Celebrating Solutions Award
Nomination Form

Legal name of organization: Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative

Year established: 2002

Program nominated for award (if different): same

Year established: same

Address: 42 Charles Street, Suite A

City/State/ZIP code: Dorchester, MA 02122

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Brief description of organization: Close to Home's mission is to foster community-wide responsibility to prevent and reduce the impact of domestic and sexual violence. We are building and supporting networks of community residents and organizations in local neighborhoods that want to take action and address the problem of domestic violence together.

Geographical area served:
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Waltham, Massachusetts
- Los Angeles, California
- Trinity County, California

Is the organization tax-exempt under IRS 501 (c) (3) guidelines or a public agency/unit of government? Yes

Please check up to five descriptors that best apply to the program you are nominating:

- Shelter-based
- Counseling
- Heath care setting
- Dating violence
- School/youth violence
- Underserved population
- Faith-based
- Elder abuse
- Legal aid/assistance
- University setting
- Batterer treatment
- Prison-based
- Stalking
- Coalition/collaboration
__ Transitional housing
__ Technology/Internet service
__ Employment/training program
__ Victim relocation

__ Hotline service
__ Public awareness/education
__ Other...
As one of the goals of the Mary Byron Project is to disseminate information about cutting-edge programs and best practices, we wish to post exemplary Celebrating Solutions Award nominations on our website (www.marybyronproject.org). Those posted will include the organization’s website address, telephone number, and e-mail address. If you have concerns about this request, please address them to information@marybyronproject.org, prior to submitting a nomination.

By my signature on this letter, I grant the Mary Byron Project permission to use the contents of my nomination for the Celebrating Solutions Award in the manner and for the purposes set above. I further affirm that I am fully authorized to grant such permission to the Mary Byron Project.

Signature __________________________
Date [13/10]
1. Describe the mission of your organization in five sentences or less.
Close to Home’s mission is to foster community-wide responsibility to prevent and respond to domestic and sexual violence. We achieve this by working with local community members, policy makers, service providers, and other leaders in the domestic and sexual violence prevention and intervention field to
- Implement community mobilization strategies in local communities;
- Build and share knowledge with a community of practitioners; and
- Ensure broad adoption of policies and practices that support local community members in taking a leadership role to address domestic and sexual violence.
For nearly ten years, we have mobilized youth, residents, and organizations in the Dorchester section of Boston, Massachusetts. Based on our success, we are sharing our knowledge and approach with practitioners throughout the country.

2. Describe the most innovative aspects of the program you are submitting for consideration.
Close to Home is a pioneer in taking the proven strategies of successful community organizing practice and applying it to the pervasive and persistent problem of domestic and sexual violence. This application of a social change strategy is rarely used to combat domestic violence — and further, most current approaches are **primarily reactive rather than proactive and preventive**. Some of our major accomplishments include:
- Worked with over 160 youth and adult volunteer organizers and over 75 organizations;
- Engaged over 14,000 residents in Dorchester to identify strategies and challenges to involving the community in domestic and sexual violence prevention;
- Developed 3 bi-lingual public awareness campaigns (English / Vietnamese), a youth literary magazine, and 35 digital stories;
- Recognized by Governor Deval Patrick as a promising prevention practice (2007);
- Supported youth to design, fund and install a mural at the local transit station, backed by local business and government (2008);
- Received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Jane’s Trust and Massachusetts DPH to begin national expansion and develop evaluation process (2009);
- Selected by the California Department of Public Health to train two CA communities: Los Angeles and Trinity County (2010)

**Close to Home’s Innovation: Using Community Strengths to Change Social Norms**
Community mobilization engages all community members — youth, adults, seniors, civic groups, businesses, service providers, and governmental and non-governmental systems — to address root causes of domestic and sexual violence and to foster personal and collective responsibility. It is a comprehensive and systematic approach to supporting changes in social norms, including attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors for individuals, their social networks, and the broader community. Enduring solutions emerge because they reflect the community’s needs and utilize community strengths.

