due to the pandemic. Travel bans, stay-at-home orders, and decreased travel options, make it much more difficult for our clients to relocate away from their abusers. Furthermore, friends and family who might normally step up to provide shelter or other forms of support may be less able to do so now.

That’s why I want to emphasize that our services are available 24/7 via

our crisis hotline at 406-442-6800. We have advocates on call, always available to listen, to help problem solve, and to safety plan.

We have had to make some very difficult decisions in regards to running our own shelter as well. We are going to great lengths to ensure that anyone moving into shelter is healthy. This means putting clients up in hotels while we await test results, prior to moving them into shelter.

Furthermore, our county public health department has recommended that we keep our shelter numbers down to a lower capacity, in an effort to reduce the risk of infection. Through the summer, with the help of hotel stays, we managed to keep our shelter at half capacity, so that residents could each have their own bathroom for themselves and their children. Obviously, this is not a limitless option for us financially, and as we move into cold weather months, I anticipate the need for our shelter will increase and we will necessarily make adjustments to meet that need.

Despite all of this, I remain hopeful. Those facing violence continue to rise up and say “no more.” As long as they are spurred by the hope to seek a new path, we will be here to walk beside them. We too will face the violence, and I hope you will join us in the Face the Violence campaign so that together, as a community, we shine a light on domestic violence.



