

# DVC 2003

Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence Commission 2003 Report to the Community

## **Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence Commission Members:**

Battered Women's Task Force  
Batterers Treatment Provider  
Chief Probation Officer  
City of Santa Cruz Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women  
Community Clinic Coalition  
County Administrative Officer  
District Attorney  
Dominican Hospital  
Family Law Bar of Santa Cruz County  
Family Mediation Service  
Health Services Agency  
Human Resources Agency  
Law Enforcement Chiefs Association  
Public Defender  
Representative of the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Community  
Representative of the Latino Community  
Seniors Commission  
Sheriff-Coroner  
Superintendent of County Office of Education  
Superior Court Judge  
Survivor of Domestic Violence  
Sutter Maternity and Surgery Center of Santa Cruz  
Walnut Avenue Women's Center  
Watsonville Community Hospital  
Women's Commission  
Women's Crisis Support~Defensa de Mujeres

## A BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR YEAR 2003

On behalf of the Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence Commission (DVC), I am pleased to present the DVC's Report to the Community for calendar year 2003.

This is the first year that we have published this type of report, in the hope of providing a baseline assessment of domestic violence in our county. The DVC is dedicated to the elimination from our community of the serious social problem of domestic violence. We believe that all people have a right to a life free of violence.

Domestic violence continues to be under-reported to law enforcement. In Santa Cruz County in 2003, less than 22% of the clients served at domestic violence service agencies had reported the incident to a law enforcement agency. The US Department of Justice estimates that only about half of domestic violence incidents nationwide are reported to police. The most common reasons are that victims view the incident as a personal or private matter, they fear retaliation from their abuser, and they do not believe that police will do anything about the incident.

Battered women's fears and beliefs are not unfounded. Efforts to escape abuse can provoke violent retaliation. The American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence notes that if a woman leaves her batterer, "her risk of serious violence or death increases dramatically." As can be seen from Santa Cruz County statistics, 69% of domestic violence incidents reported to county law enforcement agencies resulted in arrests, and about 36% resulted in prosecutions. This county is addressing this issue by

encouraging collaboration between domestic violence support agencies and law enforcement, and by providing training to law enforcement officers who respond to domestic violence calls.

Through collaborative efforts, the DVC develops and recommends education, prevention and intervention policies that hold batterers accountable and ensure safety and support for victims, both survivors and children. As a commission, we need to better educate our community in domestic violence issues and to more effectively support its victims.

We have five goals as mandated by the Santa Cruz County Code Chapter 2.118:

- Help increase coordination between agencies, departments and the courts, and with victims of domestic violence and abuse;
- Promote effective and accessible education, prevention, intervention and treatment that will be developed based upon research and data collection;
- Seek to improve the response to domestic violence abuse so as to reduce incidents of domestic violence;
- Examine issues relating to domestic violence and make recommendations in regard to administrative and legislative action to be taken by the board of supervisors; and
- Establish a committee from among the membership, with the addition of a representative of the office of the Santa Cruz County Counsel, as specified by Penal Code Section 853.6(a), to develop protocols for use by law enforcement officers and recommend adoption of said protocols to the board of supervisors.

I hope you will support our efforts, and I encourage

you to participate actively on one of the many boards and committees that strive toward a future free of violence.

I want to thank the many people who were responsible for contributing to developing this report: **Kim Austin, Paula Gammell, Nancy Goodban, Alan Hiromura, Judge Thomas Kelly, Laurie McWhorter, Jo Anne Myall, David Rabow, Abbie Robideaux, Jennifer Rose** and **Linda Starn**. We owe special thanks to Dominican Hospital and its Communications and Marketing Department.

We recognize that 95% of domestic violence victims are women, and a much smaller percentage are men. While no exclusivity is intended, throughout this report we will refer to only women as victims.

At the bottom of each page you will find reference to Santa Cruz County women who have lost their lives at the hands of abusive partners. These women paid the ultimate price. We wish to keep their memories in the forefront as a reminder to all.

### **Mark Tracy**

Santa Cruz County Sheriff

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## ADVOCACY GROUPS CREATE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES DAMAGED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Women impacted by domestic violence face many barriers: fear for their personal safety, financial and housing worries, medical needs, love loss, and concerns about the effect their choices have on their children.

Unfortunately, these challenges can be further negatively impacted because not all victims currently turn to the systems set up to respond to the needs and safety of families.

There was disparity in 2003 between numbers of victims served by agencies and reports generated by law enforcement, clearly indicating that not all incidents are being reported. There is also disparity between victims served by agencies and those who never seek any services.

Those involved in advocacy efforts in the county hope that through outreach, education and awareness they will be able to create a safe and supportive community for all families impacted by domestic violence.

Walnut Avenue Women’s Center, Women’s Crisis Support~Defensa de Mujeres, Family Matters, Victim Services, and the advocacy program at the Santa Cruz City Police Department are among the agencies in Santa Cruz County responding to the needs of families. These agencies participate in facilitating a

