From the depths of despair to the top of the world

Thanks to you, mom and kids start a new life

Give the best gifts of all!
SEE MORE INSIDE

GF Public Schools’ Thompson honored with Peacemaker Award
Recently, I spent a couple of hours in meaningful conversation with one of our faithful donors. For nearly three decades, she has given consistently because confronting violence and transforming lives are challenges that she not only supports financially but wants to impact personally.

Nearly 40 years and thousands of lives transformed

At the end of our chat, I reminded her that our 40th anniversary was on the horizon in 2020. Her face softened with awe. When you’ve championed a cause for so long, its purpose becomes a part of who you are.

Before we parted, I shared a few updates relevant to our agency’s 40-year history and this particular supporter’s lasting influence. I asked her if she had any idea how many lives CVIC had reached in the nearly 30 years she and others had been giving. She shook her head and then asked: “Thousands?”

I grinned. When I shared that three decades of contributions had touched more than 60,000 lives, her eyes instantly glistened. It’s powerful to hear how generosity greets adversity. It’s compelling to hear how your personal contributions, alongside an engaged community, make a difference.

One young man’s life will never be the same

On the drive home, I was reminded again of Chris*. Just 20 years old, Chris now shares his story with the poise of an accomplished speaker, not a former pre-teen who once hid under tables. We met Chris through our school-based counseling program that is possible in part because of this donor’s tenacity.

What struck me most about this donor’s response was how grateful she was that I shared these milestones. It’s captivating to watch how grateful generous human beings are. We often see gratitude from those we serve. It’s compelling to also see its impact on those who give.

Reminding ourselves of generosity’s impact on people like Chris, this fall we implemented a sixth agency value: Generosity/Gratitude. Following is an excerpt. I hope it reminds you how grateful we are for your generosity, how moving your work truly is and how many lives you touch—from 60,000 to one.

* Generosity and gratitude are very tightly connected. At their very core, they represent who we are and what we do…. Generosity and gratitude come full circle when community partners, volunteers, supporters, and staff work together…. We are deeply grateful for those who live with generosity and fervently hope their involvement with CVIC brings meaning to their lives.

* Name changed to protect client’s privacy.
Bring meaning to your holiday and life-giving help to families

On the following pages, we have shared the experiences of three families we are privileged to serve, each in need of a special gift this holiday: a stable future, a happy childhood, or a safe home. 

*Would you consider making a gift to help a family over the holidays?* Your gifts will provide life-giving support to these families or others in the same situations.

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**Why one family chooses to provide gifts that last a lifetime**

**What inspires you to give to local families?**

“It all comes down to impacting lives and building a better tomorrow. CVIC helps those in need and strives to prevent future events of violence. The sheer number of clients served, and the variety of services, is amazing (and a little frightening when you realize how great a need there is in our community). We are also inspired by CVIC’s efforts beyond local families, by developing and demonstrating ways that other communities can implement similar strategies for violence prevention.”

**Your gifts help to provide stable futures, happy childhoods and safe homes. How does your generosity bring meaning to your own life?**

“It is easy to feel proud of a donation when you know the organization you are giving it to has such an incredible staff of caring individuals, is extremely well organized, and is a great cause focused on serving the people of our community. We also work with youth and athletes in our community, through parenting, teaching and coaching, therefore we deeply understand the importance and impact of feeling safe and loved on a student’s academic and social skills. We are only a very, very small piece of your success, but are proud to be a part.”

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Photograph of Jessie and Tom Erickson:

*Jessie and Tom Erickson are members of CVIC’s Dream Maker Society, pledging significant financial support over many years to help community members impacted by violence. They agreed to share their thoughts with us for this newsletter.*
Going to college full-time, working three jobs, and raising six children—that’s enough to take most people down, but Marin* couldn’t be happier.

Over the past year, she said, “I feel like I’ve got myself back. I’m confident—that’s something I never had before.” She’s so confident that she not only took the big step of enrolling in college, but she is also excelling.

“I feel proud of going back to school,” Marin said. After escaping an extremely violent relationship, Marin and her kids became homeless, living in their car before they found CVIC and the incredible generosity of our supporters. One, in fact, recently offered to pay for Marin’s schooling.

“I couldn’t believe it! I started shaking and crying,” she said. “I don’t look at myself as anything special. It’s something I can’t even put into words how great it made me feel.”

Some days are extremely hard because finances are tight, she said. “It’s not easy, you go without things.... But I look at things differently now, and it’s because of all the support I’ve gotten at CVIC.”

* Name and photo changed to protect confidentiality.

I have become a totally different person.

– MARIN

Give one of the best gifts of all this holiday—a stable future!

- $75 — will instantly provide groceries for an entire week for a family, ensuring children have healthy food to eat

- $117 — will provide guidance and support to help a parent like Marin find housing, childcare and employment

You can give online at cviconline.org or send in the enclosed envelope with your gift.

