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Domestic Violence Nonprofit Announces Legal Program Expansion, Widens Victim Reach in Orange County

Laura's House Opens Domestic Violence Advocacy Center in Garden Grove

GARDEN GROVE, Calif., April 14, 2016 – A successful domestic violence legal advocacy program launched in 1997 by nonprofit [Laura's House](#) is now accessible in Central Orange County. Laura's House, a South Orange County-based nonprofit rebuilding the lives of families affected by domestic violence, has announced the opening of its Domestic Violence Advocacy Center in Garden Grove. The center is located in close proximity to the Lamoreaux Justice Center, where nearly 5,000 domestic violence restraining order applications are filed each year.

The expansion addresses an unmet demand for domestic violence legal advocacy services in Orange County by ensuring victims are prepared for, and not alone, at their restraining order hearings.

“Extending the Laura's House legal advocacy program into Central Orange County is not only a milestone for Laura's House, but for the entire Orange County community,” said Adam Dodge, Legal Director of Laura's House. “Domestic violence survivors, even after showing tremendous courage to escape an abusive relationship, often must still face this person alone in court when seeking a restraining order. Our program eases the burden by working with clients to ensure they are prepared, empowered and most importantly, not alone, on the day of their hearing.”

In April 2014, the legal advocacy program initiated a pilot program – the Laura's House Courthouse Advocacy Project – in collaboration with [Community Service Programs](#), to connect victims of intimate partner violence and elder abuse with a Laura's House legal advocate who can assist and support them at their restraining order hearings. The successful pilot project revealed that thousands of victims were in desperate need of comprehensive legal guidance each year.

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Center is designed to meet this critical need by providing a convenient and safe environment for clients to receive services near the courthouse. Services include:

- Preparing individuals for his/her restraining order hearing, and ensuring proper evidence collection
- Accompanying and supporting clients at their restraining order hearings
- Providing referrals to county resources
- Promoting safety planning to limit the risk of harm to clients and their children
- Increasing access to therapeutic and shelter services for victims

For nearly two decades, the Laura's House legal advocacy program has been providing individuals with life-changing services to support them through the restraining order process.

Services also include monthly legal clinics where clients meet one-on-one with a volunteer family law attorney to discuss their case, and linkage to local attorneys who donate their time to represent Laura's House clients at their hearings. Recently, the program was honored with the Hispanic Bar Association of Orange County's [Guardian of Justice Award](#), for their community impact and vital work with domestic violence victims.

Laura's House CEO/Executive Director Margaret Bayston added, "Since we began our work through the pilot project, we have nearly quadrupled the number of legal clients served. We hope this program will create a model for delivering effective legal advocacy services that can be replicated beyond Orange County, so that survivors can rebuild violence-free lives."

Companies generously supporting the Laura's House Domestic Violence Advocacy Center through donations and in-kind services include: Lowe's, Home Depot, Room & Board, Latham & Watkins and Window Film Depot.

About Laura's House

The mission of Laura's House is to change the social beliefs, attitudes and the behaviors that perpetuate domestic violence while creating a safe space to empower individuals and families affected by abuse.

For more than 20 years, Laura's House has served those whose lives have been affected by domestic violence. Over the past two decades, Laura's House has provided shelter and support services to more than 4,000 battered women and children and counseling, life skills education and legal assistance to nearly 50,000 people. Connect with Laura's House on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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