

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTREACH — ARCHDIOCESE of CHICAGO — AWARENESS - SERVICES - PREVENTION



Good News About the Fight to End Domestic Violence

Fall 2020

## Annual Archdiocesan Mass for Victims of Domestic Violence



*Bibiana Tohme shares her inspiring story at the Annual Mass for Victims of DV; with Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P.*

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach (ACDVO) celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Mass for Victims of Domestic Violence at Holy Name Cathedral. Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P., presided and preached, accompanied by Deacon Peery Duderstadt, who preaches for ACDVO in Lake County, and cathedral rector, Fr. Gregory Sakowicz. In his homily, Fr. Dahm explained the rampant nature of domestic violence and of its presence in all our communities. He added, “The Catholic Church is known for being pro-life, which is wonderful. But we need all parishes to be known as safe havens for victims of domestic violence.”

To address the frequently asked question, “Why does a victim stay?”, Fr. Dahm invited domestic violence survivor Bibiana Tohme to give her testimony. Ms. Tohme explained that despite horrendous physical and emotional abuse, “I stayed because I was embarrassed and afraid.” One day her husband smashed her head against a concrete floor while strangling her. She was hospitalized for a month,

including 5 days spent in a coma. With help and support, she was able to free herself from the abusive relationship. Now she wants to help others who suffer as she did by working on ACDVO’s Executive Committee as well as her parish domestic violence committee.

## ACDVO Launches Prevention Program in Catholic Schools

To diminish domestic violence (DV), prevention education is the most effective solution. After many years of research, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its [Dating Matters](#) (DM) curriculum for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in 2019. Dating Matters is a prevention model designed to encourage healthy relationships and stop teen dating violence before it starts. It focuses on teaching 11-14 year-olds healthy relationship skills early, reducing risky behaviors, and in the long-run avoiding teen dating violence and ultimately domestic violence. The curriculum includes valuable prevention strategies for individuals, peers, families, schools, and neighborhoods.

ACDVO has developed and initiated a 4-year DM pilot program. St. Agnes of Bohemia School in Chicago’s Little Village is the first school to implement DM, supported by ACDVO’s coaches, Yolanda Owens and Jessica Caccavallo. Instruction started in October, 2020, with two 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes, one in-person and one online. In subsequent years, these students will follow the curriculum in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. As new 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes form, they will also use the DM curriculum.

Dating Matters is evidence-based. Students participating in DM pilot programs reported less teen dating violence as well as other related outcomes, better than other prevention programs. It is low cost, because the CDC provides all materials free of charge, including online facilitator training, ongoing support, and testing with ethnically diverse students.

ACDVO is looking for four additional parish schools to enter the pilot program in fall 2021. These schools should have enthusiastic support of the pastor, principal and staff, stable leadership of parish and school, and stable school enrollment.

Interested? Contact John Monaco at [jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com](mailto:jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com). ACDVO also gives talks on teen dating violence for parishes, including virtual presentations.





# Leaders Spread the Word

## Chicago's Violence Reduction Plan Highlights DV

In September, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot released Chicago's first-ever comprehensive violence reduction plan, which includes significant data and recommendations about DV. It states, "Although it does not garner the same level of media attention, the incidence of domestic violence is actually greater than that of community or gun violence." ([Our City, Our Safety: A Comprehensive Plan to Reduce Violence in Chicago](#), Office of the Mayor, September 2020).

In June 2020 The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence issued a study, [Data Report: State of Domestic Violence in Illinois](#) with the following data for 2019:

- 193,800 DV-related calls were made to Chicago Police (530 daily average) and 24,400 calls to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline (67 daily average). (*Editor's note: Calls to the hotline have increased by 20% since Covid-19 began.*)
- Chicago Police made 10,095 DV-related arrests (over 27 per day).
- 39,500 Illinois survivors received various DV-related services, 40% of whom can be classified as low income. This data does not include those who sought private counseling or no counseling at all.
- 4,033 adults and 4,018 children were turned away from a DV service provider for lack of staffing and/or shelter space to accommodate them.
- Of all sexual assaults occurring nationally, only 10 to 20% are reported to law enforcement; of those reported, only 5% result in an arrest, and only 0.5% result in a felony conviction.

## Meet ACDVO Dating Matters Coach Yolanda Owens

I was born and raised on Chicago's South Side, in the Englewood neighborhood. I'm an African American woman who faced many obstacles growing up, like oppression. I was exposed to gun violence, racism, segregation, and the list goes on. At a very young age, I found myself in an unhealthy relationship which soon became extremely abusive; I was a victim of domestic violence. I didn't get an opportunity to enjoy my young adulthood as I would have liked. I watched my peers enjoy hanging with friends, traveling and just having fun. However, these missed opportunities inspired me to give back to my community by working in schools less privileged, more prone to violence, and lacking resources. I've been working with young people for over 25 years and I'm very passionate about it.

I currently work at Between Friends, a domestic violence agency, and recently joined ACDVO as a Prevention Coach. We educate young people on how to implement healthy relationships and how to identify signs of an unhealthy relationship.

As a mother, I was faced with another tragedy – my oldest son, Joseph, was shot and killed. I thought his death would kill me, but it only made me stronger. I believe God has helped me through my struggles. Although I didn't experience the best young adulthood, I feel I am living the best time of my life giving back to others.



Yolanda Owens,  
ACDVO Dating Matters Coach

## ACDVO Executive Committee

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# Parishes Raise Awareness



## October: Domestic Violence Awareness Month



During October, ACDVO member parishes have worked to raise awareness about domestic violence, despite the limitations in place for Covid-19.

