THE CENTER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES
PREVENT ABUSE • PROMOTE RESPECT • STRENGTHEN LIVES

NOVEMBER 2026

A Life Reclaimed, A Gift of Hope

When Kate sold her home earlier this year, she knew she wanted to do something meaningful with a portion of the proceeds. She chose to make a generous gift to The Center for Safer Communities, an organization dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic and sexual violence. For Kate, the gift was deeply personal.

"The likelihood that I ended up getting the house, getting the kids, getting where I was, I know isn't everybody's story," she shared. "I just want to make sure that places like this are able to empower women perhaps in the same situation."

Her generosity comes from a place of hard-won understanding. Kate is a survivor of domestic and sexual violence. And while her story includes years of fear, isolation, and unimaginable pain, it is ultimately a story of courage, resilience, love, and hope.

Kate was a mother of two when she met the man who would become her husband. He had a young daughter of his own, and Kate quickly fell in love with the little girl. Wanting to create a stable, loving family, she married him after a whirlwind relationship.

The warning signs were there, she recalls, but the abuse developed gradually. What began as troubling behavior escalated into physical violence, sexual abuse, and increasingly controlling behavior. Her husband discouraged her from working, controlled access to the family car, and gradually eroded her independence. By then, there were young children to care for, financial responsibilities to manage, and a family Kate desperately wanted to keep together. As the violence intensified, so did her fear. She remembers trying to stay quiet during arguments so the children wouldn't wake up. She remembers the confusion of loving someone who was hurting her. And she remembers the overwhelming fear that seeking help might mean losing her children. That fear would keep her in the relationship long after she recognized the danger. For Kate, leaving was never as simple as walking out the door. Her life, finances, family, and future were intertwined with her husband's. And she was terrified that involving authorities would result in her children being separated from her.

One of the first moments when Kate began to recognize what was happening to her came during a church Bible study. Kate had visible injuries on her back when a woman she didn't know particularly well approached her with a question.

"Are you being abused?"
It was a simple question, but one that changed something inside her.

"It just took somebody saying what it was for me to realize," Kate recalled. "Yep. That's actually exactly what's happening." She broke down.

Her church community became a lifeline. Friends helped care for her children, offered her a safe place to stay, and encouraged her to seek help. There were police reports, court appearances, and attempts to leave. There were also returns to the relationship, driven by fear, love, uncertainty, and the complicated realities of keeping her family together.

The abuse continued. Eventually, Kate experienced a devastating sexual assault by her husband. The experience deepened her understanding of just how dangerous her situation had become and strengthened her resolve to find a way forward. With the support of friends, family, and trusted members of her community, she began taking steps toward permanently ending the marriage. Her brother and sister moved into the family home, helping care for the children and providing the stability and protection she needed while she began rebuilding.

"They would feed my kids and read to my kids and make them feel safe while I was crumbled and leveled, then trying to build myself back up," she recalled. Their presence gave Kate something she had been missing for years: the space to begin healing.

Leaving the relationship was not the end of Kate's challenges. She still had children to raise, a mortgage to pay, and years of trauma to process. But slowly, she began to discover what she was capable of.

After her siblings moved away, they passed along an opportunity to earn income caring for dogs. Kate, who had always loved animals, decided to give it a try. What started as a small venture grew into a thriving dog boarding, daycare, and walking business. With a large backyard, a love of animals, and a growing list of clients, Kate built something entirely her own.

The business became profitable enough for her to pay her mortgage, support her family, and eventually move away from the public assistance she had relied upon during the hardest years. More importantly, it gave her confidence. She was no longer simply trying to survive. She was creating a life she loved. Her children were growing, her business was flourishing, and her family was beginning to experience a sense of peace and stability that had once seemed impossible.

And then, when she was ready, Kate opened her heart to love again. She met the man who is now her husband at a time when she was already happy and independent. Their relationship included plenty of dog walks, laughter, and the kind of companionship she had come to understand she deserved. They married last year, and Kate recently relocated to begin a new chapter with him and their blended family.

Continued on the next page.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Every year, as the days grow shorter, I find myself reflecting on the people who make this work possible: the survivors who trust us, the colleagues who show up for them, and the communities that refuse to look away. This year, that reflection fills me with gratitude and hope.

The stories you will read in these pages reminds us why we do this work. Behind every number we share in this newsletter is a person who reached out, often at one of the hardest moments of their life, and found someone ready to listen. Our commitment to Sullivan County, where Safer Communities began and where we remain rooted, has only deepened.

That commitment has felt especially weighty this season. A recent tragedy in Newport reminded all of us that domestic violence is not a distant concern. It happens in our towns, to our neighbors, and the consequences can be devastating and permanent. We hold everyone affected in our hearts. We also hold fast to what we know: that help exists, that warning signs can be recognized, and that a community paying attention can change what happens next. The stakes of this work are high, and so is our resolve.