Nationally, community mobilization has been used successfully to reduce drinking and driving and the spread of HIV/AIDS—both considered major public health issues. In both cases, community members began speaking about both the issues and possible solutions with their family, friends, and neighbors and established a sense of personal and collective responsibility. Today, the concept of a “designated driver” and conversations about HIV/AIDS prevention are infused throughout society. Community mobilization can likewise be used to address domestic and sexual violence.
First, community mobilization helps expand the current response system by extending the network of people reaching out to those affected by violence. Community members – family, friends or neighbors – are often the first to know when domestic or sexual violence is happening. Community mobilization provides an opportunity to engage community members in prevention approaches. Community members have the ability to increase daily conversation about the problem, raise public awareness, and make it possible to change the attitudes and behaviors in the community that enable violence to continue. In doing so, community members can take collective responsibility for preventing violence before it occurs, thus shifting sole responsibility away from crisis-oriented service providers and affected individuals. Finally, community mobilization around domestic and sexual violence creates solutions and impact that can be sustained over the long term because solutions integrate both prevention and intervention.

Close to Home believes that we can achieve our mission by connecting our hands-on experience in local communities to field-level dialogue about the future direction of domestic and sexual violence program practice and policy, and the allocation of resources. To that end, we pursue four integrated strategies to scale our impact. Close to Home focuses on community building (working with local communities) and field building (working with state, national and international decision-makers and influencers) through Practice, Train & Support, Research & Thought Leadership, and Policy & Advocacy.

The “Practice” strategy emphasizes both Close to Home’s commitment to ensuring the sustainability and quality of our original site at Dorchester – our “innovation incubator” – and to advancing the field through ongoing learning and implementation. Through “Train & Support,” we are focusing our energies on providing tools, training, and technical support to spread our approach through existing organizations. Within our “Research & Thought Leadership” strategy, Close to Home is raising the profile of community mobilization as an effective and critical approach to addressing domestic and sexual violence. The “Policy & Advocacy” strategy informs the development of state and federal policies, drawing upon the experiences of our network of communities and partnering organizations in the field.

3. Describe your program’s implementation. What barriers did your organization have to overcome? How did you marshal the necessary resources for implementation?

Close to Home’s community mobilization process puts our core principles into action. Our practice goals are to: 1) Build a strong, active network of community members and organizations committed to fostering community-wide responsibility for domestic and sexual violence; 2) Develop local community leadership to identify solutions and take action; 3) Intervene where domestic and sexual violence is already present; and 4) Transform environmental factors and social norms to prevent domestic and sexual violence.

Assess Community: Close to Home and community members engage in a process of inquiry and research to understand the local context, learn about the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence and identify community talents, resources, and assets to mobilize for prevention. Activities include: Community Mapping: Map local terrain, when and where people regularly gather; Observation: Direct observations to understand environment; Surveys: Collect information about community knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors; and Interviews: In-depth conversations with community members.

Start Conversations: Community members convene friends, neighbors, and colleagues for discussions to raise awareness, foster critical thinking and dialogue, identify solutions, and recruit volunteers. Activities include: Kitchen Table Conversations: Gatherings of 6–10 residents; Community Presentations: Discussions at community meetings; and Digital Stories: Multi-media videos created to catalyze discussion.
Build Skills: Close to Home facilitates training and team building to support skill and leadership development in violence prevention. Activities include: Prevention Training: Knowledge and skill building on root causes of violence and preventive solutions, e.g., gender, dynamics of power and oppression, healthy relationships; What to Do, What to Say Training: Skill building for families, friends, and neighbors of those affected by violence; Project-Based Training: Skill building for projects, e.g., improvisational theater, social marketing, community organizing; and Project Teams: Volunteers develop prevention projects.

Take Action: Close to Home’s network develops domestic and sexual violence prevention projects to implement in the community (defined by geography, age, or identity), including: Social Marketing Campaigns: elements include posters, viral tools, Web sites, etc.; Events: Participating in community and cultural events, drawing attention to the community’s role in addressing domestic and sexual violence; Intervention Projects: Community-led initiatives to support those affected by violence, e.g., Community Safety Network; and Arts Projects: Community mural, literary magazine creation.

