

Learn more about what we've been up to...

- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month - New Teen Challenge and Instagram Account
- CT Safe Connect Marks 100 Days
- Congressman Courtney Visits Safe Connect, Hosts Workplace Policy Discussion with CCADV
- CCADV Releases 2020 Policy Priorities Focused on Strengthening Outcomes for Survivors in Family Court
- CCADV, CT Dept. of Housing Announce New Federal Dollars Coming to CT
- CT Policy Academy Partners with CCADV to Enhance Training
- CCADV Board Member & Member Organization Leader, Jeanne Fusco, Named Register Citizen's 2019 Person of the Year



Follow Our New Teen-Centered Instagram Account and Participate in our TDVAM #heARTbeatschallenge

#heARTbeatschallenge

February is **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month** and this year we invite you, and the teens in your life, to participate in an exciting challenge. This month we'll be holding the **#heARTbeatschallenge**. Healthy relationships and friendships call for a mutual support of each other's talents and passions. So we are challenging **teens** to share what makes their **heARTbeat** in any art form they choose.

The rules are simple:

1. The final product should be a photo or video (1 min or less) of any form of artistic expression including, but not limited to: **dance, spoken word/poetry, drawing/painting, etc.**
2. **The challenge** – incorporate an inspirational message into your piece aimed at **promoting support, love and self-empowerment**. This may be achieved through the inclusion of music in your video. Some of the songs our staff finds inspirational are "Look at Her Now" by Selena Gomez, "Revival" by Gregory Porter and "Don't Start Now" by Dua Lipa. But if you're incorporating music, choose whatever song is inspirational to you!
3. Post your final art piece on Instagram, tag us (**@TeenSafeConnect**) and use the hashtag **#heARTbeatschallenge**. Make sure your post is public so that we can share it! We encourage you to perform in the language of your choice and you can participate as an individual or as a team.

Challenge posts can be made from **2/1/2020 through 2/29/2020** and a winner will be announced on 3/6/2020. The winning challenger/team will receive a pair of customized sneakers and their school will

receive a cash prize of \$500 to support its students (the prize for team submissions will be exceed \$1,000 in value).

[Click here to download a shareable flyer with the complete challenge information.](#) For questions, please contact Crystal Cruz, CCADV Safe Connect Advocacy Coordinator, at ccruz@ctcadv.org or (959) 202-5026.



Follow @TeenSafeConnect on Instagram

Do you live with or work with teens? Please encourage them to follow our new teen-centered Instagram account - @TeenSafeConnect! Our Safe Connect Advocacy Coordinators will be working to share important messages about healthy relationship boundaries and safely connect teens wanting to talk about their relationships or ask questions with advocates available 24/7 via text, chat and email.

CT Safe Connect Marks 100 Days

February 8, 2020 marked 100 days since CCADV launched Safe Connect, Connecticut's new domestic violence resource hub. In those first 100 days, Safe Connect was contacted over 3,000 times by more than 1,800 people seeking assistance via this new platform that allows for text, chat and email in addition to traditional hotline phone calls.



CTSafeConnect

Data from the first 100 days of the project demonstrates that housing and emergency shelter were the most frequently discussed need, followed by financial assistance and basic needs. Safe Connect advocates discussed emergency shelter as a possible option with 779 survivors, while they ultimately referred 267 clients to shelter provided by CCADV's 18 organizations. The most frequently provided services included crisis intervention, counseling, information & referral, and safety planning.

During the first 100 days, the majority of victim/survivor contact was made via phone calls. This is not unexpected as the program is set to launch paid advertising this spring to increase awareness of both the text/chat/email feature, as well as the ability of survivors to chat in more than 200 languages. With 80% of Safe Connect Advocates bilingual in English and Spanish and having cultural backgrounds that span over ten different countries and four continents, Safe Connect provides a strong platform to offer multicultural services to a diverse community of survivors.

Safe Connect, which serves as CT's domestic violence resource hub, serves as essential resource that meets the immediate needs of survivors while ensuring a safe connection to their local domestic violence organization (CCADV's 18 member organizations) for ongoing support and services. Connecticut has traditionally had 18 local domestic violence hotlines which saw a staggered phase-in to Safe Connect beginning on November 1, 2019. As of February 1, 2020, 95% of all domestic violence hotline contacts in Connecticut are coming through Safe Connect.

