

# Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention's

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## 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

*WE ENVISION A COMMUNITY  
FREE FROM ALL FORMS OF  
DOMESTIC AND COMMUNITY  
VIOLENCE AND THE  
DETRIMENTAL IMPACTS OF  
THESE CRIMES.*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE MODCVP



Jennifer Cacciapaglia,  
Executive Director  
Mayor's Office of Domestic and  
Community Violence Prevention

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to share an exceptional year of impact and progress in our collective efforts to reduce violent crime through a multifaceted, multi-disciplinary, data driven and community centered approach to address domestic and community violence. Through our steadfast commitment to survivors, their families, and our community, we have strengthened our coordinated response and expanded critical services that promote safety and healing.

This year, we served a record number of survivors of intimate partner violence and their children, providing them with essential support, advocacy, and access to safety and stability. Our multidisciplinary teams have worked tirelessly to enhance our coordinated community response, ensuring that law enforcement, service providers, healthcare professionals, and community organizations are aligned in their approach to supporting survivors and holding perpetrators accountable.

In addition to our direct services, we have developed and deployed strategies to hold violent offenders accountable while expanding our prevention and intervention programs for youth exposed to violence. By investing in early intervention strategies and providing youth with the tools and support they need, we are working to break the cycle of violence, reduce our violent crime rate, and build a safer future for our community.

Data and community-driven insights have played a crucial role in shaping our work. By using evidence-based approaches and listening to the voices of those most affected by violence, we have been able to refine our strategies and allocate resources where they are needed most. Our commitment to transparency and accountability ensures that our efforts remain effective and impactful.

We are grateful for the dedication of our partners, advocates, and community members who make this work possible. Your collaboration and unwavering commitment to safety and restoration inspire us every day. As we move forward, we remain committed to strengthening our response, expanding our reach, and creating a community where every individual can live free from violence.

Together, we are making a difference.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Jennifer K. Cacciapaglia' and the second is 'Thomas P. McNamara'.

Thomas McNamara,  
Rockford Mayor



# MEET THE TEAM



Brandon Tillman,  
Manager of Community Violence Prevention,  
MODCVP



Jennifer Cacciapaglia,  
Executive Director, Family Peace Center  
and MODCVP



Andrea Carlson,  
Deputy Director, MODCVP



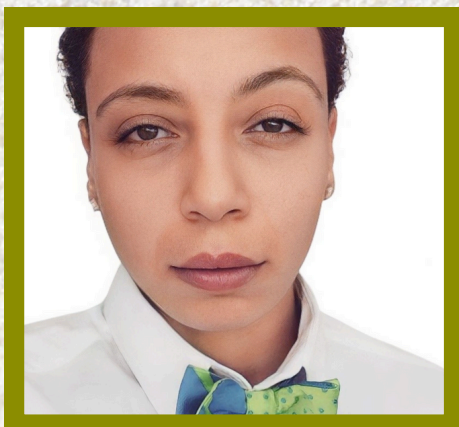
Diana Hernandez,  
Project Manager Children Exposed to Violence,  
Community Healing Center



Tretara Flowers,  
Coordinator,  
Violence Prevention Coordinating Council



Emily Schmidt,  
Project Manager,  
Engaging Men and Boys Grant



Ivy Wallace,  
Community Outreach & Navigation Specialist,  
Community Healing Center



Avery Dillon,  
Community Outreach & Navigation Specialist,  
Community Healing Center





# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE

## A Multidisciplinary Response to Domestic Violence

### Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team

The Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention and the Family Peace Center's Lethality Prevention Division have convened a multidisciplinary team to review domestic-related homicides and near-homicides.

As one of five pioneer sites in Illinois, the team aims to reduce IPV fatalities, improve services, and enhance agency coordination. In 2024, members completed statewide training and established case selection criteria, preparing for the first local case review, which occurred in January 2025. Two reviews will occur annually.

Findings and recommendations from each review will be shared with the Statewide Committee to help shape policy and system improvements addressing domestic violence-related fatalities across Illinois.



### The Family Peace Center

Since opening on July 20, 2020, amid the pandemic, the Family Peace Center (FPC) has been a critical resource for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Just one day before its fourth anniversary, the FPC reached a major milestone—serving its 2,000th survivor. In 2024 alone, the center welcomed 323 new clients, bringing the total to 2,122 survivors served—1,561 adults and 561 children.

Recognizing the urgent need for expansion, the City of Rockford acquired a larger space to accommodate the FPC's growing services and 34 partner organizations. With its current 11,000-square-foot facility at full capacity, the expansion will allow us to onboard additional full time partners, enhance service accessibility, streamline support, and strengthen violent crime reduction efforts.

