



A publication of the Community Violence Intervention Center

Vol. 29 | No. 1

2024 SPRING NEWSLETTER



Reaching  
youth early  
*is a critical part of  
our plan to end  
violence in our  
community*



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## Published by

**Community Violence Intervention Center**  
211 S. 4th St., Grand Forks, ND 58201

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## Platinum Seal of Transparency

CVIC has once again earned its Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency! Check out our nonprofit profile to keep up to date with our impact by searching "Community Violence Intervention Center" on the Candid website. We want to make sure you always have the information you need to support our work with trust and confidence.

# Generous gifts usher in fresh starts for many CVIC clients



*Dear Friends,*

We reflect on 2023 and begin 2024 in the seventh year of our Safer Tomorrows Road Map journey. Gearing up for another progressive year on behalf of neighbors impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault, we contemplate both challenges and opportunities impacting our bold vision to end interpersonal violence in two generations.

Top on our gratitude list is Giving Hearts Day, which raised more than \$29 million in North Dakota and northwest Minnesota. In many ways, Giving Hearts Day has become an additional holiday for CVIC and its cherished donors, volunteers, partners and teammates. In true form, our collective community of more than 400 donors stepped up in spades, generating more than \$101,000 for vital healthy relationship education and prevention curriculum that is delivered in partnership with both urban and rural schools. Through support from Leighton Media, we were fortunate to showcase these partnerships through interviews with CVIC's Education & Prevention team, as well as partners and donors such as Minnkota Power Cooperative and Grand Forks Public Schools during a segment on KNOX's Ryan Cunningham Show. Hearing their stories only strengthens my belief that reaching youth while they're learning to navigate the world is critical to shifting our community culture to one that does not tolerate violence.

Your generosity is helping youth at all ages learn how to prevent interpersonal violence before it begins. This remarkable transformation cannot transpire without your support. To learn more about businesses like Minnkota Power Cooperative and Nodak Electric Cooperative and other companies and individuals who helped give us a head start, check out pages 10 & 11.

We ended 2023 with both highs and lows. True to the community in our name, several private donors once again responded to critical transportation and transitional housing needs for several special clients. In December, for the second straight year, 12 clients received complimentary vehicles on behalf of Rydell as part of its Angels on Wheels program, as well as gas cards courtesy of Northdale Oil and car seats thanks to

Safe Kids Grand Forks, an Altru Health System program. Thanks to generous support from Pure North, Hugo's Family Marketplace and Community Contractors, one of our shelter clients transitioned from a frightening home situation to a safe, warm and fully furnished apartment where they could start fresh.

Our spring North Dakota legislative efforts, in tandem with our sister agencies, local legislators and partners, and key leadership in the Department of Health & Human Services, yielded historical funding increases for 19 domestic violence/sexual assault agencies statewide. Thanks to our state's attorney and county/city law enforcement partners, we also revised two key laws. One added stalking to domestic violence protection orders and another added charges/language that will initiate court-ordered domestic violence intervention education for those who have used violence in their relationships.

Nationally, we learned of unprecedented federal grant challenges for Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which would affect 12,000 domestic violence/sexual assault victims statewide. Statewide allocations, which represent nearly 10% of CVIC's annual operating funds, are projected to plummet to less than half by 2026. With continued leadership of the statewide coalition's Legislative Task Force, CVIC, in tandem with Grand Forks partners, state and national legislators and our Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation partners, is working diligently to combat this funding gap.

Programmatically, a variety of safety, healing and education services, core pillars of our Safer Tomorrows Road Map, continue to grow thanks to your support. You can learn more on pages 4-7.

We look forward to sharing additional updates and successes in the months to come. Thank you again for all you do to support this ambitious but very possible vision to end interpersonal violence.