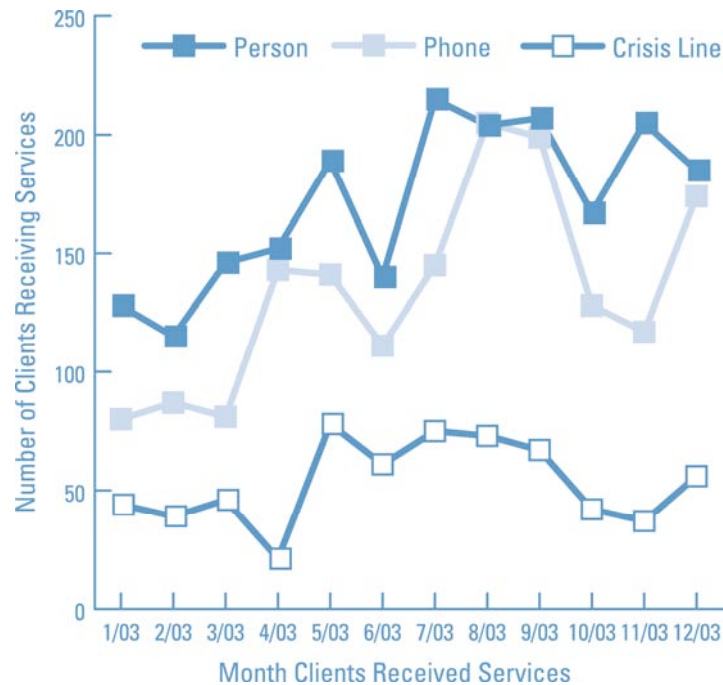
community response to families impacted by domestic violence by creating a system of support services for battered women and children in the county, including:

- Legal advocacy;
- 24-hour bilingual crisis lines, court accompaniment;
- One-on-one peer support, support groups, empowerment programs, counseling;
- Shelter, emergency food and clothing, children and youth programs; and
- Resource and referrals.

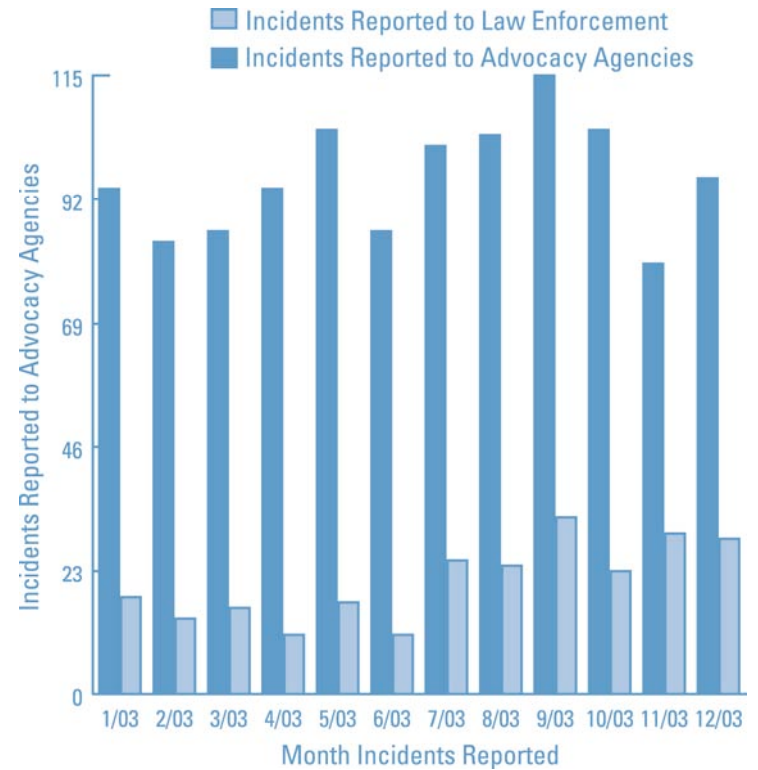
Each agency offers a unique approach to serving families with a common goal of ending the cycle of violence.

The **Walnut Avenue Women’s Center** believes that it takes three to five violence-free years for families impacted by domestic violence to reach self-sufficiency and thrive.

The Women’s Center provides “integrated, wrap-around, participant-driven, strength-based services”



Number of clients receiving services each month in person, by phone and by crisis line



Domestic violence incidents reported each month to advocacy agencies versus those reported to law enforcement.

with an emphasis in promoting physical and emotional safety for women, children and families.

The Women's Center's philosophy is to "meet women where they are and recognize that they are the experts on their own lives. We feel it is our role to respond to these needs from an open, non-judgmental, compassionate place that empowers women to make their own choices."

The Women's Center is a family resource center that offers both crisis and long-term support services.

They include crisis intervention, peer counseling, support groups, 24-hour bilingual crisis line, advocacy, restraining order assistance, family law advocacy, court accompaniment, safe homes, emergency food and clothing, home visiting program, children and youth program, empowerment programs for teens and adults, child care, family literacy, teen mom program, parenting support and education, and a supervised visitation program.

Since 1977, **Women's Crisis Support~Defensa de Mujeres (WCS~DdM)** has been providing a comprehensive range of crisis intervention and prevention services to battered women and their children from offices in Santa Cruz and Watsonville. All services are bilingual and include: 24-hour crisis line, emergency shelter, crisis counseling, advocacy, support groups, professional counseling, sexual assault and survivor services, legal assistance with restraining orders, information and referrals, children services, education and outreach, and family workshops. WCS~DdM also fosters collaborative partnerships that include law enforcement, Victim Services, the District Attorney's

office, Child Protective Services, CalWorks and other community-based organizations.

A client usually first seeks services from WCS~DdM through the crisis line or meeting with a Crisis Intervention Legal Advocate (CILA). The CILA provides peer counseling and referrals and can also assist with obtaining a restraining order. The CILA also works with the client to determine if professional counseling, sexual assault counseling or children's services are needed.

The WCS~DdM confidential shelter served 119 women between January and December 2003. The shelter has space for six families. The agency also assisted 219 clients with restraining orders during this time, a service that allows women to protect themselves and their children with the help of law enforcement.

Established in 2001, **Family Matters-Central Coast, Inc.** in Scotts Valley provides supportive services and advocacy with connections to community-based and county governmental agencies.

