

2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT



**HUMAN
OPTIONS**





DEAR FRIENDS,

As we look back on the past year, **we remain grateful to each of you**, our community of caring individuals and partners, for your steadfast commitment to igniting change in service of victims and survivors of relationship violence.

Because of you, we have been able to keep healing at the heart of what we do. The path for every survivor is different and your support ensures that we stay responsive to the needs of each survivor we encounter and to those of their families.

Over the years we have grounded ourselves in a commitment to learn from survivors. While we believe that we have done that well, we are still scratching the surface on understanding the multiple barriers they face to leading a life free from violence.

We are grateful to have received a transformative investment in innovation that is paving the way for us to dig deeper, center the voices of survivors, and partner with them to inform new tools and approaches that will address the barriers that keep them from living free from fear. This grant is setting the stage for continuous learning and innovation alongside survivors to drive better outcomes.

As you read the following pages you will see that each journey begins with an inflection point. A point where a victim gathers up the courage to reach out for help for the first time. It is in these stories that you will see the power of a safe place, its impact on how survivors see themselves, and how it can clear a path for them to reach their full potential.

We want to thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to ensuring survivors have a safe place to heal from abuse.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing our vision where every person and family in Orange County can experience healthy relationships and live free from fear.



Maricela Rios-Faust
MSW, LCSW, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer



Andrew R. Gray
Latham & Watkins, LLP
President

RESILIENCE REBECCA'S STORY

Rebecca was a loving, hardworking mother of three who dreamed of giving her children a good and stress-free life. Her husband had convinced her that things would change once they were in California. **Instead, she found herself completely alone, suffering through years of physical and emotional abuse, with threats of losing her children if she tried to flee.** One night, after her husband turned on her 14-year-old son Joe because he stepped in to protect her, Rebecca took

witnessing the abuse had on her and her children. They were withdrawn, quiet, hypervigilant, and had trouble sleeping. Rebecca was depressed and anxious. **She knew she and her children were free from the violence and needed support to heal from the pain and trauma they had endured.** At the family resource center, the family participated in counseling services to process anxiety connected to years of living in fear. Rebecca also received legal advocacy support to obtain a restraining order and work through custody issues of her children.

Today, Rebecca is once again able to dream of a good and stress-free life for her children. She is empowered to make her own choices, has the freedom to have friends, reconnect with her family, and maintain financial independence for a stable home. No longer worried about “dad being angry”, the children are free to laugh again, can focus on school, and have friends over to their house. Together, they have found joy and safety in their lives and have been able to move forward.

Together, they have found joy and safety in their lives and have been able to move forward.

the courageous step to call the police. After removing the immediate threat, the police officer connected her to Human Options at the Minnie Street Family Resource Center.

Once safe, Rebecca was able to see the impact that both experiencing and

1,189

survivors served through community-based services to begin their journey of **healing and safety**

85%

of survivors receiving **counseling services** report an increase in resiliency and **77%** report a **decrease in depression**

1 in 15

children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year, and **90% of these children** are eyewitnesses to this violence



94%

of survivors who completed our Personal Empowerment Program were able to **increase their knowledge** of how abuse affects their children

95%

of teens in our prevention programs can identify **at least one safe adult or resource** they would turn to if they were in an abusive relationship

94%

of survivors and their families can obtain **safe transitional or permanent housing** upon exiting shelter



TRAUMA & HEALING

MICHELLE'S STORY

At 15 years old, Michelle had just begun to dream of her future. As a straight A student and athlete, the possibilities seemed endless. She met John, a quiet boy who mostly kept to himself. Michelle couldn't believe he was paying attention to her. Initially, John's attention was flattering and swept Michelle off her feet. However, he soon began insisting on spending every minute with her, eventually pushing her to drop out of sports and school. This set the stage for him to slowly isolate Michelle from her family and support system. Once isolated, John forced

in the next room. All she could think about as she fought for her life and dialed 911 was getting her children to safety. While Michelle was headed to the emergency room and her husband was on his way to jail, her four children were taken into Child Protective Services custody. **Fortunate to be alive, Michelle committed to securing a safe future for her children and entered the Human Options emergency shelter upon being released from the hospital. Once there, she began the process of regaining custody of her children.**

Her determination paid off, and she was able to secure a 3-bedroom condominium through Human Options' Emergency Housing Voucher program.

Working closely with her case manager, Michelle developed a plan for the next chapter with her children. This involved weekly counseling, educating herself on the cycle of abuse through the Personal Empowerment Program (PEP), securing housing, and seeking legal advocacy to address debt and past due rent that John had accumulated, as well as custody of her children.