Close to Home has indeed overcome significant barriers since its inception, and our current practice reflects our commitment to reducing or removing the barriers that may prevent others from working to end domestic and sexual violence. First, domestic and sexual violence are extremely difficult issues to talk about, both in private and in public. There was a tremendous amount of uncertainty and discomfort within our community as we initially began to raise the issues of domestic and sexual violence in public forums across the neighborhood. Close to Home works with individuals and groups to overcome the stigma and taboo of discussing this often shameful abuse by encouraging people to stand up against this issue and identify themselves in their community as a leader against violence. Through our “kitchen table conversations” Close to Home has created new, safe, public spaces for people to address their own abusive relationships and to speak out against this pervasive problem. Second, community organizing and a community-driven approach to solutions is a new perspective for the field of domestic and sexual violence, and so our work is often met with another layer of skepticism and resistance. Close to Home has worked hard with our network members and local leaders to prove the effectiveness of this model, and to create situations where community residents can credibly act as experts in designing tools for addressing and preventing domestic and sexual violence in the neighborhoods where they live. The final challenge was one common to every new organization: how to execute and continue to innovate on our programs in order to create social impact, while in parallel building a strong, sustainable organization to promote and expand the work into the future.

In each case, Close to Home has drawn on the strengths of our communities to help reduce or remove the barriers, consistent with our program design. We bring together, and ask for help from, individuals and leaders from all corners of our community, using their resources, their strengths, their networks and their persistence to address the problems at hand, whether they are problems related to social issue or organization building. Our community’s motivation to address domestic and sexual violence are undeniable. Close to Home succeeds because of the strengths that are present in nearly every community.

4. How do you know your program works? Please site two examples. Although anecdotal examples are helpful, at least 1 example must include quantitative data.

Close to Home’s innovative community mobilization model is having a deep impact on local community members as well as an impact on the broader field. As stated above, through our network of 160 trained volunteers in Dorchester, we are reaching over 14,000 community members annually with information about how to both respond to and prevent domestic and sexual violence. One of the profound challenges in measuring the impact of a community mobilization model is that it is a process that seeks to change behaviors, attitudes and values over the long-term. We firmly believe, and public health research indicates, that changing behaviors, attitudes and values while building community cohesion will bring down rates of domestic and sexual violence. We are seeing changes in community members both in terms of their willingness to be active bystanders when violence happens and in terms of transformational change community members are experiencing related to their goals and values in their own relationships. The engagement of our youth, residents and community members in Close to Home activities and the civic life of the community is evidence
of behavior change. Our examples below demonstrate the depth and breath of Close to Home’s impact.

**Example Anecdotal Evidence: Corina’s Story**

Corina’s (at left, with her neighbor Phyllis) involvement in Close to Home started with a kitchen table conversation she hosted for her neighbors. The meeting evolved into the King Street Group, Close to Home’s first resident project team. The King Street Group provides a safe space where people can talk about their direct and indirect experiences with domestic and sexual violence. Reflecting on their experiences, the group members identified ways to engage their neighbors in prevention activities, including block parties, knitting groups, and surveys.

Eventually, they developed a set of guidelines for community members to use to reach out to family, friends, and neighbors experiencing domestic and sexual violence. In addition, some members provided shelter and ongoing support for friends and family members until they chose to access services. Others who were concerned about their neighbors reached out and offered to listen. Corina continues to engage other Dorchester residents in knitting and discussion groups, has planned two community yard sales, and participates in the development of Close to Home’s local communications and public awareness activities. In her digital story, Corina reflects on her role as a neighbor, *What do we do as neighbors? We get up and go in our houses, close the door like nothing has happened. Domestic violence is close to home. Let each of us do our part to help stop it. How? By caring, by listening, by joining together as neighbors. Learn how to open your door, not to close it.*

**Example Quantitative Evidence: 1000 Actions Campaign**

In our most recent “1000 Actions” public action campaign, local Dorchester residents challenged their community to take 1000 actions in 2010 towards building community and reducing domestic and sexual violence. Inspiring stories poured in, ranging from the simple - saying hello to a neighbor, attending a Close To Home event - to the deeply personal - an 18 year-old choosing not to get involved in a romantic relationship until she felt ready, a staff member connecting the meaning of Passover to the oppression of domestic violence. Over the course of the year, *nearly 2800 actions* were documented by our Close to Home network and shared across our community, directly changing individual behaviors and attitudes within our Dorchester neighborhoods.