214 N Church St, Rockford, IL 61101 - Future home of the FPC

### Strangulation Multidisciplinary Team

In 2024, the team focused on improving both individual and collective responses to strangulation cases. This included some partners embedding specialized strangulation training into new employee orientation and incorporating advisory statements on the dangers of strangulation to encourage connection to medical support and safety planning. The team also developed a plan to expand resources for survivors, including adding a QR code to the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA) police information form, provided to survivors on scene, to better connect survivors of non-fatal strangulation with critical support services.

Survivors can access non-fatal strangulation and other supportive resources through this QR now located on forms provide on scene





# Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention Task Force

In 2024, the Task Force was relaunched with a renewed commitment to addressing violence in our community through a multidisciplinary approach. With 37 partner organizations represented, the Task Force is structured into four main teams: the Domestic Violence Team (DVT), the Juvenile Enhanced Response Team (JVERT), the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council Team (VPCC), and the Family Peace Center (FPC) Team. Over the past year, these teams have worked to identify critical gaps, set strategic goals, and implement actionable objectives with clear timelines.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

### Domestic Violence Team (DVT):

Supported the creation of the RPS 205 Teen Dating Violence Toolkit and identified team members to provide training to attorneys working with families impacted by intimate partner violence.

Chair: Attorney Wendy Vaughn, Northern Illinois University College of Law  
Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic

### Family Peace Center (FPC) Team:

Developed a framework to expand services and support for families and loved ones of survivors while working to eliminate barriers preventing criminalized survivors of intimate partner violence from accessing critical resources.

Co-Chairs: Megan Brechon & Kelsey Hart,  
Rockford Family Peace Center

### Juvenile Enhanced Response Team (JVERT):

Focused on enhancing support for at-risk youth by expanding mentorship opportunities and promoting restorative practices.

Co-Chairs: Will Chatman, Comprehensive Community Solutions & John Johnson, Youth Services Network

### Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC):

Created a community asset map, which guided the development and deployment of targeted outreach initiatives to better connect resources with those in need.

Lead: Tretara Flowers

# COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION & YOUTH SUPPORT:

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## The Juvenile Enhanced Response Team (JVERT)

JVERT is a multi-disciplinary task force dedicated to preventing youth from entering the criminal justice system as either victims or perpetrators. Key initiatives launched through JVERT, include the Human Trafficking Task Force, Camp Hope, the Engaging Men and Boys Project, My Life My Choice, Step Up, and the Community Healing Center.

To strengthen leadership and focus, JVERT was restructured to include Will Chatman of Comprehensive Community Solutions and John Johnson of Youth Services Network as co-chairs, working alongside MODCVP staff. The team prioritized three critical areas identified in the Community and Youth Gap Documents:

**Expanding Mentorship Opportunities:** The Community Healing Center developed a mentorship program for at-risk youth, and JVERT created a training program to help other organizations establish their own. Additionally, a peer-to-peer mentoring program is set to launch in early 2025.

**Promoting Restorative Practices:** In 2024, stakeholders completed a restorative facilitation training, leading to the implementation of restorative circles at the Community Healing Center. JVERT also planned a series of events to increase awareness and support for restorative practices, with the first event scheduled for early 2025.

**Enhancing Support for High-Risk Youth:** The new Enhanced Juvenile Response Team (EJVERT) works with the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council to stabilize high-risk youth and families, connecting them to crisis services and long-term community programs.

JVERT's strategic efforts in 2024 laid the foundation for expanded youth support initiatives in 2025, strengthening community responses to youth violence prevention and intervention.

## Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC)

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In 2024, the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) strengthened its foundation by expanding membership, refining outreach strategies, and deepening community engagement. Initially formed with six core organizations, the council grew to include key partners such as the Rockford Regional Health Council, Rockford Public Schools, and local community groups. A major milestone was the development of an asset map that provided a comprehensive overview of youth, crisis, and community programs, guiding the council's targeted outreach initiatives. A newly formed subcommittee focused on addressing high-risk areas and vulnerable populations, enhancing service delivery, and strengthening trust between community members and providers.



# COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION & YOUTH SUPPORT:

## Barbershop Project

The Barbershop Project recognizes barbers and beauticians as trusted community supports for individuals experiencing trauma and works to strengthen their ability to provide safe, informed support. Led by MODCVP in collaboration with the Rockford Police Department, the initiative addresses the intersection of violence, trauma, and mental health—acknowledging that over 70% of first-time justice-involved youth have a history of exposure to domestic or sexual violence.

In 2024, the project hosted 31 participants in suicide prevention and Mental Health First Aid trainings, equipping them with tools to recognize and respond to individuals in crisis. Additionally, nine community conversations were held, featuring experts from the Family Peace Center, Prairie State Legal Services, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling. Discussions covered critical topics such as men's mental and physical health, safe relationships, domestic violence, reentry after incarceration, and self-care.

