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12/19/2023

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**FAIRFAX COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY STEVE DESCANO AWARDS
SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS**

Fairfax County, VA -- Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano today awarded grants to five nonprofits in the county that directly serve child victims of crime, victims of sexual abuse, and victims of domestic violence. The grants were awarded through the second annual Community Partnership Grant Program that CA Descano unveiled last year.

After interviewing applicants, the office selected recipients **Just Neighbors**, which provides legal services to immigrant victims of domestic violence and violent crime; **SafeSpot**, which provides services to child victims of sexual and physical abuse and their families; **Shelter House**, which provides financial assistance to victims of domestic violence; **Women for Afghan Women (WAW)**, which provides support to Afghan survivors of domestic violence; and **United Community's Progreso Center**, which provides immigration and citizenship services, including for survivors of domestic violence.

"I'm extremely glad that my office is able to partner with and support these five organizations that provide essential services and help victims on the path to healing and recovery," CA Descano said. "We are eternally grateful for everything that they do in our community. Supporting victims throughout the legal process, encouraging them to come forward and cooperate with law enforcement, and providing services and material assistance is important work that makes our community not only stronger, but safer."

This year, each organization received grants of \$5,000 that must be used for programs or services that directly support victims and law enforcement. CA Descano is committed to continuing the Grant Program annually, with funds acquired through Virginia Code 19.2-386.14.

Recipients of the Community Partnership Grants issued the following statements regarding this year's awards:

Erin McKenney, Executive Director of Just Neighbors: "We're extremely grateful to receive this grant money from CA Descano's office, which will help us provide legal immigration services to youth victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence in Fairfax County."

Heather O'Malley, Executive Director of SafeSpot: "This grant will help us support the investigation and prosecution of child abuse in our community. As the only Children's Advocacy Center in Fairfax County, our forensic interviews of children eliminate the need for children to be questioned by multiple agencies, therefore reducing the trauma associated with reliving their abuse while reporting it."

Joe Meyer, Executive Director and CEO of Shelter House: "Shelter House is extremely grateful for the support of the Office of the Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney. This funding will allow Shelter House to better meet the needs of victims of domestic violence and their children, helping more survivors to secure safe and stable housing that is free of abuse. With the support of the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, we are truly changing lives!"

Anne-Marie Gray, Executive Director of Women for Afghan Women: "Northern Virginia is home to the second-largest Afghan community in the country, and WAW is the only culturally and linguistically competent organization able to serve the specific needs of these victims. This grant from the Commonwealth Attorney's Office will help us provide emergency housing, transportation, and other essential services to victims of domestic violence that often face challenges due to cultural and linguistic barriers."

Cristina Schoendorf, Senior Director of United Community's Progreso Literacy & Citizenship Center: "United Community serves the most diverse area in all of Virginia, the Hybla Valley community. We're grateful for Commonwealth Attorney Steve Descano's continued support, which will enable us to host workshops to inform immigrant domestic violence survivors and community organizations about legal protections available through the Violence Against Women Act. It will also support the efforts of Progreso's Immigration Attorney to provide legal assistance to survivors."

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