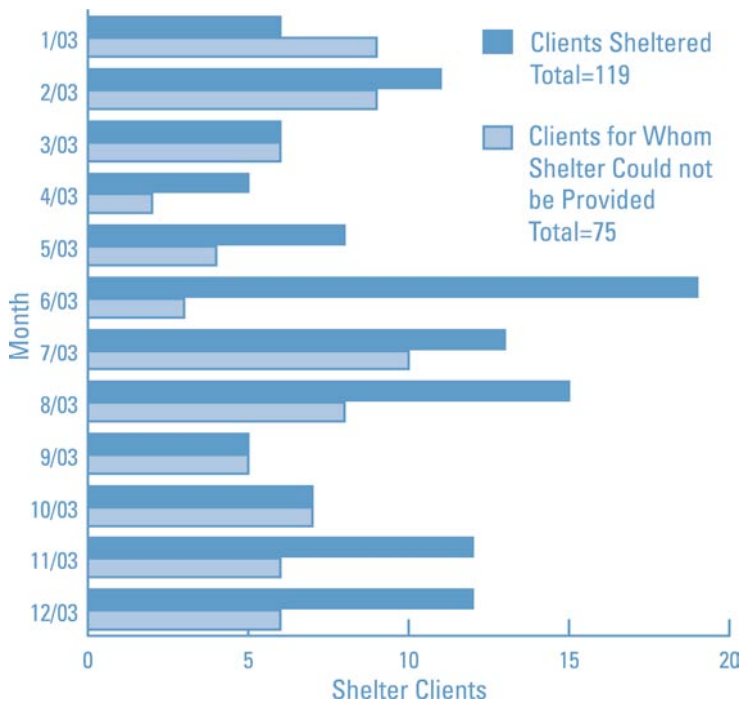
Family Matters' clients are predominantly females, the most common victims of domestic violence. Family Matters is, however, pioneering services to male victims as well, for there are far too few options for victims of this gender. Among usual clientele there is more and more male client referral from law enforcement and other agencies. Family Matters also serves the family unit, stressing care for the effects that domestic violence and sexual assault have on children.

In 2003, Family Matters continued to search for funding and had these fundraising events: "Hollywood Comes To Santa Cruz" in March, 1st Annual Rummage Sale in June and "Vegas In The Valley" in October.

In 2003, members from groups including Walnut Avenue Women's Center, Women's Crisis Support~Defensa de Mujeres, Diversity Center, STRANGE, and Santa Cruz Police and County Sheriff's departments formed an anti-queer violence task force to improve and develop appropriate and accessible services for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and questioning community impacted by domestic violence.

The **Victim Witness Assistance Center**, housed in the District Attorney's office and funded solely by the state, provides services to victims of all violent crimes. It was organized over 20 years ago under mandate by the California Penal Code. The center has long recognized the physical, emotional and financial toll crime takes on the victim, the victim's family and the community. The center's staff strives to reduce trauma and insensitive treatment by providing information, assistance and support to victims in their interactions with the criminal justice system. The center is composed of advocate and claims specialist staffs.

Advocates work to support victims and to protect their rights through crisis intervention, emergency assistance, referral to community agencies, counseling, orientation to the criminal justice system, court escort, case disposition information, and other serv-



Clients for whom shelter could or could not be provided each month

ices. Victims of domestic violence are referred to local community-based organizations for support groups, child care and other services.

Claims specialists process the claims filed locally with the California Victim Compensation Program, available to all victims for financial compensation of non-reimbursed, crime-related losses. Victims of domestic violence most commonly utilize the program for mental health, medical and relocation expenses. Claims specialists work closely with local providers to assist the victims. The specialists' role is

to verify the expenses and sources of reimbursement. A fund for relocation is available to victims of domestic violence.

In 2003, staff contacts with victims of domestic violence decreased due in large part to the decrease in staff because of the state budget crunch. The number of domestic violence victims applying for relocation also decreased. This decrease could be due to policy changes at the state level requiring additional paperwork and an emphasis on relocation immediately after the crime. In addition, new limits for mental health benefits were adopted, meaning a victim must utilize all possible sources of reimbursement—insurance, MediCal and other public programs—prior to utilizing the compensation program.

### Shelter Services (WCS ~ DdM)

One of the hardest things for a woman in an abusive relationship to do is to leave her batterer. Many women suffer years of physical, psychological and emotional abuse before they are able to take the step and leave. The decision can be difficult because it often means leaving home, children and the only adult with whom they have real contact. The victims worry about how they will survive economically and where they will go. Women also fear retaliation. According to a Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, women most vulnerable to domestic violence are those separated from their intimate part-

ners, and the second most vulnerable are those who are divorced. For some women the only barrier to leaving is not having a safe place where they can have a roof over their heads and where their batterers can't find them. The confidential shelter was developed to address this huge need. The shelter provides housing for women and children, food, clothing, case management, goal planning, counseling, advocacy and support.

The DVC questionnaire statistics related to shelter services for DVC clients indicated that in Santa Cruz County there was a greater need for shelter than there were resources. While an average of 9.91 clients were in shelter each month, there was an average of 6.25 clients that unsuccessfully sought shelter services. Between January and December 2003, 194 sought shelter services. Of those 119 were admitted into shelter, while 75 were not provided with shelter services.

At Women's Crisis Support~Defensa de Mujeres, a woman accepted for shelter must be in imminent risk of domestic violence or sexual assault—or displaced because of domestic violence—have no other options for housing (friends or family), be clean and sober for the last 30 days (exceptions are made), agree to follow house rules and work on a plan for leaving the shelter.

