

ON A MISSION: KEEPING YOU INFORMED

Thanks To You, Alexis Escaped Domestic Violence



Your donation provided the financial assistance Alexis needed to help her move forward in reuniting with her children and begin their process of healing.

This year, as families are forced to spend more time inside together, reported incidents of domestic violence have steadily increased.

October is Domestic Violence Action Month, a designation that provides the community time to consider the entirety of domestic violence: its causes, the damage it does, how the law addresses it, and the steps that can be taken to eliminate it.

As a YWCA supporter, you are aware of our range of programs that tackle the various phases of domestic violence. Your past support has helped us provide effective early intervention programs for youth, support groups for survivors, an emergency shelter providing immediate relief from the abuser, and establish processes for supporting survivors as they start new lives.

“Donations for shelter and supplies are desperately needed now because people are fleeing their abusers, but may have nowhere to go,” said Tanika Siscoe, YWCA’s Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist. “They may be living in their car, struggling to have enough to eat. They need support during this time of trauma.”

Alexis’s success story was made possible because of you.

Alexis had experienced years of reproductive, financial, physical, and emotional abuse. She was attempting to relocate after her abuser was arrested for her assault. But time was running out. He would soon be released and she knew he would come after her.

Several years prior, Alexis’s abuser had isolated their family by moving to a rural area, away from her friends and family. Because he was the main source of income for their family, she was further trapped.

But when he was arrested, Alexis contacted YWCA, and was connected with a domestic violence advocate who assisted her in completing an Emergency Financial Assistance application to cover the costs of a security deposit for an apartment. The two discussed other safety options and strategies for reuniting Alexis with her children, who had been separated from her.

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6 Actions You Can Take to Address Racial Equity



Ana Sifuentes and Vanessa Yarie were among those who explained systemic racism to the Clark County Council at a special listening session.

As the Black Lives Matter movement to end systemic racism gains momentum nationwide, residents of Clark County have turned to local organizations including NAACP Vancouver, Southwest Washington League of United Latin American Citizens Council 47013, Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program, and YWCA Clark County, for guidance in dismantling systemic racism.

In August, YWCA participated in the Clark County Council Listening Session on Systemic Racism. We explained how systemic racism shows up, where it can be found in our community, and the history that brought us to today. Together with our organizational partners, we demonstrated how much work we need to do to educate our community and begin to dismantle systemic racism here in Clark County.

“The listening session served as a starting point for engaging our elected officials in a discussion about systemic racism in Clark County,” said Vanessa Yarie, YWCA’s Director of Services and Mission Impact. “We are excited about our work with the Clark County Council on dismantling systemic racism and bringing forth lasting change for our community.”

Many of you have asked how you can help bring an end to systemic racism locally. Here are six actions you can take here in Clark County:

1. Hold elected officials accountable. Attend public meetings and ask elected officials about their record on racial justice issues. Write letters to the editor questioning actions by elected officials that demonstrate either ignorance, or support, of racism. Vote!

- 2. Call for a shift in public funds** to demand the redistribution of law enforcement funding to social programs that directly serve BIPOC communities, such as mental health, housing, and addiction services.
- 3. Call for the schools to step up racial justice practices.** Urge Clark County school districts to explore more ways to embed restorative racial justice options within schools and address disproportionate discipline of students of color and the school-to-prison pipeline.
- 4. Donate your time.** Demonstrate your support by volunteering with organizations that work for racial justice. YWCA Clark County has many opportunities to support racial equity, from being a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), to working with youth in our programs, to helping us meet the needs of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- 5. Donate your dollars.** Nonprofit organizations that embrace racial equity need financial support to fulfill their missions. Long term change requires sustaining support—consider a monthly gift.
- 6. See it, say it.** Become the racial justice conscience of your social group, class at school, or your family. When you witness racism or hear racist comments, interrupt. It will take courage to be that person.

For the full article check out our blog post at ywcaclarkcounty.org.

Our Donors Came Through Again!

September 24 was truly a day of inspired giving, as we combined Give More 24! with our first major virtual event, the 2020 Empower Luncheon. Our featured guest was Ravyn, a single mother, survivor of a very difficult youth, who received extraordinary assistance from YWCA's Independent Living Skills (ILS) program.

You heard her story that day, and responded by giving \$75,000 of support.

In a video, Ravyn shared how easily a young person aging out of foster care can fall through the cracks and into homelessness and despair. She told you how the YWCA came through for her repeatedly as she stood up to the challenges life threw at her after she left foster care.

Then, late last year, when she felt she had stabilized her life, came another blow: her second child died unexpectedly. Just when she began to feel her life was crumbling around her, ILS Program Manager Kit Kuran called to inform her of a recent age extension in the program that would allow her to enroll again.

