

**FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER**



— BY **CASA** —

FOR A  
**VIOLENCE FREE** PINELLAS



Supporting survivors with victim advocacy, civil legal attorneys, legal advocates, government victim assistance, prosecutors, law enforcement, and representatives from community-based organizations in one place.



## LETTER FROM THE CEO

### In Pinellas County, we can do better.

We can create one place for survivors built on the premise that survivors of domestic violence deserve justice. A place that is kind-hearted and victim-centered, where experts guide survivors to onsite partner resources, specialists, and the support they need. Together we can create a system that bonds survivors, not by their trauma, but by their experience of community, healing, hope, and justice.

We invite you to join CASA and our partners on this journey to become the community in Florida that embraces survivors in the Family Justice Center concept so that they and their children can truly escape the bonds of violence and move into happier, healthier lives.

With Hope,

Lariana Forsythe  
CEO, CASA

Dear Community Supporters,

It's called the Criminal Justice System – not the Victim Justice System – for a reason.

Domestic violence victims have just lived through the ultimate betrayal, often fearful they were close to death. Then they are handed a pamphlet or ten, given a pat on the back, and told "good luck." The door closes, and they are expected to immediately know how to pick up all the pieces of their shattered lives, all while navigating an immensely complicated system that most go to law school to understand. In our system, victims are often an afterthought, if they are thought of at all.

I was thrust into this complicated system that I didn't understand, alone, and confused about the process and next steps. I was doing my best to protect myself and my traumatized children, and yet we were revictimized by the system for many years.

**CASA's Mission: Challenging the Societal Acceptance of all Forms of Domestic Violence, CASA Stands up to Silence through Advocacy, Prevention, Intervention, and Support Services.**

**CASA's Vision: A Society Free from Domestic Violence.**

## CASA's FY 2020-21 Impact

**501**

Adults & children  
served through  
Emergency  
Shelter

**5,242**

Calls answered  
through CASA's  
24-hour  
Emergency  
Hotline

**1,754**

Adults served  
through Non-  
Residential Support  
Services

**2,280**

Justice Advocacy  
sessions provided  
at Pinellas County  
Courthouses

**580**

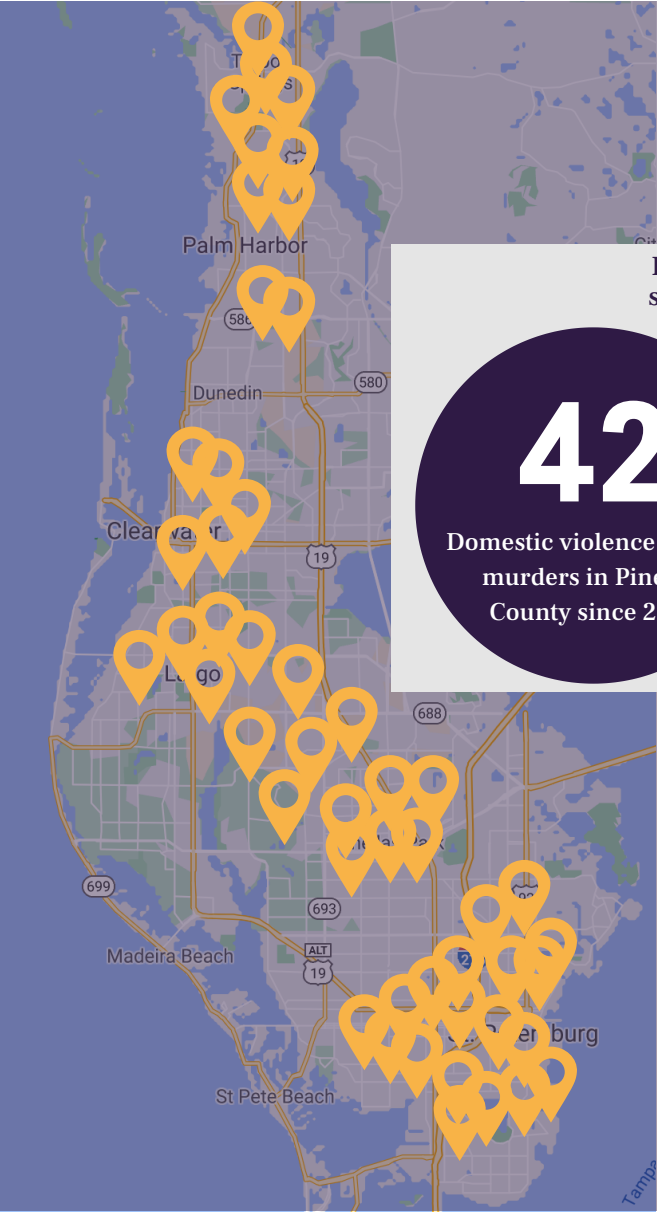
Survivors  
represented by a  
CASA Injunction  
for Protection  
Attorney