Since inception, Close to Home has worked carefully to maintain effective evaluation practices, taking into account both qualitative and quantitative data to demonstrate the effectiveness of our unique approach to violence prevention. We consider two important dimensions in our evaluation: Process (*i.e.* understanding *what happens, how often, and who is involved*) and Impact (*understanding the change we create in communities*). Close to Home would be pleased to share all components of these evaluation systems.

**5. Who are your key partners? What are their roles?**

For each of the four pillars of our strategy, Close to Home intentionally develops a network of partners for maximum effectiveness. In our *Local Practice*, we work with traditional domestic and sexual violence actors (e.g. Boston Police Department, community-based domestic violence response agencies based at local healthcare centers, Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence) with neighborhood business (e.g. Fields Corner Main Streets), civic (e.g. Fields Corner Civic Association), community (e.g. Viet-Aid) and youth (e.g. Boston Public High Schools) organizations, and of course the individual residents and leaders themselves. When community members come forward in need immediate response to a domestic violence incident, we refer them to trusted partners at the appropriate local response services and agencies.

Through our *Train & Support* strategy, we have received funding by Jane’s Trust, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide training and technical assistance to additional violence prevention organizations across Massachusetts. In piloting our programs in
California we are working in collaboration with the Violence Prevention unit of the Department of Public Health. Currently our local partners are: REACH Beyond Domestic Violence (Waltham, MA), Peace Over Violence (Los Angeles, CA), and Human Response Network (Trinity County, CA).

In our **Research & Thought Leadership** strategy, we are currently collaborating with UNC Chapel Hill to assess the effectiveness of our program replication across five pilot sites. We anticipate sharing a report with RWJ Foundation and our community of practitioners in spring 2011.

Through our **Policy & Advocacy strategy**, we have partners at both the state and federal levels. In Massachusetts we work closely with our state and local representatives, and collaborate with other domestic and sexual violence prevention organizations that receive state funding, in order to advocate for greater resources for all domestic and sexual violence prevention programs. In addition, our Executive Director participates in the Governor’s Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence. At the national level, we are currently participating, both as an interviewee of a reviewer, in the CDC’s work on a community engagement toolkit based on the CDC’s DELTA work.

6. **Could/should your program be replicated in other areas of the country? Why?**

As you know, domestic and sexual violence are present in all communities, regardless of geography, income level, urban or rural, ethnicity or race. Close to Home firmly believes that all communities are capable of addressing and preventing domestic and sexual violence. We also believe that there is a growing hunger among individuals, service providers and government agencies for a new approach to domestic and sexual violence:

- Community members want to know what they can do to prevent and respond to domestic and sexual violence
- Service providers are looking for new ways to engage community members in playing a role as part of the response and in prevention
- Recognizing that the need far outstrips available resources, governments are seeking new solutions that leverage community assets and are putting an increased emphasis on prevention

Close to Home is one of only a few organizations in the United States with: 1) experience applying community organizing processes to domestic and sexual violence; 2) an exclusive focus on applying community mobilization to these issues; 3) a community-driven model that has been developed and tested over eight years; and 4) demonstrated success in engaging a broad base of constituents to take action. At the same time, Close to Home is committed to leveraging the strengths of existing community-based organizations and state-level intermediaries, rather than duplicating efforts or creating new organizations operating in parallel, which makes our approach efficient, cost-effective and replicable even in these trying economic times.

As we have shared at earlier points in this application, Close to Home has begun test-piloting replication of its program in five new communities over the last three years. Three of these pilot programs are still in operation today. To support future replication at the organizational level, we are currently conducting research on our experiences across the five sites, in order to identify the critical elements for success and to reduce the barriers and challenges that other programs will face in adopting Close to Home’s approach and practices. In parallel, we also believe it is necessary to influence the broader field of domestic and sexual violence, so that more resources and support are available to organizations seeking to engage their communities in prevention and response work. Our four pillar strategy outlined earlier is a direct result of our desire to create changes for individuals and communities across the United States.

7. **Does your agency have a workplace policy that addresses domestic violence?** Yes (enclosed).

