

September, 2021

## Late Summer Newsletter

*In this issue:*

A Summer of Fun at CU

Executive Director's  
Message

An Invitation from our  
Board Chair

Working Together,  
Creating Change

October is Domestic  
Violence Awareness Month



### A Summer of Fun at CU

On a sunny evening earlier this summer Eva\* was concentrating hard on the freshly opened container of bubbles as she tried to master the perfect bubble-blowing technique. Nearby, young artists were creating sidewalk chalk masterpieces, and custom-made ice cream sundaes were topped with generous heaps of sprinkles. It was CU's Summer Kick Off Party; an event coordinated by our Parent Support Coordinator for families currently in CU's shelter and transitional housing programs.

For kids who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse and violence, the most important factor supporting their healing is a strong bond with the non-abusive parent. **CU's Parent Support Services Program** is a unique and innovative program designed to help nurture the critical relationship between survivors and their children. The creative and fun programming makes it easy for kids and their parents to spend valuable, quality time together.

Virginia, CU's Parent Support Coordinator, provides individual and group support for parent survivors, including parenting education, planned activities, and recreational outings that support the bond between the parent and child—all offered free of charge to families using CU services.

Throughout the summer we hosted a full calendar of outdoor activities. Weekly "Monday Funday" events like the Kick Off Party, a family barbeque, and water-play night, a field trip to Funtown Splashtown, and more have helped Eva and her mom have fun together, while also building a community of support around them to provide strength and connection as they continue to heal and move forward towards the safe life they deserve.

*\*Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality.*



## Executive Director's Message

Dear Friends,

When we first connect with someone whose life has been impacted by domestic violence, they are often feel scared and alone; yet they also feel hopeful that their life can be different. In that moment, they are connected to a lifeline of practical resources and the emotional support they need to hold onto that hope while they make a plan for safety.

As we continue to navigate through COVID, I have been thinking a lot about the ways that hope helps all of us get through difficult times, and ways in which we depend on the help and support of others.

In this newsletter, you will read about our **Coordinated Community Response Efforts** and how people are coming together to create meaningful changes that increase victim safety, hold people who use violence accountable, and improve our collective response to domestic violence.


You will **learn how to volunteer** with Caring Unlimited and be part of the community effort that makes our work possible. Our dedicated helpline volunteers helped us respond to 800 callers in the past year, answering almost 2000 calls for support, resources, and information.

You will see the difference a caring community makes for the families that we serve in our **Parent Support Program**. Being together and having fun nurtures healthy bonds between parents and children, and reminds us that joy is possible.

I am proud of our staff for their flexibility, creativity, and dedication over the past year. It has not been easy. We worked hard to continue all of our services uninterrupted throughout the pandemic and we made positive gains. We completed major renovations to our 11 unit transitional housing program and our emergency shelter to improve our facilities; we reaffirmed our commitment to providing broadly accessible services by ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the forefront of our work; and we expanded our outreach advocacy team. I'm proud to share some highlights with you below.

We didn't do it alone. We did it with you.

Thank you,

  
Susan Giambalvo  
Executive Director

### Board of Directors

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4,000 nights of emergency shelter were provided to 75 adults and children.



800 people received court advocacy services.



60 people connected with each other through our first online support groups.



100 individuals received \$36,000 worth of emergency assistance.

***"Every day is a step forward. Caring Unlimited's advocates told me life would improve, and I cherished those words trying to believe they were true. And, they were correct! Thank you, again and forever!"***

**- Addie\*, Former CU Legal Program Client**

Dear Members of Our Community,

**"Every day is a step forward."** This simple sentiment, expressed by Addie, has been on my mind since reading it. The idea that every day is a step forward has resonated with me, and has felt so relevant in so many ways as we have navigated the past year.

Because of your support, we are able to help people like Addie every day. You help anyone who is affected by domestic abuse and violence— over 2000 people who connect with Caring Unlimited each year— take another step forward towards the life they have imagined. Another step toward the safe life we all deserve.

Your generosity allows Caring Unlimited to take another step forward every day too; to expand our services, connect with more members of our community, meet emergency needs, and change the conditions that allow domestic violence to persist.

**Together, we are moving towards ending domestic abuse and violence.**

And still, we have further to go. Every day, another step.

