

October 30, 2019

Mary Mead
PO Box 119
Charlotte, VT 05445

Dear Mary Mead,

Imagine losing your home, your financial stability, your job, even your children because you decided to free yourself from your abuser.

Imagine trying to leave and having your life threatened. Imagine if the threats are carried out.

These fears are part of daily life for people experiencing domestic violence. In addition to working to regain the power and control stripped from them by their partner, they must endure the stress – and emotional and physiological issues that go along with it. All because they are trying to make life better.

As a result of the lack of – or change in – resources, folks often turn to Steps to End Domestic Violence, which serves people from each town in Chittenden County.

The fact of the matter is – **domestic violence is a public health issue**. And it's an epidemic.

One in four female-identifying and one in seven male-identifying folks have experienced severe physical violence by their intimate partner. Countless others have had the person they love control their credit card, custody of their children, their ability to see friends and family – their safety.

Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. All socioeconomic groups, all genders, all races, all income levels are affected. And often, even those closest to the people experiencing abuse don't know it.

Domestic violence is often invisible.

You can make a difference for your community, though, **by increasing your annual allocation** to \$900, which equates to less than \$.25 per resident, to Steps to End Domestic Violence. The funds you allocate will go directly to the services we provide, including:

- 24-hour hotline
- Emergency and transitional housing
- Legal advocacy
- Economic justice advocacy
- Support groups for adults and children
- Education and prevention to end domestic violence

Our goal this year is to raise 3% of our \$1.273 million budget, (\$39,000) through town funding, with an overall goal of 5%, (\$63,650) over the next three years. We're asking the communities that we support through our

work to support us. This year's funding formula equates to approximately 25 cents per resident of each town we serve, for we do truly serve each member of the community. **For just a quarter per person we can work to save lives.**

Can you spare any of your citizens to domestic violence? The answer is no.

Due to the deeply personal nature of domestic violence, many of those we serve, particularly through our 24/7 hotline, wish to remain anonymous. We have confirmed that we provided services and support to at least 15 adults and 1 child from Charlotte this past fiscal year. Of the 39 services these survivors accessed 25 included Crisis Intervention -- as a component of the service -- which is when our advocates do the life-saving work of supporting survivors during the most perilous moments on the path towards safety and independence.

In addition to the direct support we provide to survivors, we continue to develop our strong presence and relationship with the Westford community. This school year our Education and Prevention Coordinator will provide workshops on the topics of Healthy Relationships & Sexuality, Teen Dating Violence, Sexual Violence, and Bystander Intervention for Champlain Valley Union High School.

We are honored to have the opportunity to submit this request for financial support in the amount of \$900 on behalf of survivors of domestic abuse from the town of Charlotte. Along with enabling us to serve the residents of Charlotte, your financial support will help us fulfill our mission: to assist in the transition to a safe, independent life for all those who have been affected physically, sexually, emotionally, or economically by domestic abuse; and to promote a culture that fosters justice, equity and safety.

Once again we would like to thank you and to acknowledge that we could not have done this work without your support. Please do let us know about your ideas for improving services and outreach to the residents of Charlotte. Feel free to contact me at 658-3131 ext. 1062, or via email at dawnf@stepsVT.org.

We so appreciate your generosity in the past. Together we can continue to make the community safer, healthier, and happier for everyone.

Let's work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Ferringo', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Dawn Ferringo
Executive Director