



Your Safe Place – A Family Justice Center Annual Report 2021

Where families come first and
professionals come together.





Mission

At *Your Safe Place*, survivors of domestic violence, family violence, elder abuse, sexual assault, and sex trafficking can seek justice, begin healing, and reclaim their lives.

Values

To provide coordinated services in a manner that is:

- Welcoming
- Personalized
- Confidential
- Trauma-informed
- Judgment-free
- Empowering

Vision

To provide a safe space where an individual's needs are met, clients feel validated, families are protected, and survivors can reclaim their lives.



Dear Community Partners, Regional Stakeholders, and Friends,

2021 brought great changes to *Your Safe Place (YSP)*. Recognizing the extreme risk posed by abusers with guns, *YSP* expanded to include a Victim Service Coordinator from the Office of the City Attorney's **Gun Violence Response Unit**. The safety of our clients and their children is *YSP's* priority. In the last six months of calendar 2021, 58 clients reported their abusers had guns or threatened to hurt them using guns. The GVRU assesses the risks posed by an abuser's access to guns, and when warranted, expedites gun violence restraining orders to protect those at the greatest risk of being murdered. We hope incorporating gun violence prevention services will set an example for other Family Justice Centers throughout the country.

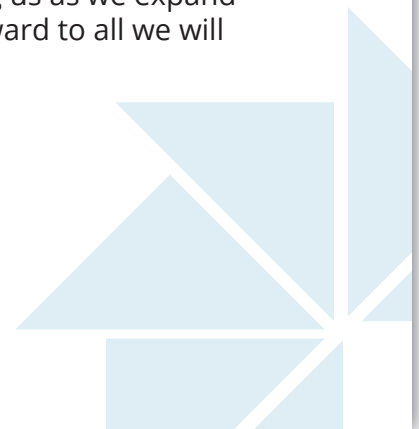
In 2021, we transitioned our name to *Your Safe Place – A Family Justice Center* to project the warm, welcoming, and inclusive setting we offer to anyone seeking safety and healing. Anyone fleeing violence or trafficking is welcome at *YSP*, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, income, zip code, or immigration status. No questions asked. We want to convey that promise in three simple words: ***Your Safe Place***.

This year also welcomed a new Executive Director, **Diane Doherty**, who has devoted her professional career to supporting survivors of abuse. Diane helped launch the San Diego Family Justice Center in 2002 and is now using her expertise to expanding its services and programming. This year, Diane was instrumental in the passage of Senate Bill 538, which empowers a domestic violence survivor to pursue a restraining order remotely, protecting them from facing their abuser in a courtroom. We appreciate Diane's tireless leadership, creative vision, and "can do" attitude.

As we continue to maneuver pandemic-related challenges, *YSP* remains fully open to the public. *YSP's* services are free of charge and provided by our team of dedicated professionals, partners, and volunteers. We work hard to serve the unique needs of every person who walks through our door. Our clients inspire us with their courageous steps forward and their perseverance.

Thank you for being a part of our work, and for supporting us as we expand our services to meet our community's needs. We look forward to all we will accomplish together in 2022.

Mara W. Elliott
San Diego City Attorney





Your Safe Place – A Family Justice Center provides confidential, comprehensive services to anyone who has experienced domestic violence, family violence, elder abuse, sexual assault, or sex trafficking. At *YSP*, we provide supportive services in a judgment-free manner that empowers victims to become survivors and move forward with their lives.

Your Safe Place: Our Strategic Priorities

- To provide confidential, comprehensive services in a safe and judgment-free setting.
- To assist clients in obtaining gun violence restraining orders to remove firearms from abusers.
- To provide clients and their families with the long-term tools needed to break free from the cycle of violence, maintain mental and physical health, and achieve financial independence.
- To serve all community members and develop services in marginalized neighborhoods impacted by violence.
- To expand services by bringing on new and dynamic community partners.
- To provide services throughout San Diego by developing satellite clinics and community-specific resources.





The YSP Team

Thank you to the dedicated YSP Team for your diligence, grace, and heart.