By fostering open dialogue and increasing access to trauma recovery resources, the Barbershop Project continues to break the stigma around mental health and strengthen community-based support systems.



Nine Community Conversations called “Shop Talk” were hosted in 2024 on various topics.



31 Community Members participated in suicide prevention and Mental Health First Aid Trainings



## Community Healing Center

The Community Healing Center provides on-site, trauma-informed support in schools, community spaces, and the Irving Strong House, offering comprehensive prevention and intervention services for youth impacted by violence. Through mentorship, mental health referrals, service navigation, restorative justice circles, and youth engagement programs, the center fosters healing, resilience, and positive youth development while working to reduce youth involvement in crime and strengthen protective factors.

## 2024 IMPACT

- Served 111 youth through trauma-informed prevention and intervention services.
- Engaged 49 youth in mentorship, support groups, and restorative justice circles.
- Provided 80 youth with access to positive and recreational activities.
- Expanded partnerships with CITIED Foundation, Comprehensive Community Solutions, and Washington Park Community Center to enhance access to critical services.
- Reached 1,178 community members through outreach efforts to raise awareness about available services and programming.

By equipping youth with the tools to navigate challenges, build resilience, and achieve personal goals, the Community Healing Center continues to empower young people and create pathways to brighter futures in Rockford.

# COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION & YOUTH SUPPORT:

## Camp Hope:

Camp Hope offers a year-round healing and mentoring program, called Project Pathways, for youth ages 7-17 who have been exposed to domestic and sexual violence. Using a trauma-informed approach, the program helps participants process their experiences, build resilience, and find pathways to hope.

In 2024, the program expanded to include its first overnight camp experience, coordinated with the YMCA. Fifteen youth participated in the week-long Camp Hope, which follows the Camp HOPE America model—the first U.S. initiative focused on children exposed to domestic violence. Through its “Challenge by Choice” program, campers build confidence, develop character, and receive ongoing mentorship throughout the year.

The Family Peace Center continues to support Camp Hope and the companion Pathways Project by providing staff training, project support, and making program referrals to facilitate this project that helps youth heal and discover their pathways to hope.

✱ We aim to expand the camping experience by offering two camps in 2025. ✱



The YMCA Camp Hope is  
a proud Camp Hope of  
America Affiliate

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION EFFORTS

2024

### Human Trafficking Task Force

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The Human Trafficking Task Force, focuses on youth up to age 24, with a robust team of over 20 partners working collaboratively to identify, respond to, and prevent trafficking.

#### Key 2024 Highlights:

- Case Staffing & Analysis: Reviewed seven cases over three months to identify gaps and improve response.
- Training & Awareness: Presented awareness training to approximately 200 community members at three collaborative community forums.
- Enforcement Efforts: Established a State's Attorney and Law Enforcement led Enforcement Subcommittee to strengthen investigations and accountability.

### My Life My Choice

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The My Life My Choice (MLMC) program empowers girls ages 12-18 to recognize grooming and human trafficking tactics, equipping them to seek help.

#### Key 2024 Highlights:

- Expanded Training Capacity: Trained staff from Brightpoint, Family Counseling Services, and Comprehensive Community Solutions to deliver MLMC curriculum.
- School-Based Prevention: Launched a 6-week group at West Middle School with six participants.
- Community Growth: Provided training to Community Healing Center staff, leading to new outreach opportunities.

Looking ahead to 2025, MLMC will expand its reach by launching programming at Washington Community Center to serve more at-risk youth.



# EDUCATION & TRAINING

## UIC Colloquia:

A partnership with the University of Illinois College of Medicine has developed and implemented training programs for medical students and healthcare providers to improve their ability to recognize and respond to victims of domestic violence. In collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence, the Family Peace Center, and the Family Peace Center VOICES survivors committee, this initiative aims to strengthen the healthcare sector's role in early intervention and support.

In 2024, this partnership led to a successful two-hour training attended by nearly 70 medical students. The session emphasized the importance of domestic violence screenings in healthcare settings and was highly effective in improving participants' knowledge and confidence. Students demonstrated an average increase of 1.63 points from pre-test to post-test, with large effect sizes across all key areas, including recognizing potential victims, using screening tools, making referrals, and educating others.

