



# Stewardship REPORT

FALL 2020 DONOR UPDATE

## When Innovation Isn't Optional

Over the course of our history here at WEAVE, we have been very proud of our ability to react and to innovate, as situations have changed and as survivors have needed different resources. And that capacity comes directly from the support of our donors like you.

However, we never imagined that our need to embrace change and adapt quickly would be tested so dramatically.

We entered spring like so many others in our community — cautiously watching the spread of COVID-19. Like other challenges we have faced in the past, we knew we must be ready for a great deal of uncertainty, as the global pandemic would force all of us into our homes — including vulnerable victims.

Thanks to generous donors like you, we could respond intentionally, knowing our community would be there for survivors. You gave us the confidence to forge ahead.

At our core, we are a survivor-centered and trauma-informed organization. This does not change, regardless of the challenges we face today and those that will come tomorrow. It is who we are as an organization, and that cannot falter or we risk placing vulnerable families at much greater risk.

When the threat of COVID-19 emerged, we stepped back and asked

ourselves how it would affect victims. We asked ourselves a lot of questions ...

- What are the new risks for a survivor living with an abusive partner?
- What will our shelter residents need?
- How do we support a survivor who needs legal help, with the courts closed?
- How do we provide remote services and ensure the privacy of all survivors?
- How do we continue to build resiliency across communities to prevent future violence?

When Shelter in Place directives were issued, we were cautiously ready. We increased staffing on the 24/7 Support Line ... added online chat ... moved all counseling, legal assistance, and advocacy work to be provided by phone ... and implemented social distancing protocols at our shelters.

We took our prevention education work online and created new tools to support teachers, parents, and youth. Almost overnight, we created a new infrastructure to support fragile families facing trauma in a different way.

We did all of this, and continue to do so, knowing we could count on you to support those families.



### You are the Lifeline

It's only through your gift to WEAVE that we have the strength and resiliency to make changes quickly, to meet survivors' evolving needs.

# Safe Shelter During a Global Pandemic

Families needing safe shelter already face numerous barriers, regardless of COVID-19. The survivors who were staying with us had experienced financial abuse, making finding safe and stable housing difficult.

Our Safehouse uses a quasi-communal model where families have their own bedrooms but must share kitchens and bathrooms. We take pride in meeting survivors where they are at — both emotionally and physically — but suddenly, sharing physical space posed a risk.

As a result, we took quick action. As families secured housing, we paused bringing new families into the shelter. We ensured our Open House apartments and Transitional Housing cottages remained full, so families could Shelter in Place in a safer environment. We began using hotel rooms for temporary shelter to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak in our existing housing. We leveraged our Housing First program to keep families housed through rental assistance.

We provided case management, counseling, and legal assistance by phone. This ensured all survivors still had regular access to the WEAVE support network and the

compassionate services they had been getting onsite, to make sure they received the help they needed and deserved.