At St. Robert Bellarmine, the DV Committee called DOVE (Don't OK Violence Ever) raised funds for its ministry by sewing and selling face masks. They also met several evenings for virtual workshops on Safety Planning and on Spiritual Self-Care in the Midst of Stress. The group also commits to pray for victims of DV every Monday night at a specific time.

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, the DV Ministry at St. John Fisher, St. Cajetan and St. Christina sponsored a forum featuring Bishop Mark Bartosic, the local police district commander, the president of Little Company of Mary Hospital, and the director of A New Direction domestic violence services, Jessica McCarrihan. They received wonderful coverage in the Beverly Times.

St. Raymond of Penafort in Mt. Prospect hung purple ribbons on its parking lot fence together with a banner stating "Domestic & Dating Violence: No Excuse!"

Many parishes placed domestic violence banners in church lobbies or sanctuaries to help raise awareness. St. Pascal's committee designed its banner to reflect family unity and peace.

St. Alexander's parish focused their street sign on domestic violence, had a prayer of the faithful focusing on DV every Sunday, and published informative bulletin inserts each week.

"Silent No More", the DV Ministry of the Catholic Community of Northbrook, helped the Village declare October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Ministry again placed its banner in the Village Triangle Park. Also, Deacon Peery Duderstadt, a leader of the DV Ministry, preached on domestic violence at all Masses on Oct 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>.

The DV Committee from St. Padre Pio parish (newly formed from St. Hilary and Transfiguration) held a Mass for survivors at which they distributed tote bags, t-shirts and information sheets to participants.



## ACDVO Posters Available for Your Parish - Contact Jan Burdulis

(Partial representations)

No one should live with domestic violence.  
You can make a difference.



No one should live with domestic violence.  
You can make a difference.



No one should live with domestic violence.  
You can make a difference.



Nadie debe vivir con violencia doméstica.  
Tu puedes hacer una diferencia.





# What's New with ACDVO

## Online Offerings

**Website Updated:** Check out our newly expanded and streamlined website for information and resources. Note the new video of a survivor's testimony in Spanish with English subtitles: [www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org](http://www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org).

**Fall ACDVO Network Meeting:** Representatives of 48 parishes with Domestic Violence Committees participated in an online meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Fr. Chuck provided updates on ACDVO's work, and Jessica Caccavallo and Yolanda Owens talked about teen dating violence. Due to Covid-19, Jessica and Yolanda are available to speak virtually in parishes. Four seminars have been developed for these virtual presentations: *Healthy Dating Relationships*, *The Hunting Ground*, *The Empowerment Project* and *The Dating Project*. Contact John Monaco at [jcmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com](mailto:jcmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com) for more information.

**Online Training:** ACDVO will offer 4 one-hour online training sessions on Saturdays, each starting at 9:30 am CST. January 9<sup>th</sup> - *Domestic Violence*; January 23<sup>rd</sup> - *Teen Dating Violence*; February 6<sup>th</sup> - *Catholic Church Teaching on Domestic Violence*; February 13<sup>th</sup> - *How to Form a Parish-Based DV Ministry*. Contact Jan Burdulis at [jburdulis.acdvo@gmail.com](mailto:jburdulis.acdvo@gmail.com) for additional information.

## Catholic Charities Expands Domestic Violence Services

Thanks to generous donors who wanted to help those suffering from Covid-19 in communities of color, Catholic Charities is expanding its domestic violence program in Chicago's West Side Austin neighborhood in November. The effort will provide free services to survivors and their families, helping them regain control of their lives and ultimately move toward healing.

The expanded staff will provide counseling, case management, advocacy, and community outreach in a predominantly Black community from the existing Augustus Tolton Center and work with other service organizations in the area. Services will include: counseling, safety planning, support groups, life skills training, referrals, financial education and possible assistance.

## Social Media Shines in October by Annie Ryder



Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) has received a great response on our three social platforms: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/dvachicago), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/dvachicago), and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/dvachicago). By committing to a dedicated month-long campaign, ACDVO has a visual presence online to raise awareness, connect to organizations fighting to end domestic violence, and provide information and resources to our community.

Original graphics and designs have featured:

- *#MondayMyth*: debunks incorrect generalizations and false explanations surrounding domestic violence;
- *#WednesdayWords*: discusses uncommon terms used within the domestic violence advocacy community;
- *#SundayScripture*: offers scriptural references and prayers for safety and well-being of victims and those affected by DV;
- *#MeetOurTeam*: highlights the dedicated and talented people working within the ACDVO;
- *#SurvivorStrength*: celebrates words and inspiration by the courageous survivors within our community.

By using popular hashtags, our posts have greater searchability and are stored on each platform in an online "community" of like-minded content. By mid-October, ACDVO's social media analytics showed our reach has tripled and our engagement rate has increased by tenfold. The entire DVAM 2020 collection of infographics will be available in our Online Resource Manual at [www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org](http://www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org).

Stay updated by following us on Facebook ([@dvachicago](https://www.facebook.com/dvachicago)), Instagram ([@dvachicago](https://www.instagram.com/dvachicago)) and Twitter ([@dvachicago](https://twitter.com/dvachicago)).

### *Thank You So Much for Your End of Year Donation*

Thanks to all who donate so generously to support our ministry. We are challenged this year because of restrictions on visiting or preaching in parishes and because we could not celebrate our benefit Gala in March. If you can donate something at the end of the year, we will be very grateful. Our work is moving forward, as this newsletter reflects.

Help us reduce, if not eliminate, domestic violence from our midst.

May God bless you with good health, love and peace.

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