8. **Has the agency and / or nominated program received VAWA funding?** Indirectly. Close to Home has never received funds directly from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). However, we have received funds through a sub-contract from the Boston Police Department (BPD). The BPD was a recipient of an OVW grant as part of the Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative (JOD) in 2002-2005.
Domestic Violence Policy

Close to Home is committed to the health and safety of its employees. The purpose of our Domestic Violence policy is to provide support, when appropriate, to employees experiencing domestic violence; give guidance to management on addressing the occurrence of domestic violence and its effects on the workplace; and to create a safer work environment.

The perpetration of domestic violence that affects the workplace, as described in this policy, negatively impacts Close to Home, its employees, clients and operations. Measurable costs to Close to Home include absenteeism and reduced productivity of not only victims and perpetrators, but also co-workers. What is more difficult to measure, but equally important, is the potential danger to employees and others that may arise when the perpetration of domestic violence that affects the workplace occurs. Close to Home is committed to maintaining a workplace where acts of domestic violence that affect the workplace are neither tolerated nor excused.

A. Acts of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace

“Acts of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace” includes violent acts (whether occurring within or outside the workplace) between family or household members, or between persons involved in a substantive dating relationship, and that Close to Home, in its sole discretion and judgment, determines affects its workplace. Such conduct includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Any act or threat of an act of physical aggression that causes physical harm to any other person (regardless of gender);
- Any statement or action that reasonably could be perceived as demonstrating an intent to cause physical or serious emotional harm to another (regardless of gender);
- Intimidation or verbal harassment;
- Disorderly conduct;
- Display or discussion of weapons;
- Threats of suicide;
- Homicide, assault and battery, or rape;
- Stalking;
- Enlisting, coercing or asking others to do any of the above actions;
- Aiding or abetting others in doing any of the above actions.
B. Peretration of Acts of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace

Close to Home considers the perpetration of Acts of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace by an employee to constitute, at a minimum, intolerable, unacceptable conduct and a material breach of any duty such person owes Close to Home. As such, Close to Home will take seriously any reports of such acts as defined in this policy. This policy, however, does not create any legal duty or obligation on the part of Close to Home to respond to, investigate or address any such allegations in any particular manner.

Close to Home encourages any person who perceives that an employee is perpetrating or has perpetrated Acts of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace to report promptly such conduct to the Executive Director. Close to Home will not tolerate any retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports an incident of An Act of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace or who cooperates in the review thereof. Close to Home will use reasonable efforts to protect the confidentiality of such individuals reporting or cooperating, but it cannot guarantee confidentiality in all cases.

Upon learning of an incident of an Act of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace, Close to Home may review the reported conduct, which may include an interview with the alleged perpetrator. The scope of the investigation may include an inquiry as to whether the alleged perpetrator has used Close to Home resources such as office supplies, telephones, fax machines, mail, e-mail, access to the Internet, voice mail or other forms of electronic communication in the perpetration of alleged conduct prohibited by this policy.

If Close to Home concludes that an employee has violated this policy by perpetrating Acts of Domestic Violence Affecting the Workplace, Close to Home may respond by:

- Encouraging the employee to seek help with a certified intervention program; and/or
- Taking any other action Close to Home determines may be appropriate, including imposing disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal.

C. Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence

An employee who is a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence may take up to three weeks of unpaid leave per year to get medical attention for their injuries, to get services from a domestic violence shelter or rape crisis center, to get psychological counseling related to the domestic violence or sexual assault, and to try to ensure their safety, such as by temporarily or permanently relocating. Close to Home’s Executive Director must receive advance notice of an employee’s need for time off under this policy. If advance notice is not possible, Close to Home may require certification, such as a police report or court order relating to the sexual assault or domestic violence.

This leave is unpaid, however, an employee may use accrued vacation or personal/sick leave for the period of the absence.
General Questions

4a) What is the approximate number of individuals served annually by the applicant or the nominee?

Close to Home has a volunteer network of approximately 160 adults and youth in Dorchester, MA, that actively participate in organizing activities, community events and trainings. In addition, we have a dedicated Youth Team (10 - 15 youth depending on time of year) which meets daily during the summer and school year. The volunteer network and the Youth Team are the groups most strongly impacted by Close to Home’s messages of domestic violence prevention through the individual transformation they experience as part of their work with us.