The most common reasons why women are unable to access shelter are drug or alcohol use, mental health issues that are beyond the agency's capacity to accommodate, or no imminent risk of domestic violence. A number of women seek shelter services

from the agency even though they have not experienced domestic violence. These women are referred to other shelters.

Santa Cruz County needs transitional housing options. Many women have to leave the shelter before they have established themselves in another living situation. For a variety of reasons, they have been unable to obtain employment, or a stable housing situation. WCS~DdM had a transitional house at one time but, due to funding difficulties, was unable to keep both the shelter and transitional house open. A small percentage of women who are turned away for shelter have already received shelter services and have been unable to obtain a stable place to live after leaving. This is an area that will need to be addressed to effectively help women stay out of abusive relationships.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTINUED ITS PIVOTAL ROLE

The Santa Cruz County Law Enforcement community in 2003 remained dedicated to prevention and intervention of domestic violence.

Domestic violence crosses all social, economic, racial, gender and age barriers. It was vitally important again in 2003 that the law enforcement community had the highest level of training and awareness to effectively and safely deal with this problem.

### Domestic Violence and the Law Has a History

In the past, domestic violence has always been viewed as a “family” problem, something with which the public and law enforcement should not be involved.

In 1985, Penal Code section-273.5 was adopted as law in California, specifically identifying domestic violence as a criminal act that no longer required the victim to make a citizen’s arrest against her batterer.

Since then, laws concerning domestic violence have evolved to more effectively address this issue. Legislation continues to be an ongoing element of domestic violence intervention, with laws enacted each year to address the issue. Some of those laws enacted in the past three years include: SB 1894—assists with funding of programs addressing domestic violence; AB 1915—expands the definition of domestic violence to include minors who have not been emancipated; SB 1745—requires collaboration with agencies in their responses to homes where children reside and domestic violence is occurring; and SB 1505—requires Child Protective Service workers to receive training on violence within the context of dating.

All the laws pertaining to domestic violence enacted since 1970 in California can be viewed at these Websites: [www.purpleberets.org](http://www.purpleberets.org); [www.snbw.org](http://www.snbw.org); [www.caadv.org](http://www.caadv.org); [www.justicewomen.com](http://www.justicewomen.com); [www.sccbvw.org](http://www.sccbvw.org) and [www.sen.ca.gov/sor/whatsnew/whatsnew.htm](http://www.sen.ca.gov/sor/whatsnew/whatsnew.htm)

In 1995, a countywide policy was adopted to address special issues involving domestic violence. The policy delineates the specific tasks that each agency should perform. This protocol is currently in its second revision due to advances in the legislative efforts to help curb domestic violence.

### What Law Enforcement Found

For the purposes of this first annual report, law enforcement looked at five specific areas in 2003. The same five questions were asked each month of the California State Parks, Capitola Police Department, Santa Cruz County Death Review Team, Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office, Santa Cruz Harbor Patrol, Santa Cruz Police Department, Scotts Valley Police Department, University of California Santa Cruz Police Department, and Watsonville Police Department. The California Highway Patrol did not collect data, as it does not handle domestic violence calls. Instead, these cases are referred to Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office.

Law enforcement agencies were asked how many:

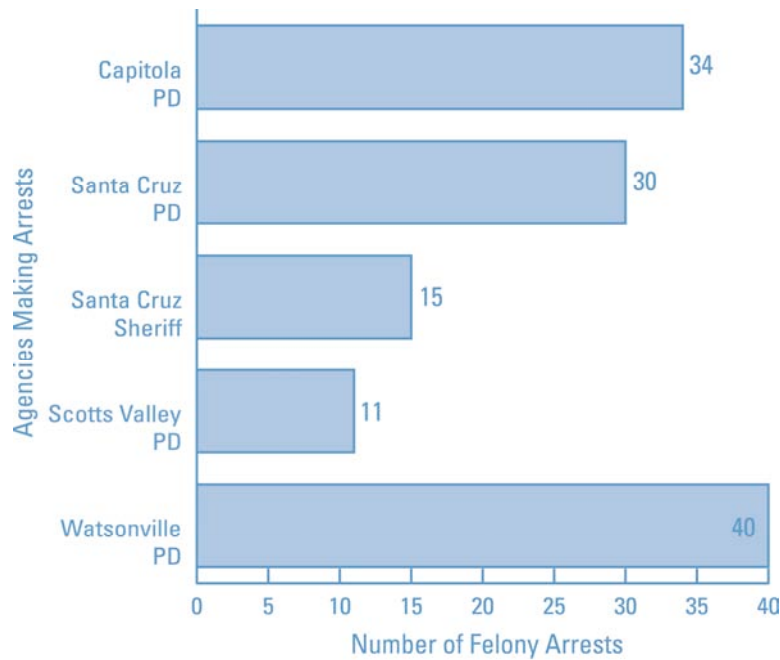
- Total domestic violence incidents were reported?
- Felony domestic violence arrests were made?
- Misdemeanor domestic violence arrests were made?
- Emergency Protective Orders were obtained?

- Children were living in the home with domestic violence occurring?

During 2003 data collection, we found some differences in the way agencies handle reporting processes. There is significant variance *per capita* but, since this is the first year of the report, we will be trying to understand the reason for those differences.