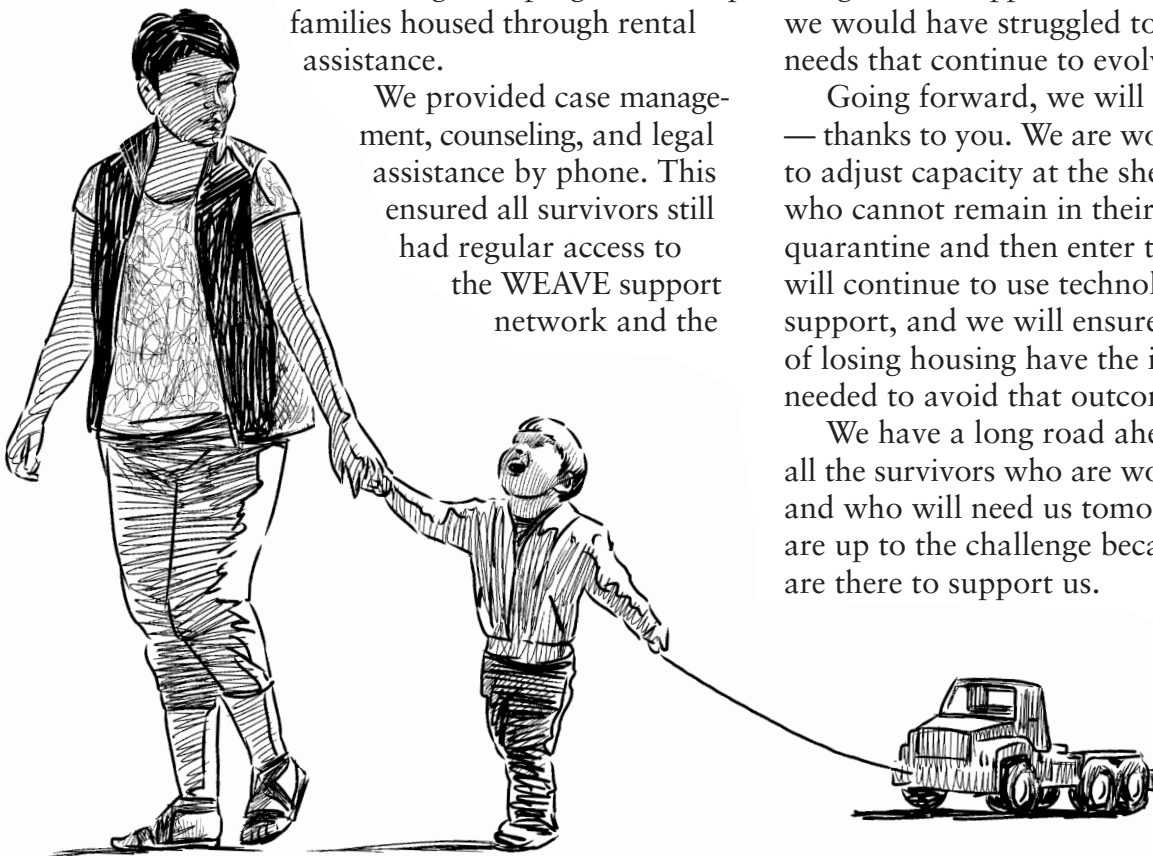
We supported parents in meeting distance learning requirements. We helped survivors balance parenting while working from home at the shelter. We continue to learn how to navigate the unemployment system for those families who lost work.

We have a long road ahead of us ... but we are up to the challenge because we know you are there to support us.

This transformation was not easy or ideal, but we could forge this path thanks to you — our generous supporters. Without your support, we would have struggled to respond to these needs that continue to evolve every single day.

Going forward, we will continue to adapt — thanks to you. We are working on protocols to adjust capacity at the shelters, so families who cannot remain in their homes can safely quarantine and then enter the Safehouse. We will continue to use technology to provide support, and we will ensure families at risk of losing housing have the interventions needed to avoid that outcome.

We have a long road ahead of us — as do all the survivors who are working with us now and who will need us tomorrow — but we are up to the challenge because we know you are there to support us.



# Meeting Survivors Where They Are, When We Can't Be Together

One of our greatest challenges when responding to COVID-19 was that we could not hold physical space with survivors. Therapeutic counseling, case management, legal assistance, and advocacy depend on creating a safe space, whether it be a counseling room at WEAVE, shared space at a Family Resource Center, or an Advocate meeting a sexual assault survivor at the BEAR Clinic.

Every model of supporting survivors had to change.

Our federal and state funding comes with stringent — and necessary — privacy requirements. Our privacy mandates exceed HIPAA. We could not start using popular videoconferencing services without thorough vetting. We also felt it was not appropriate to adopt an entirely new way of delivering services without staff training.

Our best option was to offer counseling and advocacy via telephone. While not ideal, it worked. For survivors who could safely participate, they expressed immense gratitude that telephone support was an option. We also heard repeatedly that many survivors preferred this option, since they didn't need to worry about transportation or childcare.

We know there are many who had to stop counseling because it was not safe for them to participate from home. And, we know they will need us even more when they are able to safely reach out again. We'll be ready, thanks to your support.

While many assumed sexual assaults would decrease due to Shelter in Place orders, this was not the case. We know that victims most often know their perpetrators, and this pattern continued with reports of assaults by neighbors, friends, and current and former partners.