The goal of Safe Connect is not only to create a coordinated triage response to domestic violence in Connecticut, but also to allow our member organizations more time to provide ongoing services to survivors. By handling immediate needs on the front end, our member organizations can focus their efforts on providing comprehensive advocacy for survivors that meets their long-term needs.

[Read the complete press release about Safe Connect's first 100 days!](#)

Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz Visits Safe Connect

In January, Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz visited CCADV to tour Safe Connect and host a press



conference in an effort to help CCADV continue to raise awareness about this important new resource for survivors. Lt. Governor Bysiewicz pointed out the importance of victims and survivors having options for how they connect with advocates. She thanked advocates for their continued efforts to help survivors achieve safety and stability.

Help Us Spread the Word!

We are asking all of our partners to help us continue to spread the word about the availability of Safe Connect's innovative platform providing access to domestic violence advocates 24/7 via call, text, chat and email. Some possible ways you might help us raise awareness about the availability of Safe Connect include:

- sharing the pre-formatted images on social media
- hanging the poster in your waiting area
- sharing the flyer with local organizations with which you are affiliated, such as faith-based organizations, healthcare professionals, or local human services organizations
- hanging the "tear-off tab" flyers in your restrooms or on bulletin boards at local organizations and stores
- using the sample article provided in a newsletter or eblast
- placing the Safe Connect logo on your website with a link to www.ctsafeconnect.org

[Click here to download the Safe Connect Awareness Toolkit with a link to download a number of useful images and print materials!](#)

For questions about Safe Connect, please don't hesitate to contact CCADV's Director of Safe Connect, [Maria Guzman](#).



Congressman Courtney Visits Safe Connect, Hosts Workplace Policy Discussion with CCADV



On January 23rd, CCADV hosted Congressman Joe Courtney to learn about Safe Connect and lead a roundtable discussion on workplace policies to address domestic violence. The day started with a tour of the new Safe Connect resource hub where Congressman Courtney had the opportunity to meet advocates and learn about day-to-day operations. Staff and members discussed current challenges with meeting the increasingly complex needs of survivors.

Following the visit with Safe Connect, CCADV CEO, Karen Jarmoc, and Congressman Courtney led the roundtable discussion around domestic violence workplace policy and broadly workplace violence policy. Congressman Courtney's Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (H.R. 1309) directs the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue new standards requiring healthcare and social service employers to write and implement a workplace violence prevention plan to prevent and protect employees from violent incidents and assaults at work. The House voted to pass H.R. 1309 on a bipartisan basis. Passage of Rep. Courtney's bill is the culmination of a seven-year effort that began in 2013, when Courtney first requested that the

Government Accountability Office (GAO) study workplace violence trends in the healthcare sector and identify options for OSHA to curtail it.

Since then, Congressman Courtney has worked with a host of healthcare and social service professionals including his wife, who is a pediatric nurse practitioner at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Both Rep. Courtney and his wife have identified the need to have strong policies that encompass a comprehensive response to domestic violence in the workplace.

This past fall, CCADV released new toolkit for employers - [Responding to Domestic Violence in the Workplace: Best Policies and Practices](#). The toolkit has a number of helpful resources for employers including information to better understand the issue of domestic violence and how it might impact their workplace, as well as tools to develop comprehensive policies and programs so that their workplace can both prevent and respond to domestic violence.

CCADV Releases 2020 Policy Priorities Focused on Strengthening Outcomes for Survivors in Family Court

With the regular session of the CT General Assembly in full swing, CCADV has released its 2020 Policy Priorities. One of CCADV's priorities this session is strengthening family court processes to increase safety for survivors and their children. Many survivors of domestic violence find themselves in family court when seeking a restraining order, divorce or custody of their children. Unfortunately for many survivors family court can become one more tool for their abuser to continue their pattern of control and coercion. Litigation abuse, or the continuous and vexatious filing of repetitive and/or frivolous motions, has



become too prevalent and is a consistent concern voiced by survivors. Strengthening outcomes for survivors and their children require a multipronged approach. To that end, CCADV is proposing...

- Establishment of a Family Violence Judicial Benchbook Governing Council to develop and provided continuing guidance related to a judicial benchbook addressing family violence in the context of divorce, custody and visitation.
- Enhance judicial system training as it relates to family violence in the context of divorce, custody and visitation.
- Increase survivor safety and emotional well-being by providing safe spaces and in-court supports for survivors.