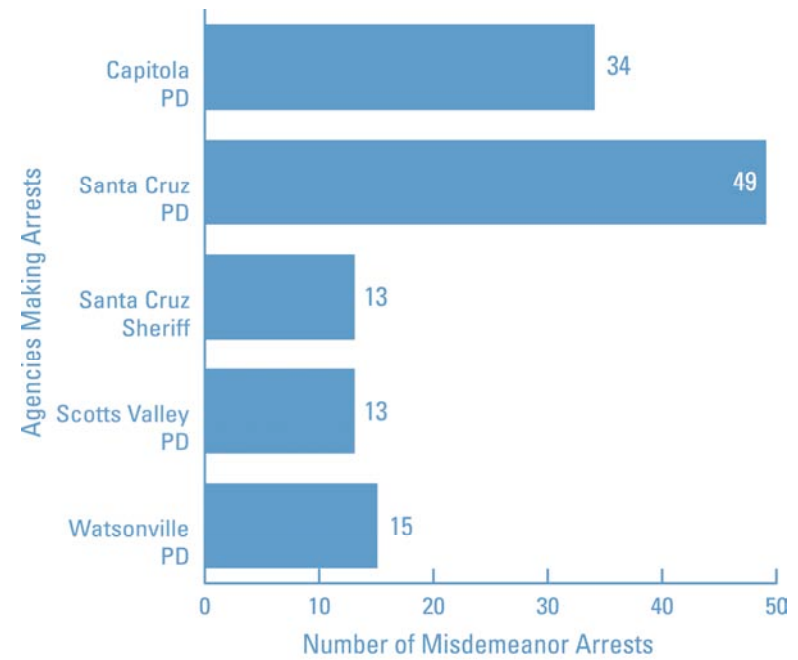
The data collected by Scotts Valley Police Department shows an unusually high number of reported incidents and a correspondingly high number of children involved. The number of reported arrests, however, is more in line with the rest of the agencies within the county. This discrepancy can be

explained by the fact that Scotts Valley recorded all family incidents —physical disputes among siblings, parents, children and other relatives—not just violence among significant others.



Based on population/10,000 for 2003.

Number of felony arrests for domestic violence during 2003



Based on population/10,000 for 2003.

Number of misdemeanor arrests for domestic violence during 2003



## CHILD WITNESSES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BECOME WHAT THEY SEE

Domestic violence is a recurring crime. When children live in a home where there is domestic violence, they are almost always witnesses to the violence at some point—and thereby become its victims as well. Men who assault their spouses often abuse their children, too. Even children who are not direct victims of child abuse often exhibit many of the same problems, including low self-esteem, aggression, depression, anxiety, learning difficulties, anti-social behavior or post-traumatic stress disorder. Children raised in violent families are also placed at great risk of becoming abusers or victims them-

selves as teens or in adulthood.

Since domestic violence is under-reported, law enforcement does not hear about all incidents. However, reporting to law enforcement is fairly standardized across the county and is the most standard and reliable source of information.

Countywide, 836 children under the age of 18—about 14 children of every 1,000—were estimated to be living in a home in 2003 where a domestic violence incident was reported to law enforcement. The rate was highest in Scotts Valley, where 25 of 1,000

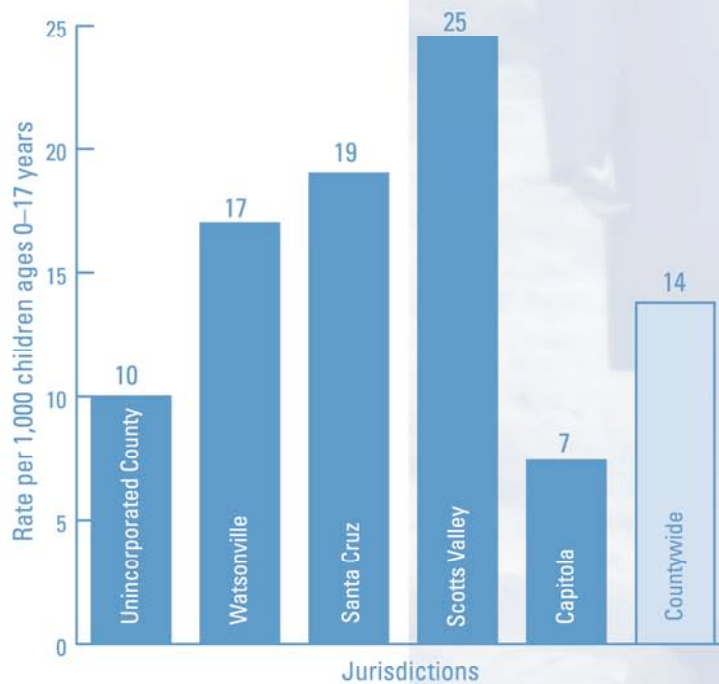
children were living in homes with domestic violence. In Santa Cruz the rate was 19 per 1,000, followed closely by Watsonville at 17. The rates were lowest in Capitola, with only 7 children per 1,000, and the unincorporated county, at 10 per 1,000. The different rates of child witnesses between different regions of the county tracked closely with the rates of reported domestic violence incidents overall, which were much higher in Scotts Valley than elsewhere in the county, due to reporting differences previously mentioned in this report, and lowest in Capitola.

A more in-depth analysis of the characteristics of child witnesses was made only on sheriff reports (representing 37% of the children reported countywide). Those reports showed children were direct witnesses or living in the home in fully 55% of the homes where domestic violence occurred. Among homes with children, there was an average of 1.7 children. They were fairly evenly split by gender, although slightly more likely to be boys. Most strikingly, 43% percent of the children were five years old or younger, although that age group comprised only 30% of the population.

### Tracking and Reporting Child Witnessing

In Santa Cruz County in 2003, interagency agreements ensured that children who were witnesses to domestic violence were referred to child welfare by law enforcement for assessment and follow-up.

Child Protective Services received referrals on an average of 33 families per month in 2003. Law enforcement identified an average of 70 children per



Annual rate of child witnesses to domestic violence in Santa Cruz County, 2003

month as living in homes where there was a report of domestic violence. Assuming that each family had multiple children, it appears that most of the children reported by law enforcement were also being cross-reported to CPS for follow-up.