This has also been a year of growth. As we expand into the Monadnock Region, building on the important work of the Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention, we are welcoming new colleagues, including Ashley and Kathy in Keene and Emmy in Claremont, who bring experience, compassion, and deep ties to the communities they serve. Their arrival strengthens our ability to support survivors and educate communities across southwestern New Hampshire.

Growth matters only if it makes us more present, and prevention may be where that matters most. Our PEP Talks partnership with Newport Community Television shows what is possible when we meet people where they are, with short, practical conversations that help adults talk with young people about boundaries, consent, and staying safe online. The message is simple: the strongest protection we can offer a child is a trusted adult who listens without judgment.

That idea guides everything we do. Safety is built through relationships, through small acts of care repeated over time, and through a community that decides together that violence has no place here.

Thank you for being part of that community.

With gratitude,

Pascale

Pascale N. Graham, Executive Director
pascale@cscnh.org

A Life Reclaimed, A Gift of Hope (continued)

Kate is quick to acknowledge that finding safety and happiness doesn't mean the effects of abuse simply disappear. She continues to work with a therapist to process her experiences and navigate the lasting impact of trauma. Sometimes, an unexpected reaction or an ordinary disagreement can trigger feelings of fear that belong to a very different chapter of her life.

Her children, too, are finding their own paths toward healing. But today, Kate can recognize those responses for what they are. She can remind herself, and her children, that they are safe. Her life is not without challenges. It is, however, a life filled with possibilities, choices, and hope. And she wants other survivors to know that such a life is possible for them, too.

When Kate decided to donate a portion of the proceeds from selling her home to The Center for Safer Communities, she was thinking about the people who might still be living the life she once knew. She remembers how frightening it was to ask for help. How difficult it was to tell someone what was happening behind closed doors. How much she worried about being judged, or having decisions made for her.

She also remembers the extraordinary difference it made when someone simply listened.

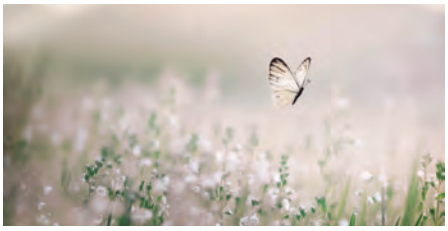
Kate hopes her gift will help ensure that other survivors have somewhere to turn, somewhere they can talk openly, explore their options, and receive support without judgment. When asked what she would say to someone who is experiencing abuse and considering reaching out for help, her answer was both gentle and powerful.

"It's whatever part of you that is thinking about wanting to step out of that, that part of you needs to have a louder voice."

She spoke about the importance of recognizing those fleeting moments of clarity, when something inside tells you that the way you're being treated isn't right.

"Just go with that and explore that for a moment with somebody that's not gonna judge you and that can understand you and just hold your hand."

For Kate, that is why organizations like The Center for Safer Communities matter. Survivors deserve a place where they can speak openly, be heard without judgment, and explore what safety and independence might look like for them.



Her decision to give back reflects both how far she has come and her understanding that not everyone has access to the support, resources, or opportunities that helped her rebuild her life. Kate knows that healing takes time. She knows that leaving an abusive relationship is rarely simple, and that the path forward looks different for everyone. But she also knows what it feels like to begin believing in yourself again, to discover your own strength, build something meaningful, and create a life filled with love and possibility.

By sharing her story and making this generous gift, Kate hopes to help other survivors recognize that they, too, deserve safety, dignity, and the freedom to shape their own futures.

And for someone who may be questioning their own relationship, wondering whether things could ever be different, Kate offers this simple encouragement:

"I think that clarity moment, it will grow."

Direct Services

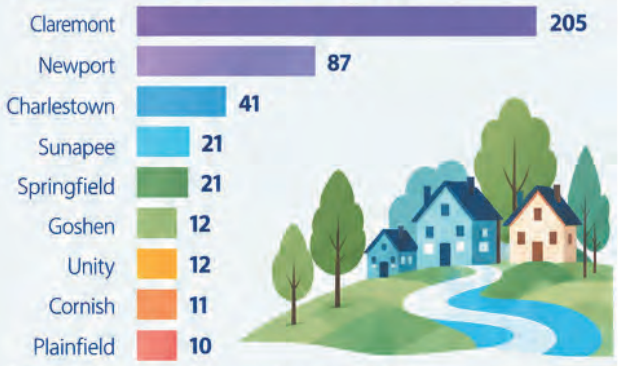
609
INDIVIDUALS SERVED
Survivors and family members who received support through our direct services.

572
VICTIMS/SURVIVORS SERVED
People who experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or other forms of violence.