Survivors spent

**19,451**

Bed nights in  
the CASA  
Shelter

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

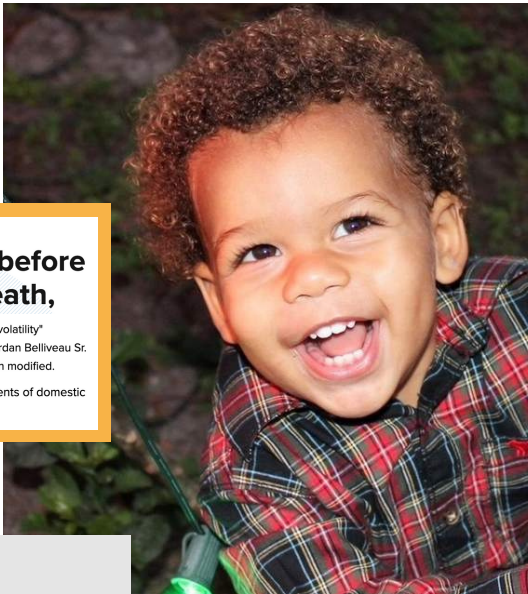


10INVESTIGATES

## Warning signs were ignored before toddler Jordan Belliveau's death,

-- A new child abuse report was received in August 2018, alleging "increased volatility" between Belliveau's parents. Despite documented allegations of threats of Jordan Belliveau Sr. to kill Stinson, the child was not removed from the home nor was the case plan modified.

-- The case plan was never modified even after multiple documented incidents of domestic violence between Stinson and the boy's father, Jordan Belliveau Sr.



2018

In 2015 CASA opened one of the largest emergency shelters in the state. Yet still, the problem persists...

42

Domestic violence related murders in Pinellas County since 2015

Pinellas County  
Ranks #5

Out of 67 counties for highest rates domestic violence in Florida

32,115

reported incidents of domestic violence in Pinellas County since 2015



2019

PINELLAS COUNTY

## St. Petersburg parents break their silence following stabbing, daughter's death

Markeita Maynard died after her mother's ex-husband attacked them, police said. In life, she was tenacious, competitive and close with her family.