Women's Crisis Support/Defensa de Mujeres (WCS/DdM) and Walnut Avenue Women's Center (WAWC) provide an array of services for domestic violence victims and child witnesses, including:

- Prevention counseling and advocacy for minors;
- Bilingual, culturally appropriate community education and training;
- Crisis intervention services, legal assistance, sexual assault response, counseling, safe houses and shelters; and
- Parenting classes in both English and Spanish on the effects of domestic violence on children.

Monthly reports from WCS/DdM and WAWC indicate that, on average, 10 children per month were in safe housing or shelter.

### **Breaking Ground in Data Collection Methodology**

Although researchers and practitioners increasingly recognize the effect of domestic violence on child witnesses, there are no state or national standards for collecting this information and no good data on its prevalence. In Santa Cruz County, "Investing in Children and Families – What Works!" received funding in 2003 from the Packard Foundation to develop a standardized methodology for collecting this information countywide.

In collaboration with the Domestic Violence Research & Development Annual Report Committee, data was

collected about "child witnesses" from four sources for this section:

- Child Welfare Services monthly reports to the Domestic Violence Commission (DVC);
- Monthly reports to the DVC from each law enforcement jurisdiction;
- Monthly spreadsheet completed by the Sheriff's Department, with detailed information on domestic violence incidents; and
- Advocacy groups' monthly reports to the DVC.

This data indicates the importance of continued collaboration among law enforcement, child welfare, and the advocacy agencies to identify and provide support to children living in homes where domestic violence occurs.

## TAKING THE VIOLENT PERPETRATOR TO COURT FALLS TO DA'S FAMILY UNIT

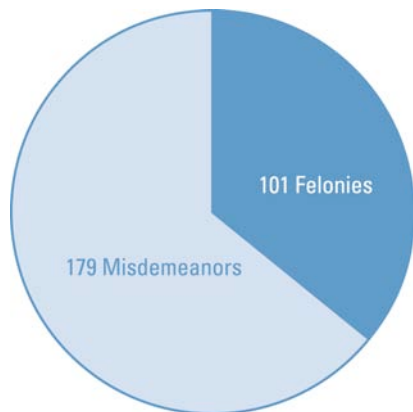
The Family Protection Unit of the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, one of four operational units in the County District Attorney's Office, prosecutes cases involving domestic violence, as well as child abuse, stalking and elder abuse. Domestic violence cases include acts of harassment, stalking and violations of restraining orders.

For the calendar year 2003, the DA's office received approximately 990 domestic violence referrals, of which 280 were filed on.

The Family Protection Unit in 2003 was staffed by five prosecutors: Jean Jordan, supervisor, and assistant district attorneys Gretchen Brock, Bill Butler, Steve Drottar and Alison Sanders.

Case referrals come in to the DA's office from local law enforcement agencies, and most filing decisions are made immediately. All cases are evaluated with

regard to victim safety issues. After a decision to file has been made, all cases are vertically assigned to a prosecutor who follows the case from arraignment to sentencing. The goal of vertical prosecution is to give the victim consistent information and support,



**280 Cases Filed**  
Cases charged as felonies  
versus misdemeanors

and to be certain that an accurate history of the case is made available to the court.

Of the 280 cases filed in 2003, 101 were charged as felonies, and 179 as misdemeanors.

The decision to file a case is multifaceted and a number of factors come into play. First and foremost, the prosecutor has an ethical obligation to only prosecute cases that can be proved at trial beyond a reasonable doubt. Prosecutors look at issues such as: the existence and severity of injury; the credibility of the parties; intoxication levels of the parties; prior history for domestic violence (reported and unreported); and children in the home. The office operates under the philosophy every case is treated equally whether it is a misdemeanor or a felony.

Family Protection Unit prosecutors work in conjunction with District Attorney inspectors to conduct the follow-up investigation necessary to support conviction via plea bargain or court trial.

In addition, the department's victims of crime advocates assist victims with financial and emotional recovery. Strong working relationships have been developed with outside agencies that assist in making the system as responsive to the victim as possible. A "soft" waiting room in the District Attorney's office was completed in 2003, providing a private, safe and comfortable area for victims and witnesses outside of the courtroom. Pagers are also provided, to give additional flexibility to persons who must often wait long periods of time during court proceedings.

In the early stages of the case, attempts are made to

contact the victim to ascertain if there are safety issues, and direct them to appropriate agencies for counseling and other assistance. It is common for victims in these cases to be hostile to authorities. Family Protection Unit prosecutors and inspectors are aware of the socioeconomic and psychological issues behind this behavior and strive to develop relationships with all victims.

There are a number of tools that can be used to achieve prosecutorial goals even if the victim is hostile. Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to audiotape conversations with victims at the scene. Videotaped interviews with victims and/or children and witnesses are even better, since video captures the nuances of complex family dynamics and can assist in reaching plea agreements in the early stages of prosecution. Video can also assist the prosecution in a case at trial.

Negotiating the appropriate sentence for perpetrators is complex. It is necessary to balance the safety of the victim and the community against the need to attempt to rehabilitate the perpetrator, because the likelihood that the perpetrator will return to the family is high. The goal of the Family Protection Unit is to seek the maximum sentence the law will allow for repeat offenders.

Program statistics for calendar year 2003 were based partially on manual counts, as the District Attorney's new, enhanced case management system was implemented in April 2003. In the future, it is anticipated that more detailed information, such as specific charges filed and case outcomes, can be provided and evaluated.