Your generous gift will support the entire mission of CVIC. Thank you!
At just 6 years old, Luisa* had to leave her home with her mom and baby brother because she was no longer safe at her house. Her mom’s boyfriend, who had been like a father to Luisa, sexually assaulted her, shattering the innocent childhood she had known. Thankfully, our shelter had an opening, and this young family of three found refuge while they tried to take in what had just happened.

At first, Luisa clung to her mom, afraid to leave her side. But before long, she warmed to our family advocate, Kelsey, who offered cupboards full of colorful craft supplies. While they created art together, Luisa began to open up about what had happened. And Kelsey was ready to provide healing messages and techniques to help her through, such as the breathing star, below, and a coping shield, on which Luisa identified her strengths and the people who will support her and help her stay safe.

It will take some time for Luisa to fully heal. But seeing her begin to blossom and play with the other kids at shelter makes us believe she is on her way to making her childhood happy again.

* Name and photos changed to protect confidentiality.

Give one of the best gifts of all this holiday—a happy childhood!

- **$125** — will provide a night of shelter so Luisa’s family (or another family in a similar situation) can stay safe while planning their next steps

- **$219** — will provide a child like Luisa who was harmed by violence with a session of expert trauma therapy to help him or her heal

You can give online at cviconline.org or send in the enclosed envelope with your gift. Your generous gift will support the entire mission of CVIC. Thank you!
Paul doesn’t remember the times his dad would hit him when he was a baby to get him to stop crying. But when his mom told him about the blows they both took, he said, “I swore I would never be an... abusive person.”

Several months ago, Paul was arrested for domestic violence, his boys were put in foster care, and Paul began our New Choices group for men who’ve used violence. “At first, I didn’t want to be there,” he said, “but then a lot of it started hitting home. I realized what I was doing wrong.”

Paul has also taken parenting classes and is working hard to get custody of his sons back. Now, after completing the full 27 weeks of New Choices, Paul said, “I actually changed quite a bit.”

Does he have advice for other men like him who are ordered to New Choices? “Just listen and take in what you can,” he said, “because I guarantee, you’re going to be a better person by the time you get done.”

* Name and photo changed to protect confidentiality.

I realized how my kids were affected by the fighting ... and I didn’t feel good about myself. I didn’t want my kids to ever witness that,” Paul said. “New Choices helped me be a better parent, from the standpoint of my temper and going off the handle. I’ve gotten better. I do more thinking about things and the consequences of my reactions. — PAUL

Give one of the best gifts of all this holiday — a safe home!

- $63 — will provide for a session of New Choices to help an adult like Paul end his use of violence and ensure safety at home

- $219 — will provide a child exposed to violence at home with a session of expert trauma therapy to help him or her heal

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North Dakota’s first domestic violence court has successful first year

The Grand Forks County Domestic Violence Court, a pilot project commissioned by the ND Supreme Court, recently completed a successful first year.

CVIC and court staff collaborated closely to hold domestic violence offenders accountable and to reduce the number of adults who reoffend.

“In Grand Forks we are very fortunate to have close collaborative relationships, which is a huge part of what has made our court so successful in such a short time.”

— Max Kollman, Domestic Violence Court Coordinator

In its first year, the court heard 508 cases of 115 adult domestic violence offenders, with 110 men and women ordered to complete intakes at CVIC’s New Choices Program, which offers groups to help adults end their use of violence and control and build relationships based on respect, trust and non-violence.

Thompson wins Peacemaker Award

Grand Forks Public Schools Associate Superintendent of Elementary Education Jody Thompson has been named CVIC’s 2019 Peacemaker Award recipient, recognized for his partnership in the Safer Tomorrows initiative to end violence in two generations.

“Jody was influential in CVIC’s successful efforts to implement prevention and therapy programs at schools across the county,” CVIC President/CEO Coiya Tompkins said.

“More kids are being reached with prevention education and healing services than ever before as a result of Jody’s efforts.”

Thompson provided instrumental leadership in serving on the Safer Tomorrows Governance Team from 2011-2016 and on the agency’s board of directors from 2012-2019.

CVIC tries to build a better community, Thompson said. “Anytime the public schools can be involved, we want to be front and center. I gladly accept the award on behalf of the Grand Forks Public Schools and all the county schools involved.”
You can make the holidays bright for families we serve

If you are in a position to give to families living in poverty served by CVIC, you will help them over major hurdles in their life and bring such relief. Here are some of their immediate needs:

- Tracfoness
- Tracfone minutes
- Cell phone chargers
- Gas cards
- Oil changes
- City bus passes
- Monetary gifts for vehicle repair
- Monetary gifts for utilities

If you can help, contact Jamie at jamie@cviconline.org or 746-0405 for more info. Thank you!