Jenny Eck



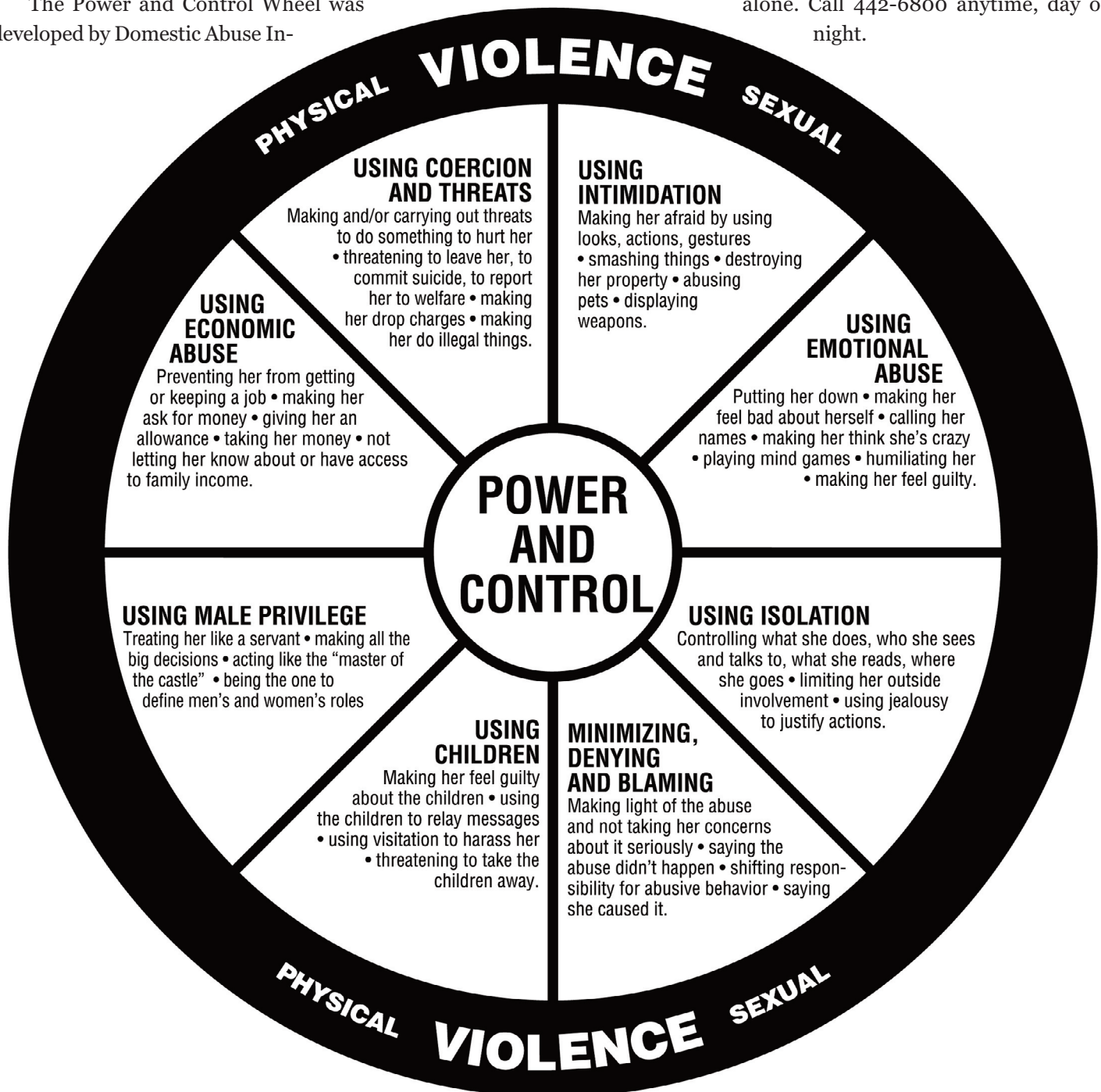
# Power and Control Wheel

**D**omestic and sexual violence are often the physical manifestations of more broadly abusive relationships, and at the root is power and control. The Power and Control Wheel illustrates the most common tactics used by abusers to wield their control over their victims, including using economic abuse, emotional abuse, and minimizing a person's experiences.

The Power and Control Wheel was developed by Domestic Abuse In-

tervention Programs in Duluth, Minnesota, and has become a valuable tool used to illustrate the common patterns of abuse.

If you are experiencing these behaviors or know someone who is, an advocate at The Friendship Center is available. You do not have to wait for things to escalate to become violent. You also do not need to "Face the Violence" alone. Call 442-6800 anytime, day or night.



# Stalking: A Crime Deserving More Awareness, Attention

Generally, as a society we are aware of the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence and have taken great strides in openly talking about these crimes. Stalking, however, is much less understood. Criminologists are beginning to recognize the severity of this behavior, and its impact on victims. Law enforcement officers are now trained to take stalking seriously, recognizing that it is not only a form of personal terrorism, but it also can be a precursor to intimate partner homicide.

Last winter, Friendship Center staff attended a conference where stalking was highlighted as a crime deserving more awareness and attention. The presenter told a harrowing story about a woman who had left an abusive relationship and moved away to an undisclosed location, in the hopes of starting her life over. One morning, she left for work as usual. She unlocked her car and slid into the driver's seat but immediately felt that something was amiss. The hair on the back of her neck stood up. There, in the cup holder, was

a steaming hot cup of Starbucks coffee, prepared just the way she liked it. Her abuser's pet name for her was written on the side of the cup. She was absolutely terrified.

She understood, with crystal clear clarity, her abuser's message to her: he knew where she lived, he knew her schedule, and he could still access her safe spaces without permission. And yet, here was her quandary: how could she report this? What would it sound like to call 911 and say, "someone left a hot cup of coffee with my name on it in my car?" Would they take her seriously? He had delivered a terrifying message that only she understood. And therein lies the challenge that victims of stalking face. Savvy abusers understand this and use stalking as a way to wield power over their victims.

Thankfully, policy makers and law enforcement officers are becoming increasingly responsive on this issue. Studies show that 76% of femicide victims were stalked before being murdered. One in six women and one in 17 men will be stalked in their lifetimes. (Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center) Nationally, 7.5 million people are stalked each year (safehorizon.org). Across the nation, laws have been updated to provide higher penalties for stalking and work is being done to educate law enforcement, prosecutors, and the courts on the need to hold stalkers accountable.