Michelle to prove her love and loyalty to him by sleeping with him, despite her repeated refusal. Shortly after, she became pregnant with her first child. The abuse and isolation intensified with each additional pregnancy, and John utilized her love for her children to keep Michelle from fleeing. By age 20 Michelle was a mother of four, financially supporting her husband and fearful of his threats to take her children.

Determined to break the cycle of abuse for her children, Michelle re-enrolled in school with the goal of completing her G.E.D. and began a baking business to provide a stable home for her children and live the violence-free life they deserve. Her determination paid off, and she was able to secure a 3-bedroom condominium through Human Options' Emergency Housing Voucher program. **Now in a safe and stable home, Michelle can continue to focus on healing through therapy for herself and her children at a Human Options walk-in center.**

Shortly after her 24th birthday, John stabbed Michelle multiple times while she was cooking, with her children

WHOLE PERSON / WHOLE FAMILY

RICHARD'S STORY

As a retired educator with two master's degrees, Richard never imagined he would be a victim of late-life family violence. As a young man, he swore he would not repeat the cycle of abuse that he had witnessed during his childhood.

After ending an unhealthy and abusive marriage, Richard turned to his son. Unfortunately, Richard did not find the support he needed. Instead, his son began to use subtle tactics like installing a smart heater controlling his dad's access to heat during cold nights, installing a keyless entry system, changing the entry code,

Today, Richard is living independently with his dog and has taken back full control over his life, finally breaking the cycle of violence and living a life free from any violence.

and locking him out of the house without access to a phone and car. He also threw items at Richard and shoved him to intimidate and keep him isolated.

Richard found himself feeling trapped and helpless, a distressing situation that

challenged his sense of safety. Struggling with what to do, he believed, "A parent never stops being a parent. Even when you experience abuse, you still want to protect your child. I was stuck and didn't know what to do. I needed an advocate."

After making the difficult decision to file a report, Richard was connected by a social worker to Human Options' Safe Options for Seniors program. Although he was hesitant to act at first and unsure of what his next steps should be, Human Options provided him with a safe space to learn about his options, create a safety plan to escape the abuse, and ultimately set him on a path to healing through therapy and emotional support.

Richard participated in both group and individual counseling and was able to learn about the forms of elder abuse. He worked through the effects that years of witnessing abuse as a child and experiencing his own abuse had on him.

Through this learning, he was empowered to get the protection he needed by working with the Legal Advocacy team. Today, Richard is living independently with his dog and has taken back full control over his life, finally breaking the cycle of violence and living a life free from any violence.

92%

of seniors report an **increased knowledge** of their legal rights and options through our Legal Advocacy program

67%

of older adults experiencing **relationship violence** are caused by their adult children or spouses

90%

of older adults receiving counseling report a **decrease in depression symptoms**



326

survivors received **Legal Advocacy** services

7,753

people **trained and educated** through prevention education

5,349

the amount of calls Human Options' hotline received for help this past year



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

KELLY'S STORY

Every week, Kelly volunteers on our Human Options crisis hotline. She is the first voice many victims of relationship violence hear when they call for help.

Little do they realize the depth of Kelly's empathy and understanding of what they are going through.

“

But now, I get to help others like me. I get to give them options, and that gives them hope.

There was a time when Kelly felt trapped, scared and totally alone. She was in a relationship that, from the outside, looked to be perfect. Others at work often commented on how lucky she was to be in a relationship with the handsome, young executive at the company. But looks can be deceiving. At first, it seemed like a fairy tale relationship – he swept her off her feet and made her feel like the center of the universe, but he slowly began to isolate her over time. He pressured her to move in with him and then held both her job security and her housing over her head. When she tried to leave, he'd pursue her and threaten her with violence if she didn't return. Kelly was trapped in her own private prison and nobody around her knew what she was going through. **“I didn't have anybody who could understand what he was doing to me. I was suffering in silence, and I didn't know how to get out.”** Thankfully, she took the courageous step to leave her job, her home, and abusive partner, picking up the pieces of her life far away from him. At the time, she didn't know that there were organizations like Human Options available to walk with her on her journey to healing.