Gratefully,

*Coiya Tompkins Inman*

Coiya Tompkins Inman

# Safety, Healing, Education & Prevention



## Healthy impact on clients and in classrooms

2023 was both a year that highlighted how far we have come on our Safer Tomorrows Road Map, and a year that illuminated all the places we still need to reach.

We are incredibly proud of 2023's amazing successes, including our new restorative therapy services for those who have used violence in their intimate partner relationships, expanded programs to reach immigrants and refugees needing crisis support, our reinvestment in partner training with Coordinated Community Response (CCR), and the growth of our education and prevention services.

We are incredibly heartened to see the levels of community engagement in our work and the momentum behind our programs. We are also acutely aware of the remaining needs we have in our community, including economic hardships that make crisis and stability services even more critical, ongoing barriers to medical care and trauma-informed services across our communities, and the alarming resurgence of serious interpersonal violence like strangulation. But, at the same time, we have demonstrated that we have the tools we need to create change.

As we head into a new year, we know that we are moving in the right direction and thrilled to have you continuing to walk with us.

**17,389**  
families, adults  
and children  
served in 2023



### SAFETY IMPACT

**2,647**

People and families served by safe visits, shelter, crisis response and crime victim rights



### HEALING IMPACT

**176**

adults and youth provided with evidence-based therapy



### EDUCATION & PREVENTION IMPACT

**14,566**

Youth and adults trained in violence prevention

# Safety

## CVIC Transitional Housing program creates stability



Liz\* entered CVIC's Transitional Housing program after leaving her abusive partner. Things were going well for Liz and her children, but when her ex-partner escalated threats against her, damaged her property, and raised complications in divorce and custody proceedings, Liz's mental health and progress on her stable living situation hit a standstill.

In addition to the support she receives in the Transitional Housing program, CVIC's advocacy program helped her process these issues and identify the steps to regain her stability. Liz told CVIC staff how grateful she is for the support, stating that she doesn't know where she would be without it.



*"I lost my mother to domestic violence, so I am especially thankful for this service."*

- CVIC CLIENT

**155**

new men and women in the New Choices program participated in group, addressing their use of violence and promoting accountability for the harm they have caused to others.

**99%**

of clients reported feeling safer and more aware of ways to plan for safety as a result of CVIC Advocacy services.

\*Name, some details changed

# Healing

## Thriving and healing after life-altering assault



*"...The fears are still there but I'm able to practice all of the skills I've received to move on...it has brought back some feelings of worthiness and strength in the knowledge that I am capable to do more than I thought possible."*

- CVIC ADULT THERAPY CLIENT

CVIC's youth therapists help to connect children and their families to all the care they need, in addition to therapy. Our therapist saw Mike\* for about a year after he experienced an assault, helping him to process what happened to him and learn coping skills, while also helping his family access education and resources to support Mike.

In addition, the therapist connected Mike and his family to the CVIC Adopt a Family Program, which provides gift cards to purchase groceries and other basic needs. Mike's family shared that these donations had a huge impact on their family. Not only that, but Mike's family passed along strategies learned from CVIC when someone they knew was experiencing suicidal thoughts, showing the ripple effect our services have throughout our communities.

**94% OF ADULT CLIENTS** surveyed showed improvement in emotional condition after receiving therapy services with CVIC.

\*Name, some details changed

# Education & Prevention

Empowering students  
one classroom at a time



*"I learned the  
difference between  
flirting and  
harassment."*

- YOUTH PARTICIPANT

At the request of a Grand Forks-area school principal and Education & Prevention partner, CVIC developed 10 healthy relationship education modules for students consisting of recordings, videos, online activities, and resources. Module topics include empathy, digital safety, coping skills, bullying and more.

"There is an ever-changing need in the schools to enhance our outreach," said CVIC Director of Prevention and Education Brittany Love. "Over the last year, we have received more requests for our education services. We worked closely with one rural school to adapt our education so they could provide it right at their schools on an as-needed basis and without our staff being present."

