Now more than ever, our clients and their families need us, and we in turn need you.

Dear Valued Community Member,

As COVID-19 continues to impact every Rhode Island community and uncertainty prevails, the Nonviolence Institute is forging ahead providing vital services to victims of violence and responding to critical incidents of violence. We know Rhode Islanders are faced with daily challenges ranging from staying safe, securing groceries, home schooling children, and being separated from family and loved ones to name just a few. Our clients and their families are facing even greater challenges. And, right now the Nonviolence Institute is doing everything possible to sustain our operations in order to provide critical services. Now more than ever, our clients and their families need us, and we in turn need you.

Since COVID-19 hit our state, the Nonviolence Institute has served 150 clients during March and April. During this period of time critical incidents increased by 54% and requests for victim emergency housing assistance increased by 75% compared to the same period in 2019.

- Our building, which is a safe haven for many, has been closed due to the pandemic.

- Our Streetworkers, due to COVID hospital restrictions, no longer meet with a victim’s family in the hospital which impacts our ability to immediately begin building trusting relationships and to turn the focus away from violence in order to mitigate the risk of retaliation.

- Victim service response has slowed because of hospital COVID restrictions – only 26% of new victims have completed victim compensation applications.

- Housing assistance requests total $3,843 for March and April 2020.

- Our access to schools and other locations where children gather isn’t possible because of COVID. Kids now have more time to access social media and often act out online. Streetworkers must intervene in potentially violent situations through social media along with continuing to have a strong community presence.

- Our Nonviolence Training for students, schoolteachers, and principals has been put on hold for the foreseeable future which limits opportunities to learn the principles and practices of nonviolence.

We are in uncharted waters, COVID is present everywhere and our state is no exception. The Nonviolence Institute plays a critical role during these tumultuous times. However, while times may be challenging we still have uplifting stories to share:
An emotionally distraught mother of a 17-year-old double shooting victim frantically called us in tears because she had no access to her hospitalized son due to COVID restrictions. She was desperate to know more about her son’s condition and to be reassured that he was receiving the necessary care. Our staff was able to go to the hospital to set up FaceTime for the victim and his mother to calm and to reassure the victim’s mother which meant so much to both of them.

A contribution to the Nonviolence Institute will ensure that we continue to support victims and their families during this period of uncertainty. Our Streetworkers, while honoring social distancing, will continue to reach out to neighborhoods to prevent violence and to change lives.

Please consider making a contribution which will help us continue to support communities throughout Rhode Island.

May you, your family and friends stay healthy and safe and remain strong in the coming weeks and months.

Sincerely,

PJ Fox, III
Executive Director

Larson Gunness
Board President

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