Does it ever get any easier? It doesn’t seem to.

Our programs and staff embody persistence, resistance and insistence in our servant leadership. Using grace and acting with integrity to raise awareness, increase commitment, motivate investment and assist those suffering the harm of abuse, it is our bold intention to help systems and leaders to see – SEE – that partner abuse impacts us all. Every day. In subtle and obvious ways.

Our staff of 54 devoted professionals experiences the suffering and celebrates the survival in our community, as survivors make advances toward survival in our community, as suffering and celebrates the Our staff of 54 devoted ways. partner abuse impacts us all. parenting, working, overcoming their partner.

Domestic Violence Action Center plants hope. Families, youth, children, marginalized people, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants and indigenous communities know we are here to stand beside them as they endeavor to achieve their goals and turn their suffering into a memory. They propel themselves forward to a life without trauma, terror and torment. Our staff’s support, consideration and presence is life changing. In the words of one client:

“My sincere admiration and respect for all the advocates. The support and compassion helps reassure me we will not live in fear for my life.”

Survivor Programs

The importance of the specialized, unduplicated advocacy that DVAC’s expertly trained and well supervised Alaska’s staff offer to every survivor cannot be overstated. There are so many challenges–at once, to be attended to. Housing, health care, financial security, education, job readiness, legal rights, childcare, transportation and other things stand between a survivor and stability. Every person who is seeking to become the kind of advocate and workerDVAC has the precious benefit of an advocate to stand with them as they make difficult decisions. Those seeking court assistance with a restraining order or appearing as the chief witness in their case would meet an EXPO advocate at Family Court. 2,493 victims had this kind of specialized assistance in First Judicial Circuit criminal and civil court.

They may call the agency helpline (1,944 callers in FY 2018) and begin asking their questions, and learn that an advocate can help them to sort through the many things that define their reality and must be attended to. They may be receiving legal representation for a potentially lethal divorce and need additional support. They may be participating in a culturally specific support group and find there are other things that are interfering with their well-being that an advocate can help them overcome. DVAC advocates work with a survivor on average 9 months or longer. They may be enrolled in one of the UH college programs and be introduced to the advocate on campus. Or they may have had the police respond to an incident at their home and benefit from an on-scene advocate who responds when the police do. In FY 2018 DVAC opened 2,390 cases in four of its programs. Our agency’s advocates always talk about safety, and work to facilitate safe planning and safe decision making. In this past year, advocates helped survivors complete 6,736 safety plans. The beauty of a DVAC advocate is her availability to respond, facilitate, or accompany a survivor as they maneuver on their path to safety. Agency staff had 11,384 telephone contacts with clients throughout FY 2018.

The prospect of obtaining a temporary restraining order is one of the most frightening experiences a victim faces. DVAC’s EXPO Court Outreach Program meets every person (assessed as a victim) and helps to lessen the panic, provide information about what to expect, familiarize the court proceedings. EXPO advocates worked with 2,019 petitioners at Family Court. The kind of assistance is good for survivors, and is quite helpful to the Courts; a lack of understanding, and feelings of panic can be immobilizing. With assistance, and information, the support can be lifesaving while expediting the process for court personnel. EXPO advocates are also present for the criminal court calendar cat, and described DVAC programs to 990 total victims at courthouse presentations, with 272 receiving specialized support. DVAC attorneys accepted/applied 271 cases for 11,384 telephone contacts with clients throughout FY 2018. 430 appearances in Court. The agency’s attorneys practice as part of an arrangement with Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, to serve immigrant survivors in family law matters. The DVAC legal team is comprised of specialists to students on campus as part of the Campus Survivor Advocacy Program and services to non-offending moms (or dads, when they become clients) whose children are witnesses to the partner abuse or are also victimized by the abuser (their dad or mom’s partner).

The support needed to face these potentially life threatening and certainly life changing steps are mostly invisible to others. We have entered into agreements with the Japanese Consulate to serve Japanese nationals with a bi-cultural, bi-lingual advocate. We received a grant to support specialized outreach and advocacy to the LGBTQ+ community; Funding support also enables DVAC to meet the needs of immigrant communities; on staff we have a bi-lingual, bi-cultural Korean advocate, and several bi-lingual, bi-cultural Filipina advocates. Two other programs, Ho'okaiaka (Hawaii and Pulomii) Ta Ghana work with the survivors (comprised of mom and children) to assist in reclaiming their cultural values for healing and assist in rebuilding relationships that have been damaged by the abuse. Rebuilding the ohana is uplifting, reassuring and essential for the way forward.

