

PS COMMITTEE #1
November 30, 2015

MEMORANDUM

November 25, 2015

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJF*

SUBJECT: Domestic Violence Issues

Today the Public Safety (PS) Committee will receive a briefing on certain domestic violence issues, which include an update on the Family Justice Center (FJC) as well as a status update on the push to provide supervised visitation and monitored exchange services to the County. Those expected to attend include:

Darren Popkin, County Sheriff
Thomas Manion, Acting Director, Family Justice Center

Montgomery County's Family Justice Center co-locates several government agencies to provide legal and social services to families who experience domestic violence. The FJC is also supported by many local community organizations that provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.

Sheriff Popkin has provided an update on the FJC's recent accomplishments, current initiatives, and productivity improvements (©1-3). The FJC continues to expand services outreach. Recent accomplishments include:

- Partnering with the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP). DVRP has a representative on-site at the FJC to provide services to victims in 20 different languages. The organization also provides outreach and education to the Asian and Pacific Islander community.
- Coordinating four regional "Identify, Support, Encourage" training sessions for those who work with children. The training provides information on warning signs of domestic violence, responses, and resources available in the community.
- Expanding the Coaching Boys into Men program, which uses athletic coaches to encourage young men to be respectful both on the field and in other relationships. The program has been in place at Springbrook and Montgomery Blair high schools, and has now expanded to Richard Montgomery High School.

- Coordinating three regional community meetings with the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), to provide public education on domestic violence issues.

Current Initiatives

The FJC is currently working with the DVCC to bring supervised visitation and monitored exchange services to the County. These services will provide a safe environment where parents can exchange or visit with their children. The County Executive's workgroup has put together a draft proposal that includes all elements that would be necessary to have a full-service center that could accommodate the identified need in the County. The DVCC is drafting a new proposal that would build the center in incremental steps, due to the current fiscal climate. The initial setup would include basic monitored exchange services. *The Committee may wish to ask what the DVCC and FJC staff have discussed in terms of this basic model. How large is the currently identified need? What type of physical facility is required, and is it possible to use existing County space like the Circuit Court's custody-related supervised visitation program does? Is the proposal for the basic model expected to be included in the FY17 Recommended Budget?*

The FJC is also proposing a pilot program to bring DVS Legal Services on-site at the FJC. DVS Legal Services is a non-profit organization that provides legal services to domestic violence survivors and families in need. These services would supplement those already being provided by the House of Ruth Maryland.

The FJC is also working with the Commission for Women to develop a promotional campaign to educate the public about the FJC and what services it offers.

Volunteer Program

The FJC has recently created a new Volunteer and Internship program, which includes eight volunteers who are providing nearly 60 hours of assistance each week. Volunteers help with reception desk coverage, intake desk coverage, child care services, data entry, filing, and other administrative duties. The first group of interns will start in January 2016. *The Committee may wish to ask how the volunteer program was developed. Is there a specific pool that the volunteer recruiting will pull from, such as local colleges or non-profit organizations?*

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<i>Family Justice Report</i> Memo, Sheriff Popkin (November 23, 2015)	1-3



SHERIFF DARREN M. POPKIN

November 23, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO: Susan J. Farag
Legislative Analyst

FROM: Sheriff Darren M. Popkin 

SUBJECT: Family Justice Report

Attached, you will find a brief report on Family Justice Center (FJC) accomplishments, initiatives and productivity improvements. In the past year, the FJC has hosted and participated in numerous trainings and outreach events to educate the community about domestic violence. Additionally, the FJC welcomed a new on-site partner, the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project, which provides culturally sensitive services to victims of domestic violence in more than 20 different languages. The FJC also created a new Volunteer and Internship Program, which has already yielded substantial interest and results. Moving forward, current initiatives include drafting a proposal to establish a supervised visitation and monitored exchange program in Montgomery County, developing new community outreach programs, and expanding the current legal services available on-site at the FJC.

As always, we would like to thank the Montgomery County Council for its continued support of the FJC and domestic violence-related initiatives. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with county agencies and community partners to keep Montgomery County residents safe from abuse.