Beth is a Client Care Coordinator whose most important work is safety planning with clients. She provides emotional support and guidance, ensuring clients' needs are met. Before coming to YSP, Beth worked at the Family Justice Center for Riverside County. She had always admired the San Diego Family Justice Center model and welcomed the chance to work here. A certified paralegal, she is working on a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. Beth enjoys reading and watching musicals, either live or on TV.

Diane is the Executive Director of YSP. Diane joined the City Attorney's Office in 2002 and prosecuted cases as a Deputy City Attorney in the Domestic Violence & Sex Crimes Unit. In this capacity, she helped launch the San Diego Family Justice Center, which was the first center of its kind in the nation and became an international model for serving survivors of domestic violence. Diane also specializes in educating the community about healthy teen relationships. She served as co-chair of the Teen Dating Violence Committee of the San Diego Domestic Violence Council.

Erika is YSP's Receptionist. Because she is the first person a client meets, she appreciates the importance of listening to clients and putting them at ease. Clients and staff alike appreciate Erika's bilingual skills. Erika has more than twenty years' experience in administrative work (medical, correctional, and clinics). Erika is enjoying her transition to YSP. Her hobbies include swimming, reading, being with her family, and playing with her puppy.

Fatima is an intern at *YSP* and attends college. Her goal is to transfer to a 4-year university, get a bachelor's degree in Political Science, and then pursue a law degree. She brings experience, including two years working on a political campaign, a college fellowship, and a six-month program for youth engagement and community outreach. Her hobbies include watching movies on Netflix, eating favorites like sushi and pozole, and dancing.

Gaby joined the *YSP* Team in May 2020 and immediately experienced the challenges of assisting clients during the pandemic. As a Client Care Coordinator, she works to ensure victims are safe and assesses their immediate needs. Along with her degree in Social Work, she is also certified in domestic violence and sexual assault. Gaby previously managed a housing program for a DV shelter and a 24-hour hotline. Her hobbies include shopping, attending concerts, and enjoying pizza and chocolates.

Natalie believes that the best thing about being a Client Care Coordinator is that every day is different. She assesses the needs of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking and provides crisis intervention. With a degree in Human Development and Family Studies, Natalie previously worked in several different states, most recently working as a housing advocate for a mental health agency. In her free time, she explores her new home city and participates in weekly trivia challenges.

Sabrina is *YSP*'s Executive Assistant and works closely with the Director on administration and budget issues. She enjoys planning special events such as the Halloween and holiday parties for the children of *YSP* clients. After working in escrow for many years, she was thrilled to transition to a position where she assists those experiencing violence and trafficking. Her hobbies include yoga, meditation, and being in nature.

Sara is the Director of Program Development at *YSP*, a position that entails supervising and training staff and volunteers to provide confidential services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking. Fluent in Spanish, she conducts tours of the facility and speaks at public events to ensure community support for *YSP*. Before coming to *YSP* she assisted victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and elder abuse for over 25 years. She provides training at CLE seminars annually and trains local law enforcement in temporary restraining order procedures. Her hobbies include walking along the beach and spending time with family.

We advocate for the safety and independence of *YSP*'s clients.
We are here to help clients along their journeys toward healing.

What we accomplished together in 2021:

20,300+

Phone calls handled by the *YSP* Team.

3,050

Hours of counseling for adults and children.

162

Hotel and housing services provided to clients in the past six months of 2021.

495

Restraining order, divorce, custody or immigration legal services provided to clients.

111

Forensic exams provided to clients.

30

Clients provided with safety phones in the last eight months of 2021.

58

Gun violence client consultations in the last six months of 2021.

300+

Participants in *YSP's* Backpack Drive and Halloween and holiday parties to support the children of our clients.

53

Clients assisted with funding for emergency situations.

1,169

Attendees at community engagement and outreach events at schools, churches, community organizations, and of course, on Teams!

186

Professionals attended *YSP's* trainings on topics including Immigration Rights, the Importance of Self-Care, the Language Around Sex Trafficking, Gun Violence, and Healthy Teen Relationships.

206

Individuals visited *YSP* to learn about our client services and programming.