Generally defined as a pattern of behavior targeted at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel

fear, context is critical when someone is being stalked. While it may seem innocent on the surface, stalking causes distress and fear to the person who is the target of the actions. The difference between being harassed and being stalked is fear. If you ever don't understand why something is scary to a victim, it's always best to ask to learn more.

**85%** Stalking often precedes intimate partner homicide. In 85% of completed and 75% of attempted femicides, there was at least one episode of stalking the year prior.



**1 in 7** stalking victims move as a result of their victimization<sup>3</sup>

**52.5%** current or former intimate partners

**31.5%** acquaintances

**16%** strangers

**9%** family members

**2.5%** people of authority

Less than **40%** of stalking victims report to law enforcement<sup>4</sup>



**2/3** of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week. Many pursue daily<sup>5</sup>



Information and graphics provided by Stalking, Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center.

Intimate partners pose the greatest threats because they know their victims best: their schedule, their social network, their triggers and how best to upset them. Even if stalking did not occur as part of a domestic violence relationship, it will often occur once the relationship is over.

What's more, stalking can be hugely disruptive to the victim's life. The impacts can include mental health issues like depression, anxiety, insomnia, and social dysfunction. One in eight employed stalking victims lose time from work, and one in seven relocate to escape the reach of their stalker.

If you or someone you know is experiencing stalking, The Friendship Center is here to help. We trust you when you say you are afraid and need help. 📞

## Friendship Center Mondays

Park Avenue Bakery donates 10% of sales to The Friendship Center on the first Monday of each month



### No Visible Bruises

We have the perfect book for your next book club or if you just want to dive deeper into understanding domestic violence.

*No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us* by Rachel Louise Snyder explores the power and control dynamics driving domestic violence and uses a domestic violence-related homicide in Billings as a case study to drive home her message. Written in an accessible manner, it will help you understand that if we Face the Violence, we can stem the wave of violence in our community.

Montana Book Co. will donate 10% of the proceeds from the sale of this book during the month of October to The Friendship Center. Preorder a copy by emailing [montanabookco@gmail.com](mailto:montanabookco@gmail.com). 🐾

## Meet Melissa Magnuson, Residential Care Manager

Growing up in Minnesota in the land of lakes, I never dreamt that I'd be moving to the land of mountains. When my family moved to Montana four years ago, we were in awe of the beauty that surrounded us. We fell in love with the landscape, the history, and the people of Helena who were warm and friendly.

In a town with many of the conveniences of a big city, it still feels like a small town. I knew that I wanted to find a job in the non-profit sector to fulfill my desire to help people.

Working with families as the Residential Care Manager at The Friendship Center has given me fulfillment in so many ways. From making connections with people in the community, to seeing clients succeed, The Friendship Center is such a great community asset.

As the Residential Care Manager, I work closely with our clients living on-site. Once they move into our shelter, I meet with our residents weekly. We work together to help set goals for their future, and I connect them to resources including health care, public benefits, legal services, and permanent safe housing. When available, we provide material assistance including the items our generous community donates to The Friendship Center. Every person I work with has different needs and different goals. Seeing their progress is very rewarding.

I also collaborate with direct service advocate Sarah Kamis to schedule volunteers to cover the crisis line. Our crisis line is available 24/7, and when our offices are closed, we have a dedicated group of volunteers who answer those calls.

In my free time I enjoy camping with my husband, two children, and our dog, volunteering, and cooking. I've enjoyed exploring new hiking trails and seeing all that natural beauty that Montana has to offer. I look forward to continuing to learn more about this great state and seeing the hidden treasures that make it so amazing. 🐾



Residential Care Manager Melissa Magnuson and her family



## Crisis Line Volunteer Spotlight: Madi Weisberg

Crisis do not necessarily happen during normal working hours. If you find yourself in a situation where you do not feel safe, need emotional support, or you are at the hospital after a sexual assault, you always will find an advocate available when you call The Friendship Center's Crisis Line.