It is also essential that young people be offered accurate information about healthy relationships and an understanding of the red flags to alert them to risks that may be lurking as they begin to date and select their partners. The DVAC Team, Alert Program visited 77 schools this past year and saw 4,576 young people. Specialized advocacy was provided to 25 youth. A new workbook for youth was written and designed for use during 2019 school year.
There is an imperative to continue building momentum for businesses, elected leaders, funders, educators, faith-based leaders, health care practitioners, and government institutions to embrace their role in making Hawaii’s communities safe. Safe families are at the core of a healthy community. DVAC undertook initiatives to advance such willingness. Agency staff participates in ongoing Committees and Working Groups whose focus is directly or tangentially related to safety, equity, system reform, and public policy. We are active members of the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The Access to Justice Commission, the Women’s Coalition, Men’s March Against Violence Steering Committee, the Fatality Review Team, Violence Against Women Planning Committee, Justice Reinvestment Victim Service Workgroup, Institute on Violence Abuse and Trauma Planning Committee, Harm Reduction Hawaii Advisory Committee, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Training Committee and VOCA Planning Committee, Na Leo Kamehameha Committee, the Committee on Overcoming Barriers to Justice and the Legal Services Provider Consortium.

It is our absolute commitment to bring information, attention and opportunity to the community to deepen their understanding and motivate their willingness in accepting responsibility for addressing partner violence and family violence when they can, how they can. In FY 2018, DVAC coordinated two Heart to Heart luncheon events for moms and their daughters to learn about dating abuse and build a foundation for communication should it occur. The agency convened True Nexus: Domestic Violence, A Cause of Houselessness to build understanding about the intersection of Hawaii’s homelessness and incidence of violence in the homes of our island families. DVAC also convened a Media Summit to assist media in understanding the power of their stories and the importance of capturing it accurately, without re-traumatizing victims and surviving family members. We have joined the companies insured by Kaiser Permanente at an extended lunchtime specialized session on DV Action Ready. DVAC attended the public hearing of the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies to deliver testimony about the importance of police collaboration with community programs. DVAC and its programs participated in Children and Youth Day, Pride Parade, Access to Justice Summit, and Parents and Children Together, Teen Center for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month.

DVAC took a lead role in the coordination of a training for state and city employees, The Fundamentals of Domestic Violence; 150 participants enrolled to learn the basics and incorporate that understanding into their professional responsibilities. Domestic Violence Action Center worked with programs statewide, the domestic violence coalition and the Women’s Legislative Caucus to coordinate a statewide Listening Tour focused on the challenges experienced by survivors in each County. A survey was developed and disseminated first, to give shape to the Briefings in each community. DVAC staff and clients were present for the Briefing at the State Capitol before the 2018 Legislative Session. Our CEO was recruited to serve as an expert in the US Climate Study under direction by OmniTrak and the Office of Institutional Equity at the University of Hawaii. DVAC has been in the community conversation about the development of a centralized legal portal, with Legal Aid as the lead. Also with legal service providers, DVAC is collaborating in an initiative, Community Navigator, to bring awareness and training to natural helpers who would likely interface with people who need improved access to justice. The agency’s CEO also joined the Metro Rotary Club to remind them about the community’s challenges and the harm of abuse suffered by island families. DVAC collaborated with Sex Abuse Treatment Center, Hawaii Sex Assault Coalition and Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence to conduct a training supported by Department of Health, to increase understanding of sexual violence in intimate partner relationships. Advancing the Practice for Responding to Sexual Assault in Intimate Partner Relationships Training.

The opportunities to engage with the community were many and varied. DVAC staff attended an invitation only session on Fatality Review: Domestic Violence Fatality Review: The Intent and Process, featuring Dr. Neil Webdale. Teen Alert staff attended a session led by Jeff Bucholtz, A Way from Violence and a Breakfast featuring Erin Meryn, the national spokeswoman for Erin’s Law. DVAC was featured at the People’s Rally on the Anniversary of the Women’s March and also in the Plaza Club membership Bulletin. DVAC was highlighted by the Elks Lodge 616 at a Board meeting, with a follow up description in their monthly publication.

Domestic Violence Action Center coordinated the Annual Men’s March in October of 2017 with Dr. David Lassner, from the University of Hawaii, receiving the Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award.
Community Support

During FY 2018, St John, Alex and Ani, Lanikai Bath and Body, Bloomingdale’s, Williams and Sonoma, and Gold Joggers were among the agency’s generous corporate supporters while the Junior League and Women United (JLWU), civic organizations also brought financial and volunteer resource support. Restaurants were invited to partner in the inaugural Feat for Peace with DVAC during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. HARS Bistro, HJ Dolicos, Bethel Union, California Pizza Kitchen, Olay Thai Bistro, Big City Diner (all 6 locations), Cauchy, California Pizza Kitchen (6 locations), Piggy Smalls and Pig and the Lady were participants in the successful endeavor. Beauty of It All, Mother’s Day Flower sales fundraiser was a measurably larger success, with the participation of The Cole Academy and Seagull Schools.

Our clients and their entire families received holiday gifts made available by Adopt a Family, Hawaiian survivors and their families. This year the agency’s Wellness Committee launched and facilitated a variety of activities for the benefit of staff; this included Wellness Fridays with adjusted and meditation for those who wanted to participate; Herbal Bath Salts workshop, Retail Therapy Exchange, planting of an Herb Garden, an agency lunch, and a Houseware exchange party. Birthdays, employment anniversaries and other occasions are in sharp focus with balloons, lei and desk signs. We had staff reach several milestones: Teen Educator celebrated 13 years with DVAC; Vice President of Survivor Advocacy Services reached a 15 year milestone, (We can include a picture if that would be good) and our Vice President of Operations was recognized for her 25 years of commitment to DVAC.