These resources will give school partners another tool to help students learn about and internalize healthy relationships and coping skills, building on the trainings and presentations that CVIC provides. CVIC is contacting additional school partners to share materials and explore other ways to expand resources available for students. "We try our best to accommodate all their needs so we can support youth in the best possible ways", said Love.



**71%** of youth surveyed and **97%** of adults surveyed  
planned to use what they learned in their daily lives.



# Giving Hearts Day

*Success*



CVIC supporters  
raise  
**\$101,000**  
for education and  
prevention  
programming

**\$101,000**  
RAISED

**400+**  
DONORS

**20%**  
INCREASE IN  
EVENT TOTAL  
FROM 2023

**HIGHEST  
AVERAGE  
GIFT SIZE**  
IN THE LAST  
FOUR YEARS

**20+**  
NEW DONORS



# EDUCATION & PREVENTION

The gift of healthy relationships

## BECAUSE VIOLENCE IS PREDICTABLE, IT IS PREVENTABLE.

Reaching youth early is a critical part of our plan to end violence in our community, and that's why for Giving Hearts Day 2024 we chose to focus on our Education & Prevention program, which empowers students for safer tomorrows through healthy relationship training.

## 42% of students report feeling persistently sad or hopeless and 29% experience poor mental health. CVIC education and prevention training aims to reduce these numbers.

When young people learn healthy relationship tools early on, like how to recognize and address unhealthy relationships and how to maintain boundaries in difficult situations, they are less likely to experience interpersonal violence in their adult relationships.

Education & Prevention team members go into classrooms and teach students valuable skills and coping mechanisms, including:

- Understanding physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Establishing healthy boundaries with friends and romantic partners
- Building communication and conflict resolution skills
- Cultivating emotionally intelligent relationships

## 8,000 STUDENTS AND GROWING

Thanks to our Giving Hearts Day donors, who are recognized on the following pages, our education and prevention training will reach upwards of 8,000 students in 2024 and bring healthy relationship education to their classrooms.

Not only did the campaign help raise awareness and donations for the Education & Prevention program, but we were able to add another rural school to our outreach list, allowing CVIC to reach even more area youth than ever before.



## 27% of adolescents report someone they dated purposefully tried to control or emotionally hurt them. Education and prevention training teaches students about healthy relationships.



*"I have been in five different school systems, and this is the only community in which I have been part of a partnership like this. I think it speaks to the strength of the leadership at CVIC as well as the mission of CVIC, and their responsiveness to the needs of the people in front of them.*

– CATHERINE GILLACH, ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND VICE CHAIR, CVIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Giving Hearts Day is one of CVIC's largest fundraising events, second only to the annual Judd Sondreal Memorial Rise & Shine for Peace Breakfast, scheduled for May 1. Find out more about this signature event on page 15.



*Thank you to our generous Challenge Partners this year who collectively gave more than \$35,000, leading the way in supporting our students.*



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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# Gracious

## Giving Hearts Day Supporters

*\*Also a member of our Dream Maker Society*

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Tom & Brenda Rosendahl  
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### \$1,000+

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### \$500+

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Roberta Zick  
Anonymous Donors





## US Dept. of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women recognizes CVIC YORS group

CVIC's Consolidated Youth Project (CYP) received accolades in early February from the US Dept. of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, a CVIC grant provider.

The organization recognized CVIC on LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter) for "grantees doing great mentoring work" as part of National Mentoring Month 2024.

"The Youth Gaining Opportunities, Recognition and Skills [YORS] group consists of students from every middle school and high school in the district. They work to identify, promote, improve, increase and provide services and programs for young people in Grand Forks, N.D.," the post read.

## CVIC Therapy/GFPS present at national conference about partnership

In December, CVIC's Therese Hugg, VP of therapy services, and Pamela Elmquist, youth therapist, represented CVIC as co-presenters at The Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health in New Orleans alongside Grand Forks Public Schools' Catherine Gillach and Christine Litzinger.