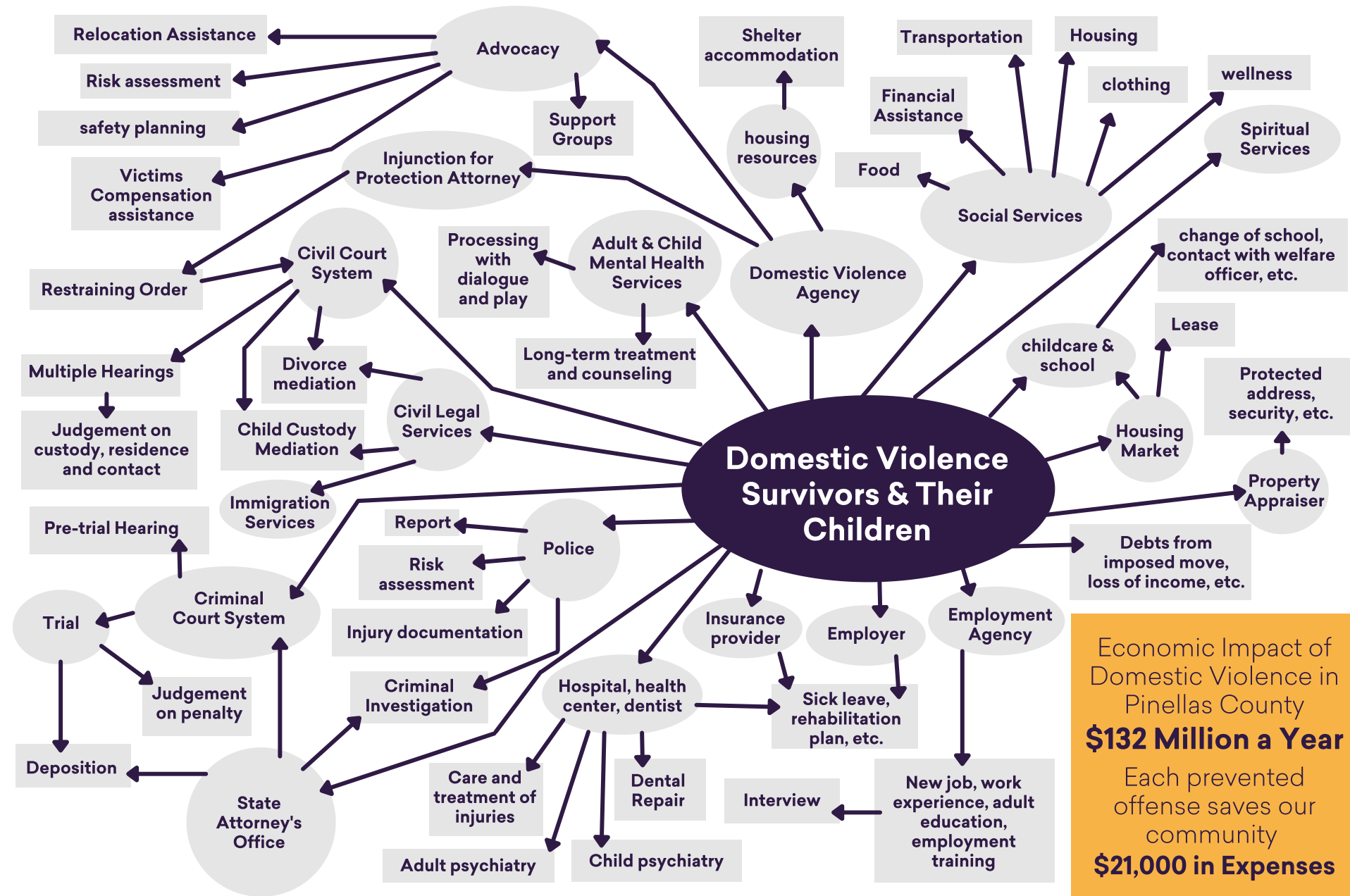
2020

## Deputies investigate apparent murder-suicide in Oldsmar

Detectives believe a 53-year-old man shot his wife and then himself.



# NAVIGATING THE SYSTEM AS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVOR IN PINELLAS COUNTY



# A BETTER WAY



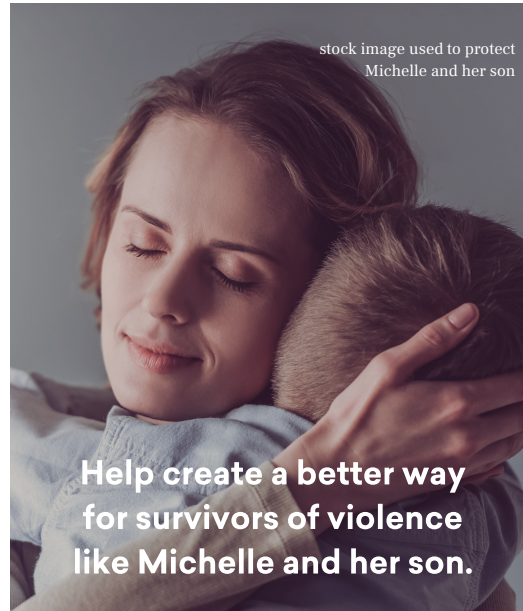
When Michelle's husband left in the back of a police car after trying to kill her at gunpoint in front of their son, she was injured, terrified, and alone. Little did Michelle know, this horrific, life-defining event was just the beginning of the pain and suffering she would experience.

Between navigating the criminal justice system, civil legal services, medical care, forensic exams, housing assistance, crisis counseling, and child services, **Michelle felt defeated.** She found herself making dozens of trips throughout Pinellas County, missing days of work at a time, and retelling her story over and over to well-meaning personnel who lacked the sensitivity she so desperately needed. Michelle thought, there has to be **a better way.**

**There is a better way.** CASA is taking decades of experience in community collaboration and survivor support to bring a successful nationwide model of service delivery to Pinellas County.

**The Family Justice Center by CASA** will provide streamlined services for survivors and their children that dramatically increase access to help and safety in one place.

Endorsed by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Family Justice Center model reduces the likelihood of a client being exposed to repetitive incidents, experiencing homelessness, and being murdered.



