



Since 1987, October has been recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is a time to remember survivors of abuse and exploitation. Today, October 1, commemorates the beginning of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we hope that you will join us in bringing increased awareness about this pervasive problem we are confronting not just here at home on the Treasure Coast, but worldwide.

The global pandemic and its long-lasting effects continue to create very difficult situations and living conditions for victims that spread beyond the home environment into our community at-large. And numbers paint the best picture. In FY21-22, our hotline crisis advocates managed 4,061 calls, representing an eighteen percent (18%) increase over the prior year.

As part of our response to an increasing request for services, we opened our second emergency shelter, a 19-bed facility located in Indian River County. Since its opening on April 7th, this safe refuge has remained at or close to full capacity, a continuing testament that SafeSpace offers life-saving services that are vital to the safety and well-being of our communities. I am happy to report that neither of our two emergency shelters suffered any damage during the recent hurricane, and that we remained fully operational throughout. Our hearts and thoughts are with the many families and communities who are currently managing the aftermath of this natural disaster.

In addition to the devastating effects that intimate partner violence has on victims, it is important to recognize that the financial burden to our communities is substantial. In 2020, the costs associated with domestic violence on the Treasure Coast were estimated at over \$60 million, including law enforcement, medical care, mental health and social services, and lost wages and productivity. We therefore must continue to collaborate in addressing the human and economic impact that intimate partner violence has on our tri-county area, especially on the smallest and most vulnerable – *our children*.

All of us at SafeSpace hope that you will join us as we stand up and speak against domestic violence. While much remains to be done, we are grateful for your continued support because without you, we could not fully fulfill the mission of SafeSpace.

Visit www.safespacefl.org/donate if you would like to contribute to SafeSpace's cause to empower the safety and well-being of adult victims of domestic violence and their children.

In gratitude and partnership,

Teresa Albizu, EdD, MFT
Chief Executive Officer