## RESTRAINING ORDERS WERE DAILY DUTY FOR COURT

About 600 people in 2003—roughly two county residents each day—filed the paperwork to obtain a temporary restraining order because of domestic violence.\* According to the Santa Cruz Superior Courts Civil Division, which processes all restraining orders, that means over a dozen times each week someone was so frightened that they

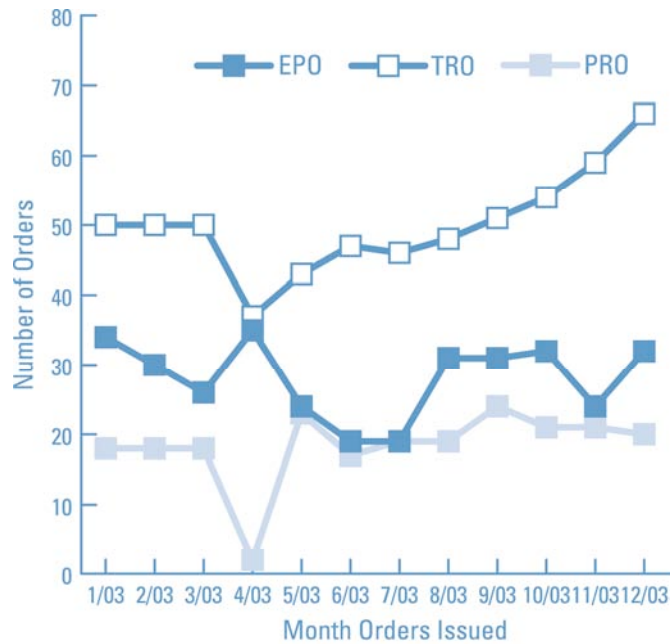
took the initiative to complete the paperwork and file documents with the court to keep an alleged abuser at a safer distance.

It is estimated that 365—or 61%—of those temporary restraining orders were filed with the assistance of an advocacy agency.

Of the total temporary restraining orders, an estimated 221—about 37%—became permanent on order of the court. The reasons a temporary order does not become permanent include failure to follow through by the petitioner; inability to properly serve the respondent; insufficient legal cause; reconsideration or reconciliation.

The local Civil Division has 18 employees. Among the many duties they perform under the direction of the judges of Santa Cruz County Superior Court, the Civil Division processes and maintains all paperwork related to domestic violence restraining orders. Steve Carlton and Lily Heredia, domestic violence calendar coordinators, organize all civil or criminal cases so the judge has access to the maximum amount of information during his or her decision-making process.

In domestic violence cases, the counter clerks receive and review paperwork, called filings, from members of the public, advocacy agencies and attorneys. The Civil Division must comply with certain legal requirements before presenting a domestic violence file to the judge, such as attempting to obtain a criminal history on the person to be restrained.



Data was not available for 1/03–3/03 for TROs and PROs so monthly averages were used.

Total number of restraining orders filed (EPO, TRO and PRO)

**Emergency Protective Orders (EPO):** Obtained at the time of the incident by a law enforcement officer, approved by a judge and effective for a period of five days.

**Temporary Restraining Orders (TRO):** Obtained by the victim during a court process, approved by a judge and time limited.

**Permanent Restraining Orders (PRO):** Obtained by the victim in a court process, approved by a judge and valid for extended periods of time.

Once a case file has been put together, a request for a temporary restraining order must be brought to the judge for an immediate decision. The office must then process the accepted or rejected file.

When asked about working with the domestic violence cases, Steve Carlton said, “Our job is to assist these people, who are going through such a difficult time—not just when we see them, but behind the scenes so that the judge is well informed and their case flows smoothly. And that feels good to be able to help them, even if they never meet me.”

\* Due to technical difficulties the Courts were not able to provide data for the annual report for the first three months of the year. Data is counted both manually and by computer, which may account for some of the inconsistencies in the information. The information only relates to orders filed based on the State of California’s definition of domestic violence. In other words, there are other restraining orders filed, but not specifically because of domestic violence.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION (BATTERERS’) PROGRAMS INTEGRAL PART OF OFFENDER’S PROBATION

Anyone convicted of domestic violence in this county—male or female—is ordered into a 52-week Domestic Violence Intervention Program as part of his or her probation. More than 690 attended classes in 2003.

The number of new probation cases received throughout the year remained somewhat stable, other than a distinct rise in clients during mid-summer 2003. This was directly related to the rise in filings from the District Attorney’s office in January and March, as it typically takes four-six months for a case to resolve in court.

Each person given a probationary sentence is handed an information sheet by the court clerk that simultaneously refers him or her to a Domestic Violence Intervention Program and the Santa Cruz County Probation Department. The expectation is that probation clients will have chosen and begun a program by the intake appointment with their probation officer.

The local intervention programs are non-funded, and participants are required to pay all fees. There are no co-educational classes.

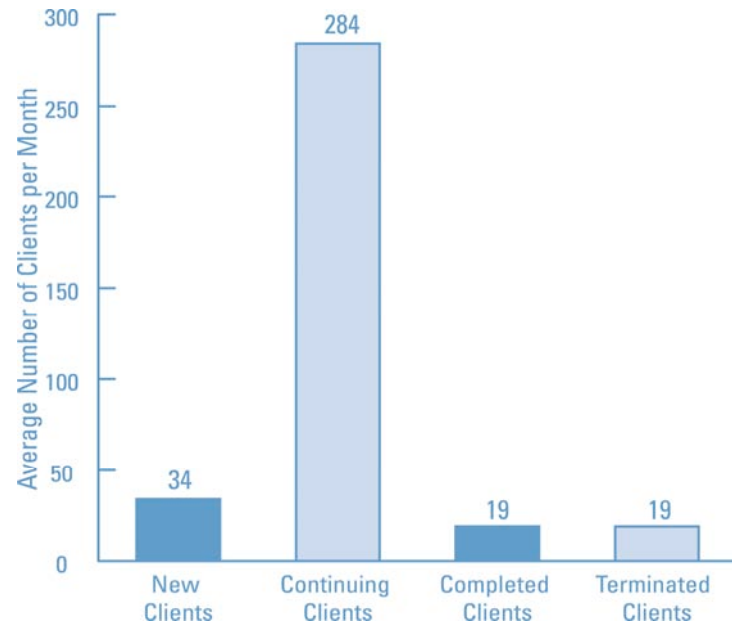
The County Probation Department’s role is to approve these intervention programs and to monitor their curricula. Provider agencies apply for approval directly to the Probation Department. In 2003, Santa