104
CHILDREN SUPPORTED
Children who were part of a survivor's care and received support through our services.

37
PEOPLE SUPPORTED THROUGH THIRD-PARTY CONTACTS
Individuals we spoke with on behalf of someone else who was experiencing violence.

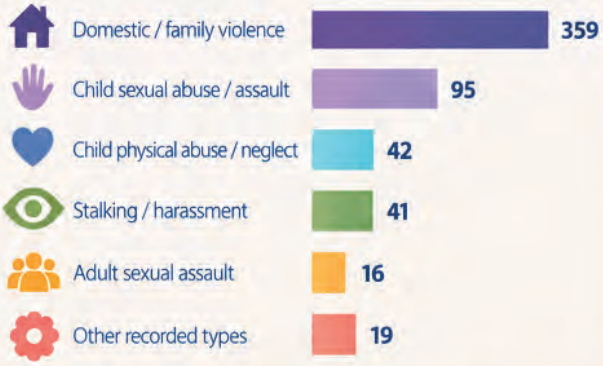
WHERE PEOPLE WE SERVE LIVE



Top recorded locations; not an exhaustive breakdown.

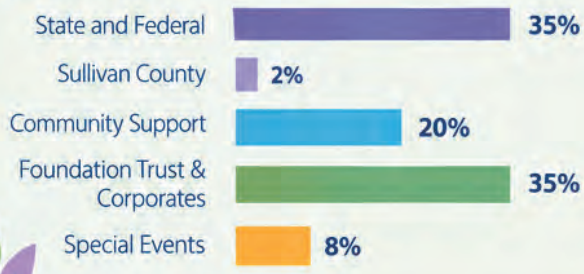
TYPES OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED

Based on 572 victims/survivors served. Some individuals experienced more than one type.

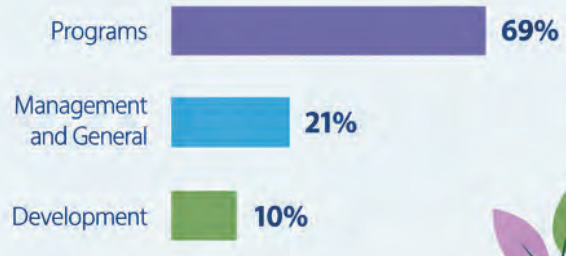


FY26 Financial Overview

INCOME



EXPENSES



Prevention Education

7,637
PEOPLE REACHED

Across schools, communities and partner organizations throughout the region.

588
PREVENTION & OUTREACH SESSIONS
Interactive presentations, trainings, tabling events and community programs.

4,075
YOUTH AND STUDENTS REACHED
From kindergarten through college, with age-appropriate education and skills for safer, healthier relationships.

2,395
COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED
Parents, caregivers, neighbors and community partners who help create safer, stronger communities.

967+
HOURS
Invested in preparing and delivering prevention education.

EDUCATION TOPICS ACROSS ALL AGES

Early Elementary	Body safety & emotional literacy
Upper Elementary	Healthy relationships & respect
Middle School	Consent & digital boundaries
High School	Dating violence prevention
College and Community	Leadership & bystander skills

Small Conversations, Big Impact: Bringing Prevention Education to Our Communities

Sometimes, the most important conversations are also the hardest to start. How do you talk to a child about personal boundaries? What should you say when your teenager encounters something uncomfortable online? How can you help young people recognize unhealthy behaviors, respect others' boundaries, and know when to ask for help?

At The Center for Safer Communities, our Prevention Education team knows that these conversations matter. They also know that for busy parents, caregivers, and other trusted adults, finding the time, resources, and confidence to have them isn't always easy. That's where a creative partnership with Newport Community Television (NCTV) comes in. Together, we've developed PEP Talks, a series of short, accessible conversations designed to make prevention education more approachable and give adults practical tools for supporting the young people in their lives.

The idea behind PEP Talks grew from a simple realization: families are busy, and attending an hour-long workshop or information session isn't always realistic. Our Prevention Education team wanted to find another way to reach people. What if important information could be shared in smaller, more manageable pieces? What if adults could learn about a topic, access helpful resources, and walk away feeling a little more confident about starting a conversation at home? With the support of NCTV, that idea became a reality.

The series has explored topics ranging from body safety and consent to summertime safety, personal boundaries, and digital safety. Each episode takes an issue that can feel overwhelming and breaks it down into practical, everyday conversations. One episode explores how holiday gatherings can create opportunities to talk about bodily autonomy, including why children should feel comfortable deciding whether they want to hug a visiting relative. Another focuses on summer activities, helping adults think through safety at sleepovers, camps, and other situations where children may be navigating new environments and relationships.