In addition, the organizing, social marketing, and individual projects that our volunteers and our Youth Team create reach thousands more here in our Dorchester neighborhood. Our goal is to build community here in Dorchester, and to reach as many individuals as possible with our messages on domestic violence prevention. We believe that our events, marketing campaigns and activities reach approximately 14,000 residents within the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston.

Within the last 2 years, Close to Home has also worked with several other communities in Massachusetts and California to support them in using Close to Home’s community-driven approach to domestic violence prevention in their own communities. Although we don’t track the impact of programs outside of our organization, this further expands the influence that our work and our values are having within the U.S.

4b) How many paid staff and volunteers are used to administer the nominated program?

Close to Home currently has 3 full-time staff and 2 part-time staff members. This fall we intend to hire 2 additional organizers, and will have a staff of six: 4 full-time, 2 part-time.

In addition, our Youth Team members receive stipends for their after-school or summer work with Close to Home. Stipends are funded in part by the Boston Youth Fund, and in part by Close to Home. This summer we have 10 paid Youth Team members, and expect to have 10 - 12 Youth Team members during the 2011-2012 school year.

Our volunteer network of support, including local Dorchester adults and volunteer youth, includes roughly 160 volunteers. The number of volunteers active at any point in time varies depending on what activities or social marketing campaigns are under way. Generally we have a committed group of roughly 20 volunteers that support our work on a weekly basis, but can access a much larger group of volunteers for specific events.
4c) Are there past awards, accolades, and grants furnished upon the applicant or nominee that would further exemplify its success in combating domestic violence?

Close to Home has received a number of important awards in its 10-year history. Close to Home has been distinctly and consistently recognized as an innovator in the arena of domestic violence for its recognition of the importance of including all community members in the prevention of domestic and sexual violence:

- Social Innovation Forum Finalist (Boston, 2004)
- Grinnell Young Social Innovator Award Finalist (US, 2011)
- NoVo Foundation Move to End Violence first cohort member (US, 2011)

Close to Home has also received important recognition from the Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick (2007), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (2009) and the California Department of Public Health (2010). Both states have made important commitments to spreading promising domestic and sexual violence prevention practices to other organizations, programs and communities across their state. It has been with their support that Close to Home has been able to provide training and technical support to five additional communities over the last 2 years, three of whom are still in operation today. As one of the few organizations practicing community-based, community-driven prevention to domestic and sexual violence, Close to Home also receives calls every week from organizations and associations looking to learn more about our values and approach. Aimee Thompson, Close to Home’s founder and Executive Director, delivered the keynote address at the Texas Council to end Family Violence’s “Make It Real” conference in May 2011, and at the California DPH “Ending Violence Against Women and Teen Dating Violence” conference in June 2011. Our constant challenge is how to support as many colleagues as possible, given our limited budget and small staff.

4d) If funding were not an issue, what (if any) changes or additions would you make to your program in the future? What are the long term goals for your program? We are interested in hearing both your practical goals in addition to any lofty dreams you might have for the future.

Our first, most practical goal is to fully staff our local program team in Dorchester so that our work in this community can continue in a robust and sustainable way. As mentioned earlier we are in the process of hiring two additional organizers, which we believe will go a significant way in accomplishing this goal. Our vision for our local work is that our volunteers and community members here in Dorchester fully embrace the vision of a “Beloved Community”, creating public spaces and nurturing relationships that replace and crowd out the negative emotions and pain caused by domestic and sexual violence. Pain, shame, anger, and fear are replaced by love, nurturing, laughter, health and joy in the day-to-day activities and interactions of our families, friends and neighbors. In turn Dorchester neighbors and Close to Home staff would support other area communities in creating the same change, influencing the Boston Public School system in its support of young adults, and influencing the philanthropic community to support the critical work of
domestic and sexual violence prevention, not just crisis response for the most severe cases.