## A Life-Saving Model

The Family Justice Center framework contributed to a

**90% drop in  
domestic violence  
homicides**

in the City of San Diego

Gwinn, C., Strack, G. (2010). Dream big: A simple, complicated idea to stop family violence. Wheatmark Press.

## The Family Justice Center for a Violence Free Pinellas Anchor Partners

State Attorney's Office Of The Sixth Judicial Circuit

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office

St. Petersburg Police Department

Baycare

Gulfcoast Legal Services

Learning Empowered

Suncoast Sexual Assault Services

Office of the Attorney General Injunction Team

Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court

Community Law

Juvenile Welfare board

The Well for Life

# THE PLAN

comprehensive, collaborative,  
trauma-informed, free services

## Childcare

Children have a safe, calm environment to play while a parent or caregiver receives support services on-site.

## Law Enforcement

Police take reports, gather evidence and help enforce court orders.

## Medical Services

Provide trauma-informed healthcare

- Strangulation Assessment
- Evidence Collection
- Forensic Medical Exams for Sexual Assault
- Behavioral Health

Health care services are available to domestic violence victims and their children, with or without insurance.

## Connection to Resources

The CASA Family Justice Center will meet the immediate needs of survivors and their children. Advocates will provide a warm connection to additional resources unique to the survivor or child's needs.

## Advocacy

The Family Justice Center by CASA will provide free & confidential services to adults, and children affected by domestic violence, human trafficking, elder abuse, and child abuse.

Advocacy services include but are not limited to:

- Crisis Counseling
- Safety Planning
- Lethality Assessment
- Rapid Rehousing Program Referral
- Domestic Violence Relocation Assistance\*
- Address Confidentiality Assistance\*
- and much more

\*Only certified Domestic Violence Center Advocates can assist with a Domestic Violence Relocation & Address Confidentiality

## Mental Health Services

Trauma-informed counselors provide free individual and group therapy for survivors and their children at all stages of healing.

## Goals of the Family Justice Center by CASA:

- Increase victim safety
- Increase victim cooperation
- Increase perpetrator accountability
- Increase evidence collection
- Increase communication & collaboration with professionals working with victim
- Reduce homicides
- Ensure needs of victims and children are met

## Criminal and Civil Legal Services

- Specialized attorneys for Injunction for Protection restraining orders
- Civil attorneys to assist with divorce and/or dependency cases, immigration, and more
- Justice advocacy to support in prosecution of domestic violence offender

**A NATIONWIDE BEST-PRACTICE MODEL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY  
ENDORSED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

# WITHOUT A FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

Based on the first 45 days following a domestic violence incident with children

## Minimum Requirements of a Domestic Violence Victim

- Travel 20 times
- Tell story 17 times
- Fill out 289 pages of paperwork
- 53 hours missed from work

Everyday Priorities such as caring for children, work, school, paying bills

# WITH A FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER



## The CASA Family Justice Center - Comprehensive Services in One Place:

- Advocacy
- Childcare
- Law Enforcement
- Criminal & Legal Services
- Mental Health Services
- Medical Services
- Connection to Resources











Receiving 10 pamphlets is really overwhelming. You are so mentally drained and dreading going in front of a judge and telling your story. At that time, I wasn't comfortable telling my story so I didn't want to tell my story 10 times at 10 different places. If I had one place to go and could tell my story once, that would be much less overwhelming.  
- Pinellas County Survivor

## TRAVEL

## WITHOUT FJC

## WITH FJC

<b>St. Pete Beach Resident:</b>	 154 miles, 5 hrs 24 min  15 hrs	33 miles, 1 hr, 2 min 4 hrs
<b>Pinellas Park Resident:</b>	 95 miles, 3 hrs 18 min  13 hrs	25 miles, 37 min 3 hrs
<b>Palm Harbor Resident:</b>	 286 miles, 7 hrs 3 min  25 hrs	54 miles, 1 hr 19 min 5 hrs
<b>St. Pete (South) Resident:</b>	 110 miles, 3 hrs 5 min  18 hrs	34 miles, 53 min 4 hrs

## IMPACT ON SURVIVOR

## WITHOUT FJC

- 53 hours of missed work
- 17 appointments

## WITH FJC

- 8 hours of missed work
- 1 appointment



Dear CASA FJC Steering Committee,

Our team at Alliance for HOPE International has been honored to work with you as your vision for beginning a Family Justice Center in Pinellas County has developed.