And thanks to the initiative of Bruce at NCTV, PEP Talks has expanded beyond television. The series is also available as a podcast, creating even more opportunities for people to listen and learn on their own schedules. It's a wonderful example of what happens when community organizations combine their strengths to make important information more accessible.

The most recent PEP Talk tackles an issue that seems to be on everyone's mind: keeping young people safe online. From social media and group chats to inappropriate content and emerging technologies, today's digital landscape presents challenges that can leave even the most tech-savvy adults feeling overwhelmed. But our Prevention Education team emphasizes that digital safety isn't simply about parental controls, monitoring devices, or knowing the latest apps. It's about relationships.

Children may encounter concerning content or behavior online even when adults have taken every precaution at home. A friend might share something on a school bus. An older sibling might introduce an unfamiliar platform. An uncomfortable interaction might involve someone the child already knows. What matters most is that young people know they have someone they can turn to.

As our team discussed during a recent conversation, children sometimes hesitate to tell adults about troubling online experiences because they're afraid of getting in trouble or losing access to their devices. That fear can create silence at precisely the moment when communication matters most. The goal is to help adults move away from an "us versus technology" mindset and toward something much more powerful: adults and children working together to navigate the digital world safely. One of our educators recalled hearing an IT professional at a local school offer a particularly memorable observation: **"The very best parental control is open communication with your kid."** It's a message that captures the heart of PEP Talks.

We teach children how to cross the street, wear a seat belt, and safely use a kitchen stove. These conversations are ordinary parts of growing up. Our Prevention Education team believes conversations about consent, body safety, healthy relationships, and digital boundaries should feel just as natural. And those conversations do more than teach individual safety skills. They build trust. When adults talk openly and without judgment, they show young people that difficult subjects aren't off-limits. They create opportunities for children to ask questions, express discomfort, and seek support without shame. That foundation matters far beyond any single conversation.

The collaboration with NCTV reflects something we believe deeply at The Center for Safer Communities: preventing violence is a community effort. By making prevention education available through local television, podcasts, and accessible resources, we're reaching beyond classrooms and traditional workshops to connect with parents, grandparents, caregivers, educators, and other caring adults. We're also reminding our communities that prevention doesn't always begin with a big intervention or a difficult conversation.

We're grateful to Newport Community Television for helping us bring these conversations into more homes and for recognizing the value of prevention education in building healthier, safer communities. Because when adults feel more confident having important conversations, young people have more opportunities to feel heard, supported, and safe. And that's a conversation worth sharing.

To find our PEP talks, visit nctvnh.wordpress.com or search for NCTV wherever you get your podcasts.



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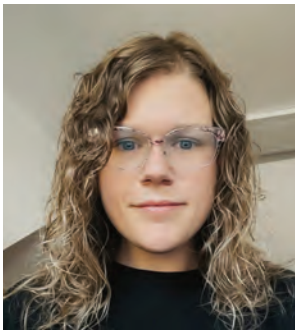
Growing Our Team, Expanding Our Reach

It's a new chapter for The Center for Safer Communities! As we expand our services into the Monadnock Region, building on the important work of the Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention (MCVP), we're excited to welcome new faces to our growing team, which has strengthened our ability to support survivors, educate communities, and build meaningful connections across southwestern New Hampshire. We're delighted to introduce three of the new staff members, each bringing unique experiences, perspectives, and a shared commitment to creating safer communities for all.



Emmy is our new Family Violence Prevention Specialist in the Sullivan County office. She was born and raised in Sullivan County and graduated from Fall Mountain High School and has a background in human services. She enjoys connecting with others, helping others navigate challenging situations, and being a person who people feel safe to confide in. In her free time, she likes to play with her two kiddos at parks, sit by the campfire, fish, color, and explore new places.

Ashley has been working with youth of all ages, supporting positive youth development and healthy relationship skills, for almost 20 years. She has worked as a substitute teacher and paraprofessional in SAU29, and as the after-school program and summer camp director at the Keene Family YMCA. As a Violence Prevention Educator in the Keene office, she enjoys the variety of her audiences, from preschool to college students, fostering their sense of self-worth and helping them identify healthy versus unhealthy behaviors in all types of relationships. As a Direct Service Advocate, Ashley appreciates being able to provide survivors with a safe space to share their experiences, validation of their feelings, and the support they deserve in challenging times. Outside of the classroom and office, Ashley enjoys spending time with her daughters and being physically active outside.



Kathy serves as the Programs Manager in the Monadnock Region, bringing six years of dedicated experience to the field of domestic and sexual violence advocacy. She holds a master's in forensic psychology and is deeply passionate about advancing trauma-informed care to support survivors effectively. A proud resident of the Monadnock region for nearly nine years, Kathy lives locally with her husband and three daughters. When she isn't managing impactful community programs, she loves spending quality time with her family and friends or getting completely caught up in a good book.