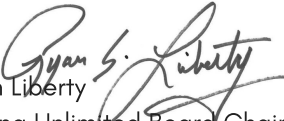
**I invite you to join me in making a gift to support the critical support and safety planning services Caring Unlimited provides 24 hours a day, free of charge, along with the prevention education, training and collaborations that make our community safer, now and into the coming year.**

A gift of just \$25 provides a gas or grocery card in an emergency.

\$100 provides a family one night of safety in our Emergency Shelter.

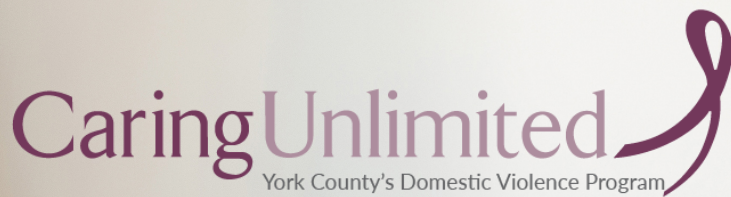
Thank you for being part of our caring community and for joining us in our mission to end domestic violence in our community. **Thank you for taking the next step with us.**

Sincerely,

  
Ryan Liberty  
Caring Unlimited Board Chair



Donate securely online at:  
[www.caring-unlimited.org/donate](http://www.caring-unlimited.org/donate)



## Free. Safe. Confidential.

Direct support and safety planning for those experiencing domestic violence. Prevention education and training to work towards ending domestic violence.

- 24 Hour Helpline + Online Chat Services
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing Services
- Individual and Group Support + Education
- Legal Assistance + Court Advocacy
- School-Based Education
- Community Education + Training
- Volunteer Opportunities

**24 Hour Helpline:  
1-800-239-7298**

**Administrative Office:  
207-490-3227**

**[www.caring-unlimited.org](http://www.caring-unlimited.org)**

*Caring Unlimited is welcoming and affirming. We do not discriminate in access to services or in employment on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, family status, or any other characteristic protected by law.*



*"Coming together gives us the opportunity to identify trends- things we're noticing in our separate roles, like increased severity of violence during the pandemic. Then we can respond in ways that best meet survivors' needs, and also gauge how our response is working over time; what impact it's actually having on victims, and how we can continue to improve."*

*-Eliza, Caring Unlimited Outreach Services Coordinator*

## Working Together, Creating Change

For people experiencing domestic abuse and violence, the effects of the pandemic have been significant. Caring Unlimited's Outreach Services Coordinator, Eliza, has heard first-hand the myriad ways navigating the pandemic has increased victims' levels of danger, and their need for comprehensive supportive services.

Eliza oversees CU's Outreach Program; a team of advocates dedicated to providing individualized support and safety planning to survivors throughout York County, and helping make connections with other community resources. She knows supporting survivors, and preventing domestic violence, takes a community working together to create change.

This is where the **Coordinated Community Response** (CCR) team comes in. Along with overseeing the Outreach Program, Eliza facilitates this multidisciplinary group. The group includes members of law enforcement, health care providers, justice system professionals, and other service providers and agencies throughout York County. The CCR team meets quarterly throughout the year.

CCR team members come together for education and training and to share resources, all with the goal of working together to build community-wide responses to domestic violence that increase safety for victims and hold those using abusive behavior to account.

Through all the challenges of the pandemic, members of the CCR team have fortified their commitment to working together. "Our relationships are stronger," Eliza states, "and the better we know one another, the more helpful we can be to survivors."

Consistent collaboration and communication allows the CCR team to identify specific ways to take action. CCR team members are working to create policies to make ambulance rides free of charge for victims of domestic violence, collaborating to train law enforcement to best respond to cases of non-fatal strangulation, and incorporating programming from specialized experts into their regular activities. It is our mission in action: working together to bring an end to domestic violence.

### October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Follow us to keep up with our Awareness Month programming!



@caring\_unlimited



@caring.unlimited

Join us!

### 9th Annual Survivor Stories Project

*Hear stories from survivors of domestic violence in a safe and compassionate space.*

Virtual registration opens on September 17, 2021.

Event details will be announced soon.





P.O. Box 590, Sanford, ME 04073

# HELPLINE ADVOCATES NEEDED!

*Are you a good listener? Are you ready to make a difference?*

**Caring Unlimited is seeking volunteers to help answer our 24 Hour Helpline!** Apply by September 20 to be considered for our free, comprehensive training starting on September 27.



**Learn more and apply at:  
[www.caring-unlimited.org](http://www.caring-unlimited.org)**