

**“We stand against violence in all its guises including physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, emotional and economic abuse.”**

– *The Rev. Aubra Love, Founder and Director,  
The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute*



Dear Friend:

We have reached the 21st century, but we are still in the Dark Ages when it comes to the subject of violence against women. Consider:

- Every 15 seconds in the United States, a woman is beaten.
- Every two minutes, somewhere in our nation, a woman or a child is sexually assaulted.
- The majority of sexual and domestic assaults are never reported to the police – denying women a basic underpinning of human dignity and existence by keeping violence against women invisible.

Because an intimate partner is often the abuser and women fear for their safety, a striking four-fifths of all rapes, three quarters of all physical assaults, and one-half of all stalkings perpetrated against women are not reported, according to a study for the National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control.

Worse, under the current legal system women reporting attacks may face charges of failing to protect their children from witnessing the violence – leading to the further punishment of losing custody. Other victims are forced to flee their communities to protect themselves and their children.

This is a shameful indictment of how society permits women to be treated. Thanks to your strong support, the Ms. Foundation for Women is an effective voice in a growing national movement to end violence against women and girls through prevention.

## Preventing violence: the key

While other organizations continue to support vital programs that assist victims of violence and strengthen the legal system, the Ms. Foundation's focus is on the next crucial step – preventing future violence against women. The only way to accomplish this will be to effect basic changes in societal attitudes.

To make this happen, we will need your help.

*(continued)*

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Our record of addressing the violence issue is strong. The Ms. Foundation is the only national foundation dedicated to building a grassroots movement to end violence against women through prevention. We were the first national foundation to support a battered women's shelter, and the first in the funding community to speak publicly about the taboo of incest.

Through its Safety Initiative, the Ms. Foundation for Women supports organizations that are making major contributions to preventing violence against women. By supporting these organizations, the Ms. Foundation involves new people, proposes new solutions, and does the hard work of changing public consciousness from the ground up.

With their efforts – and your continued support – we believe it is possible to create an American society that shuns violence against women, one that can become a model for the rest of the world.

Violence is a top priority for the Ms. Foundation because it is of such crucial importance to women. Our on-line “Quick Poll” ([www.ms.foundation.org](http://www.ms.foundation.org)), for instance, asks visitors to rate equal pay, reproductive choice, or violence as their number one concern. Violence consistently ranks first. A survey by the Center for the Advancement of Women also ranks violence against women as a top concern.

The Ms. Foundation Safety Initiative currently supports 18 organizations that fight violence – groups such as The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute (BCDVI).

## Working with the religious community to prevent violence

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, BCDVI was established in 1998 as a non-profit organization to train clergy in practical ways to prevent domestic violence. With support from the Ms. Foundation, this project helps raise awareness through workshops, training sessions, public events and meetings among African-American congregations nationwide.

“To ignore the mistreatment of someone teaches others in the family, especially children, that they cannot count on the protection and caring of their closest relationships,” says BCDVI's founder and director, Rev. Aubra Love. “We believe in the Church's mission to improve the quality of life and recognize the linkages of violence to all social problems in the history of black communities.”

BCDVI focuses on establishing collaborative relationships between faith communities and domestic violence agencies, and works with clergy to address domestic violence through their ministries. Our grant is helping BCDVI train clergy from across the country to develop culturally appropriate responses to domestic violence within their congregations.

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The Institute's educational, spiritual and technical support, as well as its programs for advocacy and leadership development, are opening doors in the faith community for important conversations about women's safety.

In addition to financial support, our Safety Initiative provides training, networking opportunities, and technical assistance – further strengthening community-based efforts to move beyond helping battered women to preventing the violence altogether. Our goals are to encourage communities to be accountable for domestic violence, to urge men and women to re-evaluate their roles in considering the problem of violence, and to continue our grassroots support of programs to prevent child sexual abuse.

## Men's anti-violence groups: a vital link

Because men's anti-violence groups are an important link in the strategy to end violence against women, we also work closely with these organizations to develop innovative models to help prevent domestic violence. For example, we support the Massachusetts-based Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse (GMADA), a grassroots, all-volunteer organization formed in 1996. GMADA's men march in an annual city parade to show support for ending violence against women, and work closely with local area women's groups to deepen awareness about domestic violence. They are creating ways for men to hold one another accountable and play active roles for ending men's violence against women in Gloucester.

Your support of the Ms. Foundation for Women moves us closer to ending the Dark Ages of violence against women, just one of the many ways your gift helps us change the way the world works. Please consider making a generous, tax-deductible gift to support the Ms. Foundation's programs today. Thank you for your strong support of the crucial issues that touch women's lives.

Sincerely,



Sara K. Gould  
President and Chief Executive Officer

P.S. By supporting Ms. Foundation programs such as its Safety Initiative, you are helping us set a path for the 21st century to ensure that women and girls can lead safe, healthy lives. Thank you again!