The group's topic, "Building a sustainable and comprehensive mental health program in a rural state," explored the successes and challenges of building comprehensive mental health programming in a rural state. They discussed the development of community partnerships and funding sustainability through grant writing and Medicaid billing. They also presented a district framework for integrating mental health services and well-being screening into a multi-tiered system of support.

## CVIC leaders participate in National Domestic Violence Hotline webinar

In January, CVIC leadership members Coiya Tompkins Inman, president and CEO, Therese Hugg, vice president of therapy services, and Laura Nash Frisch, vice president of victim witness & violence prevention presented a webinar for The National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Their presentation, titled "The Safer Tomorrows Road Map: A strategic plan to end interpersonal violence by flipping the pyramid from intervention to prevention" focused on CVIC's innovative approach to violence in our community.

**NATIONAL  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
HOTLINE**



**Coiya Tompkins Inman**  
CVIC's President and CEO



**Therese Hugg**  
CVIC's Vice President of Therapy Services



**Laura Nash Frisch**  
CVIC's Vice President of Victim Witness & Visitation



# CVIC youth therapist sparks powerful conversation about sexual trauma, language use

## Trigger Warning:

This article references crimes involving children.



*“While terms like ‘sex with a child’ and ‘child porn’ may appear straightforward, they are inaccurate and harmful. Words matter, and using accurate terms can help our community, and the survivors within it, more adequately understand the enormity of the deeply heinous nature of sex crimes against children.”*

— CVIC YOUTH THERAPIST MAURA FERGUSON'S GRAND FORKS HERALD OPINION PIECE

On March 6, 2024, the *Grand Forks Herald* published a powerful opinion piece by CVIC Youth Therapist and Group Coordinator Maura Ferguson about the importance of language when referring to sexual crimes against children.

After significant local media coverage depicting sexual abuse cases in the Grand Forks region, Ferguson saw an opportunity to educate the public on ways to address this tough topic. “As a person who works directly with children who have experienced sexual trauma, I felt it was beyond time to start this conversation,” Maura said. “It is really important for us to use our voices and leverage our expertise to help impact positive change whenever we can, especially when it comes to supporting the populations that we serve. I saw an opportunity for a shift in how the media discusses child sexual assault that could improve the climate in our community for survivors of this specific trauma.”

Maura’s opinion piece sparked conversations among staff at CVIC, which led to the filming of a recent Dove Talks episode featuring the topic. Dove Talks is CVIC’s discussion series on YouTube designed to educate and prevent interpersonal violence. In the episode, CVIC Dove Talks: The importance of language Maura and Vice President of Therapy Services Therese Hugg speak to the importance of using accurate and appropriate language when referring to sex crimes against children.

Sex crimes against children includes child sexual assault and child sexual abuse materials, and according to Maura, can lead to incorrect language use, such as “child pornography” or “sex with a child.” These terms, Maura says, infers a level of consent that children are simply unable to give.

“Inappropriate use of these terms unknowingly places the responsibility of abuse on people who have experienced violence,” Maura says. “What I see in my work is that terms like these really affect the healing process in some cases.”

We encourage CVIC supporters and other community members to watch this important episode. Small changes like this will make a big difference as we all work to end violence in our community.



Watch the episode  
Scan QR code



CVIC recognizes that conversations centered around this difficult topic may be triggering for some people or spark conversations you may not feel equipped to handle alone. Here are some resources to reach out to if you need help.

## Resources

CVIC | [cviconline.org](http://cviconline.org) | 24/7 crisis line 701-746-8900  
The Children’s Advocacy Center | [cacnd.org](http://cacnd.org) | 701-323-5626  
RAINN Hotline | 1-800-656-HOPE(4673)

## *Driven* to give

### Petersburg-area couple fueled by passion for CVIC mission

Like the incredibly kind-hearted couple they are, Larry and Marlys give back to their community in any way they can.

