



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marjaree Mason Center in Partnership with Fresno County Law Enforcement Introduce Interactive Domestic Violence Data Dashboard & Launch Gun Violence Restraining Order Campaign

Fresno, CA — (August 24, 2023) — In a significant stride toward promoting awareness and combatting domestic violence, the Marjaree Mason Center has launched an interactive Domestic Violence Data Dashboard in partnership and collaboration with Fresno County law enforcement agencies. The goal of the project is to be able to better identify trends occurring in Fresno County communities so that the Marjaree Mason Center, law enforcement, and community partners can strengthen outreach and prevention efforts and provide enhanced communication about alternative solutions to violence.

The announcement was made during a press conference on August 24, 2023 including Marjaree Mason Center Chief Executive Officer, Nicole Linder, Chief Programs Officer, Leticia Campos, and Data Analyst, Andrew Castillo, as well as Fresno County Sherriff, John Zaroni, Fresno County District Attorney, Lisa Smitcamp, City of Fresno Chief of Police, Paco Balderrama, City of Clovis Chief of Police, Curt Fleming, City of Reedley Chief of Police, Joe Garza, and additional law enforcement leadership.

Although the dynamics of power and control are a constant in domestic violence relationships, how it manifests in our communities evolves. Though most domestic violence goes unreported, greater awareness creates greater access to support, thus shifting the understanding of who domestic violence affects and how. In order to prevent and end domestic violence, communities need to stay ahead of trends about what triggers lead up to a violent incident, what is taking place during an act of violence and what happens following an act of violence to all involved.

Of the ten largest counties in the State of California, Fresno has the highest per capita calls to law enforcement for domestic violence, according to the California Department of Justice. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of population level data for Fresno County. Currently, the only way to evaluate local impact (without duplication of events) is to examine law enforcement calls.

All data reflected on this dashboard is exported quarterly and supplied directly from Fresno County Sheriff's Office, City of Fresno Police Department, Clovis Police Department and Fresno State Police Department to the Marjaree Mason Center. Homicide data is supplied by the Fresno

County District Attorney's Office. Data is anonymized and does not reflect unique counts of individuals or personally identifying information. The data dashboard is intended to be interactive and allow for the user to review a subset of the population if desired including geographical information, demographics, age, and more. The dashboard is hosted on the Marjaree Mason Center website and is available to access through the following link: <https://mmcenter.org/domestic-violence-dashboard>. Updates will occur quarterly, one month following the end of each quarter.

According to the California Department of Justice website, in 2022 alone, Fresno County law enforcement agencies reported 11,291 domestic violence calls requesting assistance; 1,545 of those incidents involved a weapon and 160 involved a firearm. Fresno County has experienced 16 homicides that were directly linked to domestic violence since the beginning of 2021. Of those, 12 occurred through the use of a firearm.

The presence of a firearm during an incident of domestic violence increases the risk of homicide by at least 500% according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Educating survivors on the deadly intersection between domestic violence and the increased risk of death at the hands of an abuser is critical to ensuring their long-term health and safety.

In response to these statistics, the Marjaree Mason Center is launching a public awareness campaign focused on Gun Violence Restraining Orders and the assistance and supportive services that are available to victims of domestic violence. This project is supported by funding from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence.

The Marjaree Mason Center holds a Legal Options Class regularly in Fresno, Clovis and Mendota that is open to the community. The class can help survivors of domestic violence through the process of filling out a request for a Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Order or a Gun Violence Restraining Order against an intimate partner. The class also provides an overview of all the various types of restraining orders available, the criminal justice system, safety planning, and other services available. To learn more, visit <https://mmcenter.org/what-we-do/legal-advocacy>.

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About Marjaree Mason Center

For over 40 years, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered safe housing and support services to adults and their children affected by domestic violence in Fresno County. As the only comprehensive domestic violence agency in Fresno County, the Marjaree Mason Center provides housing, legal services, counseling and education to survivors and youth. The Center was founded in 1979 after the murder of Marjaree Mason, a native of Easton. A graduate of Washington High School and Reedley College, Marjaree lived in Fresno for 31 years and was well known in the community. To contact MMC, call the business center at 559.237.4706, the 24-hour confidential emergency hotline at 559.233.HELP (4357) or help@mmcenter.org, or learn more online at www.mmcenter.org.