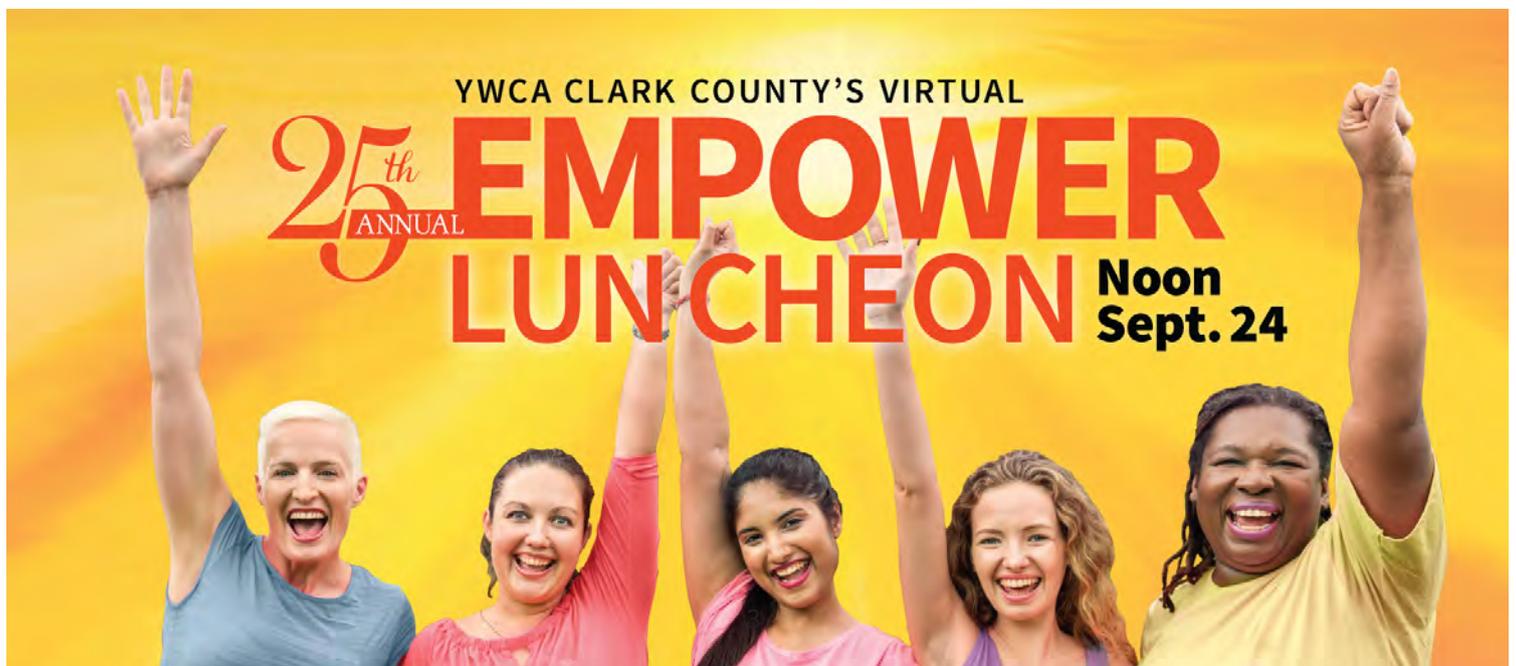
It is thanks to you that YWCA can provide support to foster youth like Ravyn who could easily fall through the cracks.



Kit and her ILS team took extra measures to help rebuild Ravyn's spirits and support her in finding stability again, which included rent assistance and help finding a job. YWCA's ILS is that safety net—a support network so many of us with family and friends take for granted—but the majority of foster youth find lacking in their lives.

Ravyn is a courageous and determined young woman. Without support, even Ravyn might have succumbed to overwhelming odds. Instead, she is back on her feet and making steady progress in her young life. With COVID, high unemployment, and rising domestic violence, these youth need your help to stay safe and healthy. It is thanks to you that YWCA can provide such support to young people who could easily fall through the cracks.

And our heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who made Sept. 24 such an incredible fundraising success. Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor—Columbia Credit Union; our high-voltage auctioneer, Alix Zimmerman from Artisan Auctions; and our drag queens, Clare Apparently and Devlin Lynn Phoenixx, for providing much-needed Bingo fun at day's end!





We need YOU for a Holiday Shop success!

YWCA's annual Holiday Shop provides joy for shoppers, staff, and volunteers alike. Your support—whether through a business or as an individual—remains essential to its success.

Holiday Shop offers our program participant families the opportunity to choose gifts for each family member. Pandemics don't care what they might interrupt, including joyous experiences like Holiday Shop. But the shopping *will* happen this year on Dec. 16 and 17, with a few key changes:

- Since we cannot allow families to enter the shop as they have in the past, The **Wish List** (see below) is even more important this year. Ensuring that our donors contribute items on the list will be vital to everyone's holiday happiness!
- Each family will be sent home with a gift wrapping kit. Donations of scissors, tape, wrapping paper, and other gift wrapping supplies are needed.
- Volunteer opportunities will be limited this year. If you'd like to volunteer, please check the Holiday Giving page on our website.