Attachment

Family Justice Center Accomplishments, Initiatives and Productivity Improvements

Accomplishments

- ❖ The Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP) received a Community Grant for FY2016, allowing them to have a representative on-site at the Family Justice Center. The Asian/Pacific Islander DVRP provides culturally sensitive services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in 20 Asian/Pacific Islander languages, and also conducts outreach to the Asian/Pacific Islander community in Montgomery County about domestic violence and the services available for victims.
- ❖ The Family Justice Center, in collaboration with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and Chesapeake Counseling Associates, coordinated four regional "Identify, Support, Encourage" trainings for individuals who work with children, including teachers, guidance counselors, therapists and youth group leaders. "Identify, Support, Encourage" focuses on working with children exposed to domestic violence, the warning signs, appropriate responses, and resources available in the community. Funding for these trainings was provided through a grant from Verizon Hopeline.
- ❖ The Family Justice Center, in collaboration with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation and the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), further expanded the Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) program. This program utilizes the unique role of athletics coaches in the lives of young men to encourage them to be respectful both on the field and in their personal relationships and friendships. Last year, the Springbrook High School and Montgomery Blair High School football teams participated in the program. This year, it has expanded to include Richard Montgomery High School. CBIM serves as a complement to the DVCC's primary youth outreach initiative, Choose Respect Montgomery, which strives to end the cycle of domestic violence before it begins.
- ❖ The Family Justice Center, in collaboration with the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, coordinated three regional community meetings to discuss domestic violence. The meetings were open to the public and held at the Upcounty Regional Services Center, the East County Regional Services Center, and the Silver Spring Civic Center. The meetings focused on common myths about domestic violence, national and local statistics, a survivor testimonial, and a review of services available for victims and families.

Initiatives

- ❖ The Family Justice Center, in collaboration with the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), is working on a proposal to bring supervised visitation and monitored exchange services to Montgomery County in an effort to provide a safe, secure environment in which parents can exchange and/or visit with their children. These services are particularly essential in volatile situations such as cases of intimate partner

violence and high-conflict custody disputes. Last year, the County Executive's workgroup on supervised visitation put together a draft proposal for a full, ideal supervised visitation and monitored exchange center that could accommodate the identified need in Montgomery County. Taking into account the present financial climate, the DVCC is currently drafting a new proposal that would start with basic monitored exchange services. Once the exchange program is fully operational, the DVCC will begin developing a proposal to expand the program to include supervised visitation services. The eventual goal is to have a supervised visitation and monitored exchange program in Montgomery County that is as close to the originally drafted proposal as possible, but the DVCC has decided to pursue that goal incrementally as opposed to attempting to reach it through a single proposal. The DVCC is working to complete the monitored exchange proposal in the coming months.

- ❖ The Family Justice Center (FJC) is in discussions to launch a pilot program to bring DVS Legal Services, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing legal services to domestic violence survivors and families in need, on-site at the FJC. The services provided by DVS would supplement the legal services already being provided several days per week at the FJC by House of Ruth Maryland. This would provide domestic violence victims more opportunities and options to receive assistance and advocacy while they navigate a complex legal system.
- ❖ The Family Justice Center (FJC), in collaboration with the Montgomery County Commission for Women, is working on developing a promotional campaign to educate the public about the services offered at the FJC. One avenue being explored is the use of ads in public transit vehicles and stations.

Productivity Improvements

- ❖ The Family Justice Center (FJC) has created a new FJC Volunteer and Internship Program. The new program currently includes 8 volunteers providing nearly 60 hours of assistance per week in a variety of tasks such as reception desk coverage, intake desk coverage, hospitality/child care services, data entry, filing, and other administrative and clerical duties. The first group of interns under the new program will start in January 2016, and will focus on intake desk coverage, assisting and shadowing FJC Victim Assistants, and answering phone calls. Prior to the creation of this program, the FJC had 2 volunteers, contributing 5 hours of assistance per week. Not only are the volunteers and interns gaining hands-on, applicable experience, but their efforts also alleviate the strain on the FJC Victim Assistant staff, allowing them to focus their efforts exclusively on providing victim services.