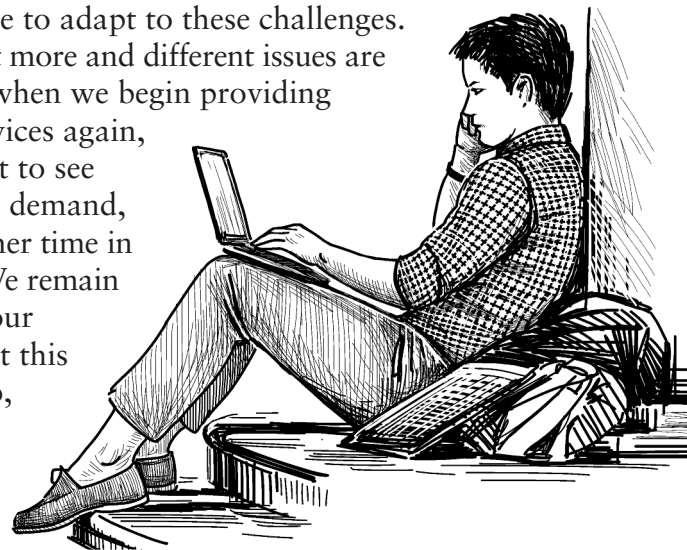
For sexual assault victims who were undergoing a forensic examination, the assurance

of an Advocate during that exam was no longer safe nor possible. We worked with our partners at the Sutter Health BEAR Clinic, so survivors received telephone support before and immediately after the examination. Survivors expressed gratitude for the help — especially given the increased concern of entering a medical facility during a pandemic. These survivors receive ongoing support through advocacy and counseling.

Our other challenge was suspending walk-in assistance. Before COVID-19, we would have 75 to 100 people in our public space every day. This included staff, volunteers, and survivors frequently in small areas together — like our lobby. The risk of exposure was significant and crossed all departments.

We suspended walk-in services and moved to doing our safety assessments and intakes via telephone. What we learned is that this process is much more beneficial for survivors. We were able to quickly enroll survivors into services using a telephone intake approach and use the same idea to start providing counseling to survivors on our waiting lists. As a result, we've provided immediate counseling to those who could participate and reduced the wait for vulnerable families needing services.

Thanks to you and your loyal support, we have been able to adapt to these challenges. We know that more and different issues are yet to come, when we begin providing in-person services again, and we expect to see an increase in demand, unlike any other time in our history. We remain confident in our ability to meet this challenge, too, because we can count on you.



# Prevention Education During a Pandemic

**W**hen we launched WEAVE Learn — an online training program for children, youth, and adults — we had no idea its use would so quickly become essential to our operations.

We had already developed age-appropriate presentations, activities, and content for K-12 students, teachers, parents, and administrators. While teachers across the state struggled to move to online learning quickly, they could count on us to meet one of their many requirements, using an existing resource that aligns with the California Health Education Framework requirements.

As educators grapple with what school will look like in the future, we know that the number of children and youth receiving quality prevention education will continue — thanks to you and your support.

Our educators took additional steps as well, beyond the existing WEAVE Learn material, and they adapted the presentations and activities they had previously delivered in

the classroom for online learning. We created short videos with activities and shared them via social media and our website. These options are available to parents looking for quality activities to augment classroom instruction.

An added benefit emerged through this approach, too. We know that many parents struggle with addressing unhealthy relationships, and often the child has already experienced an unhealthy relationship before the topic is raised. Equally concerning is that research shows that youth seldom tell anyone when they are experiencing an unhealthy relationship, and if they do, they are more likely to tell a friend than a parent or adult. By providing parents with age-appropriate activities and tools to address healthy relationships, consent, and relationship abuse, we are helping parents to start having tough conversations sooner and with additional resources.

This is only possible because of you and your past support of WEAVE.

## Thank You!

With uncertainty being the only constant as we look ahead, WEAVE is stronger and better able to respond to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking because of your support. We have been able to be thoughtful and intentional with our actions, thanks to you. As we evaluate the risk and feasibility of returning to providing in-person services, we remain committed to ensure victims have access to 24/7 support, and we depend on your partnership.



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OUR MISSION is to promote safe and healthy relationships and support survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.