Check ywcaclarkcounty.org/holiday-giving/ where you'll find all the details, and encourage your friends and neighbors to support the shop as never before! Holiday Shop is our opportunity to show our families we truly care!

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

As part of YWCA's recognition of Domestic Violence Action Month, this October we are hosting weekly workshops about the intersectionality of domestic violence and marginalized populations, COVID, tenant-landlord rights, and youth healthy relationships. Please check our website for details, and join us to learn more.

Ray Hickey Foundation Gift Empowers Domestic Violence Program

Our very special gratitude goes to the Ray Hickey Foundation, a long-time YWCA Clark County supporter. The Foundation donated \$75,000 to our domestic violence program this year when COVID began. This generous donation supported our domestic violence team's transition from face-to-face meetings with survivors to helping them online and by phone. The outcome: Our services continued to ensure the safety of those suffering at the hands of their abusers.

Thank you to Community Funders!

Autzen Foundation
Bank of America
Bedrossian Foundation
BNSF Foundation
Boeing Employees Community Fund
Burning Foundation
CDBG, City of Vancouver
Community Foundation of Southwest Washington
Costco Charitable Foundation
iQ for Kids
McDonald's of Clark County
NW Children's Foundation
Pride Foundation
Ray Hickey Foundation
Dwight and Anna Schwab Charitable Foundation
T.O.D.A.Y. Foundation
U.S. Bancorp Foundation
Walmart Community Grants
Wells Fargo
Wheeler Foundation

R-90: Ballot Measure for Students Needs Your Support!

When you vote next month, you will face an array of very important decisions. Please pay special attention to Referendum 90. We need your vote to approve it!

Referendum 90 gives students access to comprehensive sex education. Young people in every community deserve medically accurate and inclusive information that helps them make good decisions about sex to protect themselves and others. Referendum 90 will uphold the new Washington law requiring all public schools to teach age-appropriate, inclusive, comprehensive sex education.

Here's an excerpt from that law, Senate Bill 5395. The law **“would require public schools to provide comprehensive sexual health education to students in grades 6-12 beginning in the 2021-22 school year and for all public school students, including those in grades K-5, beginning in the 2022-23 school year. The curriculum would have to include instruction and information regarding affirmative consent and bystander training. Instruction would need to be provided at least once to students in grades K-3, once to students in grades 4-5, twice to students in grades 6-8, and twice to students in grades 9-12.”**

R-90 will provide Washington students access to sex education that they may not have had. Comprehensive sex education will serve as a prevention tool for sexual assault and child sexual abuse. It teaches young people how to prevent sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies and provides kids experiencing abuse with tools and language they need to get help. It teaches affirmative consent, which ties into the prevention work that I do with middle school aged youth. For students K-3, comprehensive sex education will be age

appropriate and focus on social and emotional learning to help them learn how to identify and regulate their emotions.

In my work with youth at the middle school level, I see every day how vital this kind of information can be. It leads to the formation of healthy, safe relationships—with peers, with parents, and with other adults. Comprehensive sex education will help set foundational skills our young people need to make good decisions to protect themselves and their futures.

As an Advocate for Youth, I am supporting R-90 because I want all young people to have the skills they need to keep themselves safe from abuse, unhealthy relationships, and sexually transmitted infections. So please, when you vote, do NOT overlook Referendum 90—approve it for the sake of our children and their futures.

Tanika Siscoe
Domestic Violence Prevention Specialist
YWCA Clark County



Tanika, right, continues her work with middle school students during the pandemic. She wants to make sure all public schools teach age-appropriate, inclusive, comprehensive sex education.



Please Give So Melena Can Escape Violence

Will you make an urgent gift today to protect a domestic violence survivor from abuse? Here's why... please note there are details below that might be emotionally triggering.

Melena and her children live with her long-time boyfriend. Over the last year he has become emotionally and financially abusive and has isolated her from her friends and family. Melena called our hotline last week wanting to leave her home.

Our advocate helped Melena file a protection order. She is temporarily staying with a family

friend, but needs a permanent place for her and her children to live. They need a real home where they can be safe and start to heal.

You can make that happen! Melena has found a safe home to rent, but she needs financial assistance with first and last month's rent. Melena and her children need your help now!

They cannot return to the violence and harm. Will you make a gift today to support Melena and her children as they move into their new home? Give them the gift of safety, and make our community a better one by helping this family.

YOUR GIFT WILL SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- \$25** Provides one person safety planning on the DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
- \$50** gives new, clean bedding and towels to one survivor staying in the SHELTER
- \$100** assists one survivor in obtaining a domestic violence PROTECTION ORDER
- \$250** provides LEGAL SUPPORT for 15 survivors
- \$500** gives two weeks of SAFE SHELTER for one family at the SafeChoice Shelter
- \$1000** provides one month of RENTAL ASSISTANCE to keep a family in their home