The vision for the CASA Family Justice Center is powerful and viable. The Family Justice Center Alliance, a program of Alliance for HOPE International, is the training and technical assistance provider for the U.S. Department of Justice for all Family Justice Centers in the United States. During two hybrid in-person events, a community assessment/study tour and a two-day strategic visioning event, the Alliance team had the opportunity to meet with elected officials, policy makers, funders, allied partner agencies, survivors, CASA staff members, and many others.

There is no question that the CASA Family Justice Center vision deserves funding and support from philanthropists, foundations, local government, state government, and other potential supporters. It is a transformative vision that will increase safety, hope, resiliency, and wellbeing for adult and child survivors of trauma, violence and abuse.

The CASA Family Justice Center is poised to impact the entire way government entities, the City of St. Petersburg, other cities throughout the county, community-based agencies, and the State of Florida departments handle domestic and sexual violence and how they work with trauma-exposed youth in Pinellas County.

The Alliance is committed to doing all that we can to support your planning and development process, and we look forward to seeing a CASA-led Family Justice Center framework emerge in Pinellas County that will better serve adult and child survivors of violence and abuse.

With Great HOPE,

Casey Gwinn  
President, Alliance for HOPE



Gael Strack  
CEO, Alliance for HOPE

# JOIN A **COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT** AND **RESTORE HOPE** FOR SURVIVORS LIKE KADIE



"I was completely naive to the system and to the process as a survivor. I had hope and I believed that the system was designed to protect me but quickly into the process I was stripped of that hope and I lost all faith in the system. I felt completely alone and lost in our system. But hearing the message of hope inspired me. I didn't think that change was possible. I wanted change but I didn't think it was going to happen. Now I know it's not just a dream. CASA is making it happen. THANK YOU."

**- Kadie, Pinellas County Survivor, CASA Family Justice Center Strategic Planning Event**



"The St. Petersburg Police Department sees first-hand the fear and hardships victims face when experiencing domestic violence. Our department already has a strong partnership with CASA to help survivors of domestic violence access the support they need. However, we are looking forward to continuing our partnership with the Family Justice Center initiative."

**-Anthony Holloway, Chief of Police, St. Petersburg Police Department**



"During my 40 years at the State Attorney's office, I have experienced difficulties prosecuting domestic violence cases largely because survivors lack of access to supportive services. That is why I whole heartedly look forward to being involved in CASA's Family Justice Center. This initiative will not only give survivors the support they need but create a collaborative system to hold perpetrators accountable."

**- Bruce Bartlett, State Attorney, Sixth Judicial Circuit**



"I see the tremendous wisdom in having one place for them [survivors] to go where they can address so many different issues... The court system looks forward to being involved with this, we'll certainly lend our support."

**- Hon. Jack Helinger, Judge, Sixth Judicial Court**



"In the city of Saint Peterburg, we're working hard to build a city of opportunity that positively serves all of the citizens in our community. We know that this initiative will help us toward that goal."

**- Dr. Kanika Tomalin, Deputy Mayor, St. Petersburg**





“It's important that we look at the view from the victim's perspective and how we can create a process that makes it easier for them to walk through the bureaucracy of getting their voice heard in the system.”

**- Jeff Brandes, Florida Senator, Pinellas County**



“Whenever we remove barriers, parents can heal, and children can thrive. With the comprehensive services that will be available at the CASA Family Justice Center, there will be reduced fear and anxiety from both children and parents.”

**- Amy Foster, St. Petersburg City Council Member, Executive Director, HLA**



“As a survivor of domestic violence, I understand how important it is to have all the services that one needs in one place, and what a huge step forward this is for domestic violence in our county.”

**- Pat Gerard, Pinellas County Commissioner**



“CASA is an organization who finds creative solutions to better serve not only the survivors of domestic violence, but their families as well.”

**- Matthew Silverman, President, Tampa Bay Rays**



“The trauma that occurs after family violence lingers long after the incident, or incidents, have occurred. CASA's One Place, provides access to services and supports for families to begin their healing journey.”

**- Dr. Ladonna Butler, Founder, Well For Life**



“At United Way Suncoast, our strategic plan is focused severing the constraints that prevent families from thriving. With financial abuse occurring in 99% of domestic violence relationships, victims find themselves choosing between freedom from abuse or financial stability. That is why we are proud to support CASA's efforts to bring Florida's first Family Justice Center to Pinellas. The comprehensive services offered at the FJC will help survivors break free from abuse and give them a path to a more promising future.”

**-Jessica Muroff, CEO, United Way Suncoast**



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