Meeting the Needs of Clients

YSP, together with its family of community partners, provides comprehensive services on-site, by appointment, and remotely to meet the needs of clients. Direct services include:

Safety Planning and Gun Violence Prevention:

YSP's priority is safety planning. This is particularly true any time a gun or threat with a gun is involved. *YSP*'s Client Care Coordinators develop individualized safety plans with our clients. Each plan takes into consideration the client's goals and personal circumstances. The City Attorney's Gun Violence Response Unit works with clients to remove guns from dangerous situations and obtain life-saving gun violence restraining orders.

Assessment and Advocacy:

After safety planning, *YSP*'s Client Care Coordinators will assess the clients' needs and advocate for them so that their voices are heard; provide all necessary resource information and referrals; coordinate care; and address follow-up case management.

Assistance with Finding Emergency Shelter and Housing:

With our community partners, *YSP* helps clients obtain emergency hotel vouchers and shelter, as well as transitional and permanent housing. In 2021, *YSP* helped 39 client families receive long-term rental assistance through emergency housing voucher applications. Client Care Coordinators also provide resource information on landlord/tenant rights, as well as lease and changing locks information. Emergency housing can help individuals and their children live safely and without the threat of abuse.

Counseling for Adults and Children:

Our counseling partners are experienced in providing trauma-informed therapeutic services for all individuals: youth ages 3 and up, teens, college-aged students, adults, and elders. Counseling is offered in English and Spanish to all genders. Therapy with dogs is also available. These therapeutic services help clients heal from trauma and move forward in their lives.

Legal Assistance:

Our community partners and pro bono volunteer attorneys assist with immigration law (consults, court filings, representation, and recovery of personal documentation), family law (custody of children, divorce, support), temporary domestic and gun violence restraining orders, and restitution (recovery of financial losses). Client Care Coordinators also assist and support with virtual and in-person court appearances. *YSP* also helps clients prepare for court in our mock courtroom and by providing attire for court. These legal services help clients escape abusive situations and stabilize their lives.



Sex Trafficking-Specific Services:

Working with our dedicated community partners, *YSP* serves the unique needs of survivors of sex trafficking. We offer counseling tailored to trafficking clients' needs, along with legal support to help individuals secure restraining orders, remove trafficking-related criminal charges from their records, change their names, and obtain help with child custody and divorce proceedings. *YSP* also offers connections to critical social services and career training to help clients gain financial independence to break free from their traffickers.

Assist with Public Benefits:

Our partners help clients obtain the public benefits they and their children so greatly need during crisis. *YSP* works with the Family Resource Center to provide help with Cal Works, Cal Fresh, and WIC requests. These benefits include cash support, food aid, nutritional information, breastfeeding help, referrals to health care, and other services.

Overnight Essentials and Emergency Needs:

When clients come to *YSP*, they often need essentials such as cell phones, grocery gift cards, clothing, toiletries, transportation services, and the like. These resources empower clients to flee dangerous situations.

Forensic Medical Examinations:

Compassionate and specially trained nurses offer forensic medical examinations to clients who have experienced domestic and sexual violence. Palomar's forensic nurses treat each client with sensitivity, dignity, and respect, while providing Domestic Assault Forensic Exams (DAFEs) and Sexual Assault Forensic Exams (SARTs).

Law Enforcement Assistance and Child Welfare Services:

With client consent, *YSP* helps clients obtain copies of their police reports from the San Diego Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit, find out the status of criminal cases, get copies of Criminal Protective Orders, or meet with prosecutors or detectives. Client Care Coordinators help clients sign up for VINE so they know when their partner will be released from custody, as well as provide information on their Marsy's Law rights.

Personalized Wardrobes:

Many clients leave an abusive environment with little more than their children and the clothes on their backs. In partnership with Sharia's Closet, we help restore client's confidence through their wardrobes, both professional and casual.

Financial Independence and Leap to Success Programming:

Attaining financial independence helps break the ties that bind clients to their traffickers and abusers. *YSP*'s financial independence program helps clients achieve economic stability and thrive. Leap to Success helps clients build self-esteem and confidence to create the life they want.

Whole Person Wellness:

YSP believes in whole person wellness and offers clients health and well-being services such as nutrition and family wellness programs, healthy teen and adult relationship education, self-care information and tools, books and literacy assistance, and access to Balboa Park's museums and Padres games. YSP provides free books to children visiting or receiving services in the Center to promote reading skills.