Today, Kelly is worlds away from the young woman who thought she was powerless. She is now married to an amazing man, and they have built a joy-filled life. As a result of her experience, Kelly found her passion – walking with other women as

they try to emerge from their own abusive relationships. And she provides more than a listening ear. **She now realizes the abundance of resources available through Human Options for those experiencing trauma. These range from a safe place to stay, to legal advocacy, and trained counselors to help survivors navigate the days and weeks ahead.**

Kelly loves helping survivors recognize that they have options. In addition to volunteering with our hotline, Kelly also plays a large part in Human Options' fundraising efforts during the holidays, which have led to improvements and renovations for the shelters that serve survivors and their children. The holidays can often be challenging for the families we serve, both financially and emotionally, and Kelly's efforts help ensure that they are well cared for. She shared, “I love what I do because I understand what the person on the other side of the phone is experiencing. I am so grateful that I have resources I can point them to. If I'd had those resources when I was going through my own trials, I wouldn't have felt as hopeless, and I wouldn't have suffered as long as I did. But now, I get to help others like me. I get to give them options, and that gives them hope”.

Kelly's important message to our community is, “If you feel trapped, know that you are not as alone or powerless as you may think. We are here to walk with you and provide you with the resources to help you build a safer, healthier life for you and your children. Please don't suffer alone.” Kelly has become an ambassador for Human Options and continues to share her story to empower other survivors to get help and break the cycle.

OUR EVENTS

FALL LUNCHEON 2022

Featuring keynote speaker, Taylor Armstrong, New York Times best-selling author, and former star of “Real Housewives of Beverly Hills,” guests heard Taylor share her empowering and courageous story. Held on October 20th at Marriott Irvine Spectrum, the event raised nearly \$180,000 to help sustain Human Options’ programs in Orange County.

1. Taylor Armstrong, 2. Diane W. Biagianti, Maricela Rios-Faust, Kerri Sonenshine, 3. Maricela Rios-Faust, Robert McKee, Vivian Clecak, Les Thomas, Ellen Thomas



ANNUAL MEETING 2022

Each year Human Options hosts our Annual Meeting which celebrates the contributions of our donors, board of directors, and community partners. Held on December 9th at the Pacific Club, nearly 100 guests gathered to celebrate the impact Human Options made in 2022.

1. Maricela Rios-Faust, Lynne McLeish, Doug McLeish, Nora Caldwell, Cinda Churm, Steve Churm



SERIOUS FUN 2023

Human Options was honored to celebrate DOVE honoree, Diane W. Biagianti, at the Serious Fun Gala, “The Spirit of Aloha, An Island Style Celebration”, held at the Balboa Bay Resort on May 20th. Guests enjoyed an aloha inspired evening with live entertainment and a Hawaiian inspired menu, raising over \$500,000 to benefit Human Options’ life-saving programs.

1. Maricela Rios-Faust, Diane W. Biagianti, Andrew Gray, 2. Wendy Peterson, Nikole Kingston, 3. Maricela Rios-Faust, Vivian Clecak, Diane W. Biagianti, 4. Andrew Gray, Colby Gray, Matt Williamson, Alex Williamson, Whitney Pratt, Michael Pratt

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



One in four women and one in seven men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. To shine a light on this staggering number, we hosted our first ever Walking Vigil with the City of Costa Mesa and Costa Mesa Police Department at Lions Park, where we brought the community together to #SHINETHELIGHT on the lives of those affected by domestic violence and how they can find a way out. Bringing their voices to the cause, Costa Mesa Police Chief Ron Lawrence spoke on the role we all play in bringing an end



to the cycle of relationship violence by identifying the often very subtle signs of domestic violence. The event concluded with Mayor John Stephens leading attendees to walk in solidarity carrying purple candles and reading messages from survivors along the way. Human Options continues to foster meaningful relationships throughout Orange County to educate on the impacts of domestic violence, forging a path where we work together to break down barriers that victims often face when seeking a way to a healthier, safer relationships.

INNOVATION LAB

Thanks to our transformative innovation grant, we’ve implemented design thinking through an innovative lab framework. This lets us engage with individuals affected by relationship violence to understand the best way to increase victim safety, strengthen empowerment, and drive better outcomes.

During our second design sprint, we learned from the survivors like Pamela (38), who described feeling hopeless and overwhelmed when her children tried to talk about the abuse they watched her endure. She didn’t have the words or tools to talk about the shared fear they experienced.

Pamela’s experience and insights led us to reimagine how to build a healing bond between the child and parent, to heal the impact of witnessing domestic violence. Using empathy interviews, our staff participated in design teams to immerse themselves in the lives and perspectives of survivors to understand their needs, motivations, and roadblocks.

By understanding the barriers survivors face when trying to talk to their children about the abuse they experienced we were able to design a tool to help adult survivors and their children practice communication and active listening skills together in a tangible and thought-provoking way: **A deck of cards with strategically guided questions.**

The survivors also shared that it was meaningful for them to make an impact for other survivors. To date, we have **designed and tested five prototypes, which have the potential to transform our therapeutic model** and to align our best intentions and create the best outcomes for survivors and their families. The sprints also surfaced additional opportunities that can make an impact on a survivor’s journey to healing, setting the stage for a culture of learning and innovation that is focused on continuously deepening our understanding of the victim/survivor experience to drive innovation.