1.63  
POINT  
INCREASE

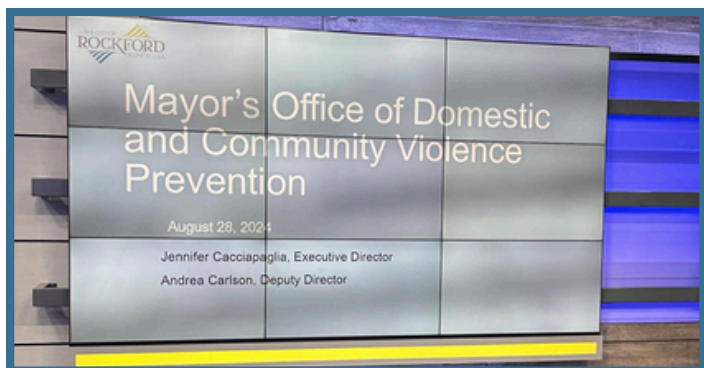


Due to the positive impact of this training, the team is now developing a simulated patient interaction module and plans to replicate the lecture-style training in the coming year.

## Media Training:

Local reporters play a crucial role in shaping public understanding of domestic violence, which accounts for approximately 50% of violent crime in our community. To ensure accurate, informed, and impactful reporting, Executive Director Jennifer Cacciapaglia and Deputy Director Andrea Carlson of the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence met with staff at Eyewitness News to discuss domestic violence dynamics and the importance of a coordinated community response.

By strengthening media awareness, we can foster more responsible storytelling that amplifies survivor voices, highlights available resources, and drives meaningful change. In 2025, the team is collaborating with additional media outlets to expand this initiative, further ensuring that domestic violence is reported with accuracy, sensitivity, and a focus on solutions.



# EDUCATION & TRAINING

## 7th Annual Educators Summit:

Our 7th Annual Educators' Summit saw its largest enrollment to date, bringing together nearly 300 regional educators, in-school professionals, and youth-serving professionals for a two-day training led by a faculty of local subject matter experts. The summit provided training and resources to strengthen responses to youth in crisis due to exposure to domestic, sexual, and community violence. Outcome data showed that the training significantly improved attendees' knowledge and awareness of these critical issues, reinforcing the importance of continued education and collaboration in supporting vulnerable youth

Post-training assessments showed significant gains in participant knowledge. Understanding of strangulation effects increased from 22% to 62%, while the ability to recognize signs of online grooming and exploitation rose from 31% to 65%.

### **Strangulation** knowledge:

Pre-test: 22%

Post-test: 62%

**Change in growth: 40**  
percentage points



### Recognition of **online grooming and exploitation**:

Pre-test: 31%

Post-test: 65%

**Change in growth: 34**  
percentage points

## Support to Rockford Public School District 205 Staff:

The Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention (MODCVP) collaborated with Alignment Rockford to develop a framework promoting healing-centered practices for school staff, students, and community members exposed to trauma. Originally known as the Healing-Centered System of Supports, the initiative was renamed Strong Schools: Healing-Centered Student Support in 2024.

Recognizing the urgent need for increased training and support for educators facing vicarious trauma and burnout, the MODCVP collaborated with Rockford Public Schools (RPS 205) to provide tailored recommendations and training sessions. The team worked with targeted schools to develop mental wellness supports designed to address staff trauma and burnout, ensuring educators have the tools and resources needed to sustain their critical work.



Two specialized training sessions were offered to RPS staff: A session for school administrators, attended by more than 75 administrators, focused on how to care for yourself and your staff when you are caring for others. A session for teachers and building staff, attended by approximately 30 teachers, centered on how to take care of yourself when you are taking care of others.



# Community Engagement and Impact

## Illinois Municipal League Conference

In 2024, Mayor Tom McNamara and Jennifer Cacciapaglia, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention, delivered a powerful session at the Illinois Municipal League Conference in Chicago. Their presentation showcased innovative solutions for addressing domestic and community violence and highlighted the Mayor's Office's comprehensive, data-driven strategy for violent crime reduction. This opportunity led to valuable connections with three Illinois communities, who reached out to learn more about our violence prevention framework, how they can bring it to their communities and the impact it is having in Rockford.



*City of DeKalb Mayor Cohen Barnes who attended the session stated:*

*"Your work and presentation has given me hope!"*



## RAMP Partners of the Year

In 2024, the **Rockford Family Peace Center** and the **Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention** were honored as Partners of the Year at RAMP's Annual Luncheon. This recognition highlights the ongoing collaboration to ensure accessibility and support for all members of the community. By working alongside RAMP, both organizations continue to strengthen services, remove barriers, and create inclusive, survivor-centered programs that meet the diverse needs of those affected by violence.

## Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Story Map

Launched in 2024, the interactive story map provides valuable insights into domestic violence in the community, the history of the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention, and strategies to address service gaps. The map is updated regularly and accessible to the public to promote transparency and community engagement.



*Thank you to our community partners.  
Your commitment to collaboration brings us closer  
to our shared vision of ending domestic  
and community violence.*



Mayor's Office of Domestic and  
Community Violence Prevention