Pet Relocation:

Emotional support animals are vital to the healing process for many individuals. Survivors often need help relocating pets while they seek emergency housing and shelter.

Parenting Assistance:

Protecting children and promoting their development is a priority at YSP. Our counselors, Kids' Klub child watch services, educational activities, and partnership with Head Start's preschool and parenting programs all work together to provide comprehensive services to youth. Additionally, YSP sponsors multiple annual events to support the children of our clients, including a back-to-school backpack drive, a Halloween party where children receive free costumes, and a holiday party where children participate in arts and crafts activities, listen to stories, and receive a gift.

Military Advocate:

YSP's relationship with local military provides a confidential advocate for clients involved in the military. This advocate helps identify and explain available military benefits.

Confidential Address Services:

YSP's Client Care Coordinators help clients obtain confidential addresses so that their abusers and traffickers cannot locate them.

Comprehensive Services

Emergency and Overnight Essentials

Counseling for Adults and Children

Legal Services: Immigration, Restraining Orders, and Family Court Advocacy

Parenting Assistance

Pet Relocation

Military Advocacy

Sex Trafficking-Specific Assistance

Self-Care Tools and Healthy Relationship Information

Whole Person Wellness

Law Enforcement Assistance

Safety Planning and Gun Violence Intervention

Personalized Wardrobes

Financial Independence and Vocational Programing

Forensic and Sexual Assault Medical Examinations

Family Resource Center (Cal Works, Cal Fresh, WIC Applications)

Assistance with Finding Emergency Shelter, Housing, Confidential Address Services & Public Transportation

In **Their** Own Words



"I want to thank you with all my heart for your kindness, attention, and help for everything you have done for me and my kids. Your empathy is a blessing for us."

-Client Survivor

"I just want to thank all of you for helping me and my children over the past two years. I am so grateful."

- Client Survivor

"Words cannot describe how thankful me and my family are. Thanks for helping us in these tough times. God bless you."

-Client Survivor

"Amazing experience for me. Thank you for helping us!"

-Client Survivor

"The experience was beyond my expectations."

-Client Survivor

"The staff at the *Family Justice Center* [has] been 'extremely warm' and 'very kind'."

- Client Survivor



"The impact the *Justice Center* has had in my life, both in regards to stability, as well as peace of mind, cannot be written... I had nothing because I invested everything into him and... essentially became homeless after his arrest... The *Justice Center* proactively pursued and obtained housing, provided pro bono legal counsel, offered counseling, enrolled us in Christmas gift giveaways, and just checked in on occasion. During a time when you cannot help but be fixated on the fence of either survival or dissolving, they stepped in to put me right back where we were before the dissection of our home and lives took place. I felt capable, I didn't feel like a victim, I felt supported and they have propelled me toward a future I dreamed of before; except this time, no one is hurting us. I do not like asking for help, but they made this easy for me... I feel like a person again and I once again have the one ingredient... that leads to success, fulfillment and joy: hope. "

-Client Survivor

In **Their** Own Words

"Thank you for your hospitality... [Client Care Coordinator] and [Pro Bono Community Partner] provided excellent support to our employee who decided to pursue a TRO based on a recent incident ... and [which] was approved yesterday."

-Client's Support Person

"I received awesome help and [it] exceeded my expectations. [YSP] was awesome. Extremely friendly and compassionate staff members made me feel safe and guided me with great information and tools."

- Client Survivor

"Exiting the life of exploitation has not been an easy journey. Not only has it impacted me, but it has greatly impacted my children. My family and I have been so blessed to have such amazing people around us and resources available to us."

-Client Survivor

"Keep up the excellent service."

-Client Survivor

"Great service."

-Client Survivor

"Thank you for rescuing me."

- Client Survivor



"YSP was there for me during one of the darkest and most terrifying times in my life. The center helped me with legal services including my restraining order against my abusive ex as well as therapy. I felt safe, supported, and relieved that I was guided by people that actually cared during that horrific period of my life. I was able to successfully obtain the restraining order, receive beneficial counseling, and finally got the strength to let go of the person that had caused me so much pain. YSP empowered me to use my voice, set healthy boundaries, and be proactive in my healing journey. One thing I liked is that I never felt shamed or judged by anyone that was helping me. Everyone that assisted me along the way genuinely cared about my well-being. I will always be grateful for YSP because they assisted me at a time in my life where I was in such despair, sadness, and confusion. Thank you!"