CCADV will also advocate for state funding to support the critical services provided by Child & Family Advocates at our 18 member organizations. Child & Family Advocates provide essential support to both the child(ren) and the survivor/non-offending parent. By working with the family unit, these advocates gain greater insight into the level of violence experienced by all members of the family and can assist in the continuous development of age appropriate safety planning. Currently federal funding supports one-third of a full-time position at each member organization. Considering that there were 4,632 children served last, current funding only allows the Child & Family Advocates to provide 2.4 hours of service to each child per year.

Click to read the complete set of [2020 Policy Priorities](#) and our [Child & Family Advocate Funding factsheet](#).

For questions, please contact CCADV Director of Public Policy and Communications, [Liza Andrews](#).

CCADV, CT Dept. of Housing Announce New Federal DV Rapid Rehousing Dollars Coming to CT

In January, the CT Department of Housing along with CCADV announced \$1.3 million in new funding

from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The funding will continue to support Connecticut's successful Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Rapid Rehousing Program. Last summer the program received an initial \$1.7 million award from HUD, with the program total standing at \$3 million as of July 2020.

The program began accepting referrals in September 2019 with 59 referrals to date. Domestic violence and human trafficking advocates work with housing specialists to locate and secure safe housing. Housing specialists have worked diligently to build relationships and create a network of landlords that understand the unique challenges faced by survivors and are willing to provide housing opportunities despite issues such as bad credit, lack of income, or other barriers that often prevent domestic violence survivors from securing housing. The program goal is to house all referrals within 45 days. To date, the program has averaged 36 days to house referrals.

Click here to read our [full press release](#) or this [article in the Hartford Courant!](#)

For questions, please contact CCADV Director of Housing Advocacy, [Annie Stockton Sabrowski](#).

CT Police Academy Partners with CCADV to Enhance Training



Over the past year, the Connecticut Police Academy and CCADV have worked together to enhance their collaborations as it relates to police recruit training. The Academy sought suggestions from CCADV for updated instructional methods. This collaboration led to the Academy utilizing domestic violence advocates, some from the *The Umbrella* in New Haven, to portray victims in training scenarios. This training allows recruits to interact with persons experienced in the field through a mock domestic violence investigation. The addition of the advocates gives the class a unique opportunity to use their new skills in a controlled setting and receive immediate feedback on their performance.

(photo to left: recruits watch a CCADV training video featuring Director of Legal Advocacy, GERALYN O'NEIL-WILD.)

Following the training, the advocates present the entire class with their insights and suggestions. This allows for staff and recruits to analyze performance and identify good communication strategies. CCADV has also provided domestic violence forms and reports to the Academy letting recruits gain practice in filling out all necessary reports and giving all pertinent victim services information to the role player. In addition, the academy has begun using the educational videos developed by CCADV in their classroom training. The continued partnership with CCADV has provided needed enhancements to the training program and has contributed to recruits' knowledge of the domestic violence advocate's crucial role in their future investigations.

If you or your organization wish to assist in this program as a guest speaker or role player, please contact Training Officer Brian Reilly.

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CCADV Board Member and Member Organization Leader, Jeanne Fusco, Named The Register Citizen's

Person of the Year

Congratulations to Susan B. Anthony Project (SBAP) Executive Director and CCADV Board member, Jeanne Fusco, on being named 2019 Person of Year by The Register Citizen! Jeanne is an incredibly passionate, dedicated leader who works tirelessly to meet the needs of survivors and their children in a thoughtful, trauma-informed manner. Jeanne has been with SBAP for 25 years, serving as executive director since 2016. She not only serves as one of the member organization representatives on CCADV's Board of Directors, but she is also a member of our Domestic Violence Fatality Review Task Force and over the years has participated on several other workgroups to shape how services are provided in Connecticut.



Said Jeanne about her work, "For me, the support I receive to do this job is circular. We have many passionate advocates here, who are at the door when the bell rings, and a person is waiting outside who needs help. So I see (SBAP) as a circle of strength for the victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault."

Congratulations, Jeanne! Thank you for your leadership and commitment. This is a well-deserved honor.

[Read the full Register Citizen article here!](#)

THANK
you

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