“We understand the nature of Design Thinking is to learn from experience and experimentation. What you propose is an ambitious, creative approach to improve how Human Options addresses some very important issues. We applaud your vision and are happy to support it.”

-Tod and Linda White

THANK YOU

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SAVE THE DATE



Visit humanoptions.org/events for more information

As we look toward the new year, we hope you'll continue to join us in igniting social change. Funds raised at our annual signature events support our life-saving work to create a future in which every person and family in Orange County experiences safe, healthy relationships and lives free from fear.



Love Shouldn't Hurt
 Teen Conference
February 10



Serious Fun 2024
May 18



Fall Luncheon 2024
October



Shine the Light
 Walking Vigil 2024
October



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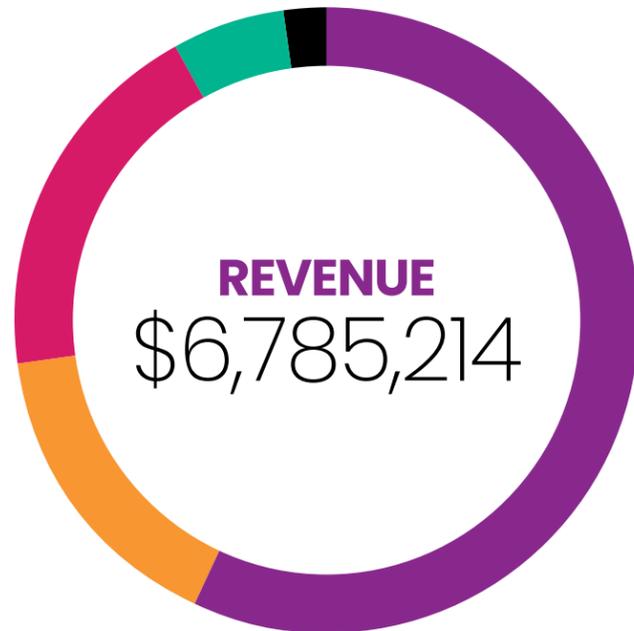
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OUR FINANCIALS

AS OF FISCAL YEAR END JUNE 30, 2023



REVENUE SOURCES

- Government: **57%**
- Individual: **16%**
- Private Grants/Found: **19%**
- Benefit Events: **6%**
- Earned Revenue: **2%**

EXPENSES SOURCES

- Program Services: **83%**
- Fundraising: **7%**
- G&A: **11%**



*Revenue excludes \$1,324,998 of tax credits and unrealized gains on investments.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

FROM 7/1/22 – 6/30/23

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**
- CDBG Tustin
 - CDBG Santa Ana

- Families and Communities Together (FaCT)**
- FaCT Corbin FRC
 - FaCT Newport Mesa FRC
 - FaCT Magnolia Park FRC
 - FaCT Minnie Street FRC
 - FaCT Oakview FRC
 - FaCT Westminster FRC
 - FaCT South Orange County FRC
 - FaCT CHEC FRC

CalWorks ResCare Workforce Services

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

- CalOES Domestic Violence Assistance Program
- CalOES Transitional Housing Program
- CalOES Domestic Violence Housing First Program
- CalOES County Victim Services Program

County of Orange

- OC Community Resources
- OC Health Care Agency (Strong Families, Strong Children) - BHS
- OC Emergency Housing Vouchers Program

Office on Violence Against Women

- Improving Criminal Justice Grant
- Transitional Housing Assistance

Housing and Urban Development

- Domestic Violence Bonus Project

Irvine Recovery Plan

American Recovery Plan Act





OUR MISSION

To ignite social change by educating Orange County to recognize relationship violence as an issue that threatens everyone, advocating for those affected by abuse, extending a safe place for victims, and empowering survivors on their journey of healing.



OUR VISION

We are committed to a future in which every person and family in Orange County experiences safe, healthy relationships and lives free from fear.



OUR VALUES

Diversity

We embrace different perspectives and lived experiences of others.

Respect

We recognize dignity as a basic human right.

Curiosity

We cultivate an appetite for knowledge and understanding.

Ingenuity

We actively work to create original and inventive solutions to further our mission.

Individuality

We call on the unique gifts of others for igniting social change.

HUMAN OPTIONS

PREVENT. PROTECT. EMPOWER. TRANSFORM.



949.737.5242

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