The organization staffing and leadership pattern was reviewed and adjusted this year. Programs with similar client participants and overall design approaches were clustered (for example, Campus Survivor Advocacy Program and Teen Alert Program—both of whom work with youth and within educational settings); delegation of new supervisory responsibilities were conceived for FY 2019 implementation, and executive management team examined strategies to shift day to day oversight responsibilities, also for implementation in FY 2019. Lab descriptions were reviewed and updated; paygrades and pay ranges were reviewed and consideration will be made for implementation for the next biennium. The agency’s Personnel Handbook was reviewed and revised with comment provided by Hawaii Employers Council. Procedures for collection of sliding scale client fees were reviewed for efficiency and improvement.

Inclusivity training was incorporated as a mandatory training for all staff; an extensive survey was circulated with Findings and Recommendations offered. Efforts are underway to align the agency’s commitment to a safe and welcoming environment for all with organizational practices.

Domestic Violence Action Center is committed to sustaining an uplifting environment, a conscious organizational culture and its devoted employees. This year the agency’s Wellness Committee launched and facilitated a variety of activities for the benefit of staff; this included Wellness Fridays with adjusted and meditation for those who wanted to participate; Herbal Bath Salts workshop, Retail Therapy Exchange, planting of an Herb Garden, an agency lunch, and a Houseware exchange party. Birthdays, employment anniversaries and other occasions are in sharp focus with balloons, lei and desk signs. We had staff reach several milestones: Teen Educator celebrated 13 years with DVAC; Vice President of Survivor Advocacy Services reached a 15 year milestone, (We can include a picture if that would be good) and our Vice President of Operations was recognized for her 25 years of commitment to DVAC.

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DVAC staff participated in 1,272 hours of training (106 trainings) securing our status as experts in service to the community. A sample of trainings includes: Advancing the Practice for Responding to Sexual Assault in Intimate Partner Relationships, Aloha Response to Our Exploited Keiki, Trans Youth and Adverse Childhood Experiences, Transgender, Non-Binary, DV Trauma informed Training, Criminal Court Law, Criminal Law & Practices, #MeToo: Exploring Men’s Role in Ending Discrimination and Violence in Hawaii, A Balanced Approach: Strategies to Reduce Offender Risk While Supporting Victims of DV & SA.

DVAC’s DV 101 Training, which is the 4 day full orientation to the agency’s approach, understanding and analysis to partner violence was reviewed and updated. New materials and a new arrangement for delivery of content were developed by the members of the agency Leadership Team who provide sections of the training. It is available to the community at large and is mandatory for incoming new staff.

Safety planning and emergency procedures were reviewed with staff, and highlighted to secure agency premises, employees and clients. Client Feedback Surveys were revised and aligned for all programs to use with certain questions included for each client served in each agency program. Quality Assurance Measures were reviewed and revised to capture relevant data and highlight areas of strength, weakness and needs for attention.

Government Funders and Contracts

- Legislative GIA, Department of the Attorney General
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Hawaii State Judiciary
- Indigent Legal Assistance Fund
- City and County of Honolulu
- Department of Health and Human Services, Family Violence Prevention & Services
- Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau
- Victims of Crime Act, Department of the Attorney General
- VAWA, Department of the Attorney General

2018 In-Kind Donors

- Acushnet Golf Company
- Aloha Beer Company
- Aloha Shoyu Co. Ltd.
- Bank of Hawaii
- Big Island Candies
- Cecil & Howard Higa
- Cookie Comer
- Corine Hayashi
- Diamondhead Theater
- Duane Miyashiro
- Duke’s Waikiki
- Hawaii Theater Center
- Hawaiian Airlines
- Hawaiian Host
- Hawaiian Isle Water Company
- Honolulu Star Advertiser
- Island Princess
- Jennifer Eaddy
- Ka’analii Beach Hotel
- Kona Brewing Company
- Lapperts Hawaii
- Manoa Valley Theater
- Mark Murakami
- Maui Jim’s
- McDonald’s Restaurant of Hawaii
- McDonald’s Restaurant of Maui Jim’s
- McKinley Car Wash
- Meadow Gold
- RLI
- Roots & Relics

- Honolulu Star Advertiser
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- Meadow Gold
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- Roots & Relics

- School Kine Cookies
- Scot Matayoshi
- Sheraton Waikiki
- Stuart & Akemi Donachie
- Subway
- Tamura’s Fine Wine & Liquors
- The Cheesecake Factory
- The Kahala Hotel & Resort
- Turtle Bay Golf
- Uncle Bo’s
- Waielele Country Club
- Waikiki Parc Hotel
- Webco
- Wet’N’Wild Hawaii

It’s gonna take all of us!
FUTURE

There is no shortage of work to be done. New collaborations, new services, new dollars and new ways to raise awareness are all on the horizon for the Domestic Violence Action Center.

Donor Recognition Reception is scheduled to thank donors for their support!

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