

## ABOUT VIOLENCE



Domestic violence is all around us. It affects our families, our friends, our coworkers and our neighbors. Most of the time, we are not even aware that it is happening. In the United

States, 24% of adult women and 14% of adult men have been physically assaulted by a partner at some point in their lives.

Nearly a quarter of employed women report that domestic violence has affected their work performance at some point in their lives. Each year, an estimated 8 million days of paid work is lost in the U.S. because of domestic violence.

Domestic violence costs \$8.3 billion in expenses annually: a combination of medical costs (\$5.8 billion) and lost productivity (\$2.5 billion). Addressing this issue could save thousands of lives and billions of dollars. But as long as the symptoms and consequences of domestic violence go unnoticed or overlooked, nothing changes.

Since 1977, The Greenhouse has provided emergency shelter, counseling, support groups and advocacy to victims of domestic violence. Recently we have started to look at augmenting those core services with more nontraditional and holistic services.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2014, we embarked on a strategic planning process that began with an environmental scan. What that scan found was in order for Women's Services to be a viable organization, we would need to become more innovative and forward thinking. We would have to look at developing unconventional partnerships, programs and ways of problem-solving in order to create a more responsive victim services ecosystem.

We would need to move to a Generative Model that focuses on generating healthy communities by creating solutions for multi-dimensional family and socioeconomic challenges and opportunities. This scan and the subsequent strategic planning really got us thinking about what was possible, which we decided was anything and everything!



The Greenhouse planted its first garden in May of 2013 with the help of staff, stakeholders and shelter guests.

## WHY GARDENING?

So what does gardening have to do with our vision and our mission? In our opinion, EVERYTHING! Plants and plant-related activities

and environments are evidence-based healing methods for individuals whose lives have been impacted by trauma. When we view trauma and violence through an intersectional lens that includes social constructs like racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia as well as poverty and homelessness, the impact

we could have knows no bounds.

We see our garden not only as a healing space but also as a connection to our community as it encourages neighbors to interact and get to know one another. Community gardens not only help to build communities, there is also evidence that they make them safer and reduce violence, which we are all about.

Knowing that financial instability and the threat or actual experience of poverty is one of the biggest barriers for women to overcome and is often what compels them to return to abusive partners, our garden blooms with small business training and micro-enterprise opportunities giving survivors a path to economic empowerment and self-sufficiency.

**Our vision includes growing the garden into an economically self-sustaining program that is a resource for income as well as nutritious local seasonal food.**

# THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE

The term therapeutic horticulture (TH) applies to interventions that use nature or plant-related activities to improve participants' physical, psychological, and social wellbeing. In addition to providing fresh, nutritious food to the women and children staying in the shelter, our garden is providing shelter guests with the opportunity to engage in horticultural therapy. Horticultural activities improve social, educational, psychological and physical adjustment. For victims of violence, gardening in a safe environment helps heal emotional disturbances and poor self-esteem. It can improve mental and physical health. Horticultural therapy heals because it engages the whole person. It helps shelter guests, including children, to reconnect to key elements of self that may have been broken by violence.

Cultivating the land can address several issues simultaneously. Specifically, gardening can reduce the shelter's food budget, while improving nutrition for residents and staff. Ultimately we dream of growing the garden to raise revenue through the sale of produce while also providing shelter guests with opportunities for physical exercise, socializing, and quiet reflection and meditation, thus facilitating healing.

Many medical professionals advocate therapeutic horticulture as an effective method to rehabilitate or stabilize individuals facing physical and mental challenges. Whether by walking through a garden, watering, digging in the soil, or watching a seed germinate, gardening is food for the soul.

**“To really change a system we need a more holistic set of skills, including systems thinking, an understanding of collaboration tools to further collective impact, and lateral leadership skills such as the ability to lead without power and to galvanize movement toward a common goal across a diverse and disjointed solutions ecosystem.”**

**Daniela Papi-Thornton**



## MISSION & VISION

**Women's Services provides hope and resources for those affected by violence and advocates to end it.**

**We envision communities free of violence.**

### PROUD MEMBER OF



# WOMEN'S SERVICES

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## COMMUNITY GARDENING



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