Cruz County had six agencies to provide intervention classes. Four programs were in North County and two were in South County:

- Alto Counseling Center and Student Assistance;
- Family Services Association of Pajaro Valley;
- Family Services Association of Santa Cruz;
- Pacific Treatment Associates;
- Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance; and
- Simply Your Best.

Program curriculum includes:

- Strategies that hold the defendant accountable for the violence in a relationship;
- Gender roles;
- Socialization;
- The nature of violence;
- The dynamics of power and control;
- The effects of abuse on children and others;
- Cultural influences; and
- Anger management techniques.



Client participation in batterer’s programs

Some participants assessed to have special needs are further ordered to enroll in an inpatient intensive treatment program immediately after sentencing or before beginning the Domestic Violence Intervention Program. Others may also be referred for individual counseling with an emphasis on batterer's treatment.

692 clients participated in Domestic Violence Intervention Programs in 2003. During this period, a total of 228 participants completed all program requirements. The seemingly low rate of graduates reported in 2003 is attributed to the fact that two newly approved programs had not yet reported graduation completions by the end of the reporting period, and—since this is a yearlong program—many participants were still actively enrolled and not yet graduates.

The Penal Code allows participants 16 months to complete a program, and some participants have been granted a leave of absence for valid reasons, such as family emergencies, medical issues, military duty, and work travel demands. Participants can be discharged as Failed-to-Complete for:

- Failure to pay program fees;
- Violating substance use policies;
- Incurring a new offense;
- Transferring to another program;
- Moving out of the county; or
- Absconding from jurisdiction.

Following are excerpts from comments by a participant who completed the Domestic Violence Program in 2003:

"I cannot believe the amount I learned. Every class I learned something more about myself and about the

way a person should respond to certain situations. I learned that everyone has boundaries that should be respected, and to know what mine were. I learned about escalations, minimizing, denial, red flags, guilt, shame, resentment, time outs, verbal abuse and physical abuse, and about how to deal with all of them in the right manner.

"My wife and I are doing family counseling to be better parents. Several times my counselor would talk about subjects that our family counselor talked about. My wife participated in all my homework assignments, and that helped both of us to understand how to better deal with situations. Now, when my wife and I need to discuss something uncomfortable, we go to another room so the kids aren't involved. We no longer raise our voices to each other."

## 2003 SUMMARY

The Domestic Violence Commission hopes that the results displayed in these pages will serve as a baseline assessment and help us all to realize that domestic violence is real and present in our community.

As we collected the data, we became aware of more information that helped us improve our questions and identify issues that our contributing organizations need to discuss further. Our hope is that by next year we can see improvement in some areas and identify others that require more concentrated effort.

**Advocacy**—Advocacy agencies see, in person, approximately the same number of clients that they service via phone and their crisis hotline. Only 22% of the clients the advocacy agencies provide advice and support to actually file police reports. It is a priority to encourage the reporting of violent acts through continued outreach and collaboration of all agencies. There is a shortage of transitional housing options for victims, essential for women so that they have an alternative to returning to abusive situations.

**Law Enforcement**—Data indicates that the various law agencies that interview victims of domestic violence have differing ways of generating reports. In future years, we hope to better understand the reasons for those variances. As required by law, our county will continue to adapt appropriate domestic violence policies and provide training for each agency. This will assist agencies in having a more uniform way to interview victims, collect the data and standardize reports.

**Child Witness**—We all recognize that children who live in the home and/or witness domestic violence are at increased risk to abuse or be abused as they grow older. It was most difficult to collect information on children impacted by domestic violence because there are no state or national standards. However, standard methodology is now being developed. Nonetheless, we know there are a surprising number of local children involved with domestic violence, and this may indicate a need for more education in the schools.

**District Attorney**—Many cases are submitted to the district attorney's office by various law enforcement agencies. Each case is evaluated and consideration is given to factual issues, legal challenges and the quality of the investigation. Cases that are not filed are retained and may be reviewed and filed at a later date if circumstances permit. The need for further law enforcement training is a topic that may be considered in the future.

**Courts**—The number of restraining orders processed by the courts reflects the magnitude and complexity of this process. It confirms that many victims in our county are sufficiently frightened of violent acts that they request court assistance. Advocacy agencies assisted with filing 61% of restraining orders. The data we received does not represent information from the criminal court division, and our hope is that next year we will be able to provide those figures as well.

**Batterer's Programs**—The county probation department works with the various intervention programs, which are mandatory for anyone convicted of domestic violence and seen as instrumental in changing behaviors and stopping the cycle of violence. In the future, we hope to better evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

We would like to extend a special "thank you" to all agencies that contributed data for this report.

For complete report data, or for further information on the commission, visit our website at [www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us) and follow the link to the Domestic Violence Commission.

### The Domestic Violence Research and Development Annual Report Committee