Their many gifts to CVIC started rolling in decades ago. At first, they'd load their car up with boxes of clothes for shelter residents, a need Marlys saw firsthand while working with Nelson County Social Services.

"When I worked for the county, that's when I really saw the need for CVIC's programs," Marlys said. "I told Larry about it, and the more we learned about what they were doing, we really respected how they operated."

A tour of CVIC changed everything.

"We took a carload of stuff over and they asked us if we wanted a tour," Larry said. "When we saw the little kids in there and the distressed people, it just changed our lives. It became a goal in our lives to help CVIC."

One day, the Northwood business community had told him about a young mother and her three-year-old child with health problems that required frequent trips to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Their transmission had blown up. They couldn't get to appointments. They needed help.

As part of a community-wide effort to help the family get back on their feet, Larry volunteered to make necessary car repairs. "I was able to help, sure, and it was a community effort to help the family," Larry said. "So, I got their car fixed up and donated my time and materials. It was just the right thing to do."

After that, Larry started fixing up cars for CVIC clients, which is a real game-changer for anyone who's experienced the often-shocking financial toll of abuse. "I saw having a reliable car was a safety concern for women to get away from situations, too," Larry said.

*"The wealth  
is in doing the work.  
It's the greatest  
feeling on Earth."*

- LARRY, CVIC DONOR

He is now retired, but during his career Larry served many people in the region, and we are more than grateful he and Marlys included CVIC in their community volunteer efforts. "We aren't rich, but we got more of a rush through giving what we can than when we buy a new car," Larry said. "If I bought a new Cadillac, I'd grin for a minute. When I gave by repairing cars for CVIC clients and saw the look on their faces, that lasts longer."

Recently, Larry and Marlys were able to make a significant financial contribution to CVIC, but repairing cars for clients has been the couple's most sustaining gift—one that offered immediate safety and opportunity to families affected by violence and abuse.

"Giving is a community effort and can come in many forms," Larry said. "What's most important to me is that people step out of their comfort zones and help their fellow human beings." Larry and Marlys intend to continue supporting CVIC "as long as I'm allowed to," Larry said.



# The Power of ONE:

Amorelle Upton



Keynote for the 2024 Judd Sondreal Memorial Rise & Shine For Peace Breakfast

**Amorelle Upton is the 2024 Judd Sondreal Memorial Rise & Shine for Peace Breakfast keynote speaker and 2020 Teen Miss North Dakota. A domestic violence survivor and activist, Amorelle is currently pursuing her Occupational Therapy doctorate at UND.**



Former Teen Miss North Dakota and domestic violence prevention activist Amorelle Upton is the kind of woman who has it all together.

But the UND graduate student said just a few years ago her life fell apart at the hands of a high school sweetheart—faster than anyone could have imagined.

The relationship started off with thoughtful gifts and affectionate texts, but love bombs turned out to be life-threatening ammo for her boyfriend. He wasn't going to give up on his seemingly endless need for control over Amorelle's every move.

What happens next is Amorelle's heart-wrenching and empowering journey from victim to survivor, a story she will courageously share as our 2024 Judd Sondreal

Memorial Rise & Shine for Peace Breakfast keynote speaker.

As Amorelle continues to heal from abuse, she's on a mission to share her journey wherever she can. Her passion for bringing awareness to domestic violence and sexual assault issues in our region continues to inspire so many, and sheds light on some of the unseen aspects of this complicated and painful issue.





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*Help CVIC celebrate, reflect, and advance  
safer tomorrows, featuring keynote speaker  
and former Teen Miss North Dakota,*

**AMORELLE UPTON,**  
*a domestic violence survivor-turned-activist.*



**REGISTER TODAY**

Signature Fundraising Event

Wednesday, May 1  
7:30-8:30 a.m.

Alerus Center

**Please register  
by April 16th**

Scan this QR code  
to register today