- Client Survivor

In **Their** Own Words

"A million thanks for all of you and for all the resources. You've always made a very big, positive, hopeful difference in my life."

-Client Survivor

"This was above and beyond, could not have done this without you."

- Client Survivor

"The staff was extra attentive, approachable and nice."

-Client Survivor

"Amazing customer service."

-Client Survivor

"I love the caring energy" at YSP.

-Client Survivor

"Staff was very friendly, helpful and respectful."

- Client Survivor



I was in a very complicated domestic violence situation. I was scared and didn't think I had a way out and had no clue what to do. The [Client Care Coordinator] who answered the phone helped me tremendously. Due to her assistance, I have managed to get a new apartment that I will be moving into in 2 weeks and I am going to have a restraining order served to this man a few days before. [The CCC] was very empathetic and understanding and listened to me. She gave me the resources that I needed and the support that I needed as well. I have spoken with her a few times now and I am just at a loss for words regarding how much she helped me. If it was not for her and the conversation that we had I would not have the hope that I have today.

-Client Survivor

Thank you to our Community Partners and Collaborators for Your Unwavering Support and Commitment



"We are strongly committed to partnering with *Your Safe Place* and working together to help victims break out of the cycle of violence."

-Community Partner

"A big, huge, enormous THANK YOU to all the wonderful staff at *Your Safe Place*!"

-A Community Partner's praise for YSP



From Our Community Partners

"My heart was truly warmed to see how many different agencies throughout San Diego have come together to help care for this vulnerable population. ❤️ Your facility is amazing and our collaboration is and will be so helpful!"

-Community Partner

"I am just so glad to have such a fantastic place like the *Family Justice Center* to bring someone in need. Your staff was so patient, attentive, and knowledgeable. Your Center is a bright spot for people in need and I sincerely appreciate all that you and your staff do there day in and day out ... Thank you again for helping her get somewhere safe and giving her access to the resources she so desperately needed."

-Comments about YSP's help to a client

"[The client] mentioned how the staff at the *Family Justice Center* have been 'extremely warm' and 'very kind' to her! She was beaming about the *Family Justice Center* the entire conversation!"

- Community Partner

"I wanted to add how thankful I am to have had the opportunity to volunteer at YSP ... I was able to learn many new things and really enjoyed my time there. A special thank you to the wonderful staff who were all so nice to me ...[who] watched over me, showed me how things worked, and was always kind and welcoming. [Client Care Coordinator] made me feel comfortable by speaking to me in Spanish and participating in conversations about our different cultural foods . . . and just making me feel welcomed in general..."

-Volunteer

Volunteer

Your Safe Place welcomes volunteers!

As a *Your Safe Place* volunteer, you will not only aid us in meeting the needs of our clients, you will also learn practical skills. With your assistance, we will help survivors of violence and their children heal and move on with their lives.

We invite you to volunteer at *Your Safe Place*. If you'd like more information, please contact us at InfoYSP@sandiego.gov or (619) 533-6000.



Tours

Come see us for yourself! Contact InfoYSP@sandiego.gov to arrange.

"I really appreciate the amount of time you gave me for a tour last week. I am impressed with the intentionality and empathy that is committed to marginalized residents and those who are in or on the brink of crisis. Inspiring!"

-Community Service Provider

"I found the experience incredibly inspiring and felt compelled to offer my sincere kudos and appreciation to [the YSP] team and community partners."

-Community Tour Participant

Are You in an Abusive Relationship?

Are you afraid to go home?

Do you live in fear of your partner?

Has your partner threatened to harm you, your children, pets, or someone you love?

Does your partner blame you for their violent behavior?

If you think you may be in an abusive relationship, call today.



Your Safe Place

1-866-933-HOPE (4673)

619-533-6000

www.sandiego.gov/yoursafeplace

Hablamos Español

Thank you for trusting us to serve you.