The Friendship Center's crisis line is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, thanks to our rock star volunteers like Madi Weisberg. Madi moved to Montana three and a half years ago for many of the things that a lot of people around here love: mountains, time outdoors, and new adventures.

### Why is it important to you to volunteer?

Volunteering with The Friendship Center is an important part of how I connect with my community. I feel a responsibility to contribute, and because I'm pretty stable in crises and care about this work, volunteering on the crisis line makes sense for me. There is a serious and consistent need for prevention and intervention for people experiencing domestic and sexual violence in our community and beyond. I appreciate how volunteering on the crisis line keeps me connected to realities that, while I may not be

living them directly, are so potent in our world.

### What do you find rewarding about volunteering?

I enjoy getting to know the clients and being able to provide even a small amount of relief amid a crisis. I've spent hours on the phone with a single



Volunteer Madi Weisberg and her dog Phoenix

client who has nobody else to talk to and have other clients whom I've come to know by name after receiving their calls over months. The moments I enjoy most are those when we meet in person. I love digging around in The Friendship Center storage room to put together a goodie bag of toiletries and food for a client's emergency hotel stay and the relief and appreciation for the client from that small act of support.

### What is important for our community supporters to know?

People should know that their support of The Friendship Center makes a real and immediate impact. The food, clothes, furniture, and toiletries that people donate go directly to clients in and out of shelter. The gift cards for gas and cell phones and the monetary donations make it possible for a client to spend a night in a safe

place, get to a job interview, or move somewhere they can start anew. We use those resources all the time, and they make very important impacts on the lives of clients. And lastly, Friendship Center staff are rock stars who deserve tons of admiration and appreciation. They make themselves available outside of office hours to be a backup for the volunteer on the crisis line and are always compassionate, understanding, and grateful.

### What do you do outside of volunteering?

I've been sticking around Montana more this summer because my partner and I recently purchased a fixer upper and are spending lots of time learning as we go. We have a pitbull, Phoenix, whom we adopted from the Humane Society a couple of years ago and who loves a good cuddle. I work with the Montana Family Planning Program, which provides grants to health clinics around the state to provide sexual and reproductive health services on a sliding fee scale. 🐾

## Volunteers Needed

If you have always thought about doing more to end domestic and sexual violence in our community, The Friendship Center is hosting a hybrid Crisis Line Advocate training the first week of November. Twenty hours of live training will be hosted through video conferencing and 19 hours will be self-paced online trainings. Contact Gina or Sarah at (406)442-6800 for more information.

### Training Schedule

Monday November 2nd 5:30-7:30  
Thursday November 5th 5:30-7:30  
Saturday November 7th 8:30-5:30  
Sunday November 8th 8:30-5:30



Donate **TODAY** to support ending domestic and sexual violence in our community:

Use the **ENVELOPE** enclosed in this newsletter

Visit [thefriendshipcenter.org](http://thefriendshipcenter.org) and click on DONATE NOW in the upper right corner

Make a **RECURRING GIFT** from your credit card or bank account.

Make a **PLANNED GIFT** to take advantage of the Montana Endowment Tax Credit

Give through **SECGC to #3707** if you're a Montana state employee



The Friendship Center

1430 Sanders  
Helena, MT 59601



TheFriendshipCenter



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The Friendship Center's newsletter is a membership benefit for those who support our mission. If you value the work we do and would like to continue to receive our newsletter, please donate today.

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## Join Us To Face The Violence

- Financial donations are essential to our ability to Face the Violence. Go to [thefriendshipcenter.org/donate](http://thefriendshipcenter.org/donate)
- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to learn more and help us spread the word about how we can Face the Violence
- Be an intervening bystander
- Model healthy relationships and consent
- Don't engage in victim blaming
- Volunteer as a crisis line advocate
- Educate yourself about the issues of domestic and sexual violence and the warning signs of an abusive relationship
- Contact your Senators and Congressional Representative to ask them to fund the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), and Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP).

THANK YOU  
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