Our national vision is even more ambitious. We would like to create a “Close to Home National Resource Center” in order to support all communities in taking action to address and prevent domestic and sexual violence. The center would offer trainings, create peer learning opportunities for neighbors and practitioners alike, and create a library or clearing house for ideas, tools, and knowledge - all focused on supporting individual communities as they design their own solutions and projects for ending domestic and sexual violence across their social and family networks.

Questions Specific to Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative
1) One of the stages of your program is “Assess Community,” which is accomplished partially through surveys and interviews. Can you provide more information about how this assessment is done? What methods do you use to reach community members? How are candidates for interviews chosen?

Assessment is the first step in Close to Home’s process to engage and mobilize communities in responding to and preventing domestic and sexual violence. We believe it is critical to have a deep understanding of the communities we seek to engage in order to foster effective work together and ultimately, create sustainable social change on the issues of domestic and sexual violence. The goal of the Community Assessment process is to gather any and all information about your community, and how community life functions that will help you achieve your goal to involve residents, leaders, and institutions in responding to and preventing domestic and sexual violence. A critical element of this process of learning is that it is done in partnership with community members, so that the questions are posed by members of the community themselves (rather than service providers posing the questions) and answered through a structured process of information gathering and analysis. This process is called participatory research.

Participatory assessment provides a self-conscious way for community members to take effective action towards improving conditions by providing tools and structures for:
  o Observing and defining phenomena in a particular community context
  o Analyzing and interpreting information to find a deeper meaning for how and why things work in a certain way
  o Engaging in critical thinking about the ways things are, and the way things can be based on a shared vision within our communities
  o Using learning to develop strategies for collective solutions and organizing that supports change within individuals, social networks, and the broader community.

By putting assessment in the hands of the “traditionally studied”, the subjects become the researchers. Those holding knowledge contribute through active participation in the process of research and learning, rather than as passive subjects. Participatory research is a profoundly educational process. It is not a didactic “one way process” but an interactive bi-directional learning partnership between the community researcher, the
issue and the community. This results in the generation of living knowledge that gets translated into action.

Often we choose a range of surveying tools to help us accomplish these goals, recognizing that individuals have different levels of comfort and access to items like computers, internet service, or community centers and services. In Dorchester we have used on-the-street surveys, where we ask neighbors and passersby for a few minutes to verbally answer a set of questions. We also hand out surveys at local community meetings for neighbors to complete in written form. At the local senior center or for other local youth groups, we may schedule specific times to come to their facilities or offices to conduct interviews, individually or in groups. In a more creative vein, last year our Youth Team created an ethnographic mapping of the neighborhood using photographic images to designed to reflect the community’s varied gathering places and local eyesores in order to engage residents about what they love and what they want to change about their neighborhood, and how visually demonstrate the ties to domestic and sexual violence prevention. This summer one of our organizing staff has set up a roving “lemonade stand” where he offers juice to passersby in exchange for a quick video interview about their feelings on neighborhood violence and violence in the home. For people already connected to Close to Home, email or Facebook surveys are also a quick and easy way to hear individual voices and track data.

We also consider “Assessment” an ongoing process in the neighborhood, given that individuals and communities are in a constant state of change. Each new survey or outreach project, big or small, is a new opportunity to open up conversations about domestic and sexual violence, and to share those conversations across all corners of the community.

Our goal is to be as inclusive as possible in gathering information because we believe that ALL members of the community must be included in prevention work, given the prevalence of the problem. Often when we share back the data (qualitative and quantitative) that we have collected, the reaction we get is “I didn’t know there was so much going on in our neighborhood.”

2) How are residents chosen to participate in Kitchen Table Conversations? Are “Community Gatherings” integrated into other town events (such as town meetings), or does Close to Home organize their own events?

Kitchen Table conversations are meant to create a unique safe space for neighbors to discuss domestic and sexual violence prevention and the roles that they can play. In our experience, the most effective structure for a Kitchen Table conversation is for a Close to Home volunteer, or simply an interested community member, to host a discussion at their house inviting their own friends, families, co-workers and neighbors. Often a Close to Home staff member or long-time volunteer helps support and facilitate the discussion, but the goal is for the community members to generate the ideas, questions and concerns on their own. Community members and volunteers are able to put their leadership skills to work right away in bringing together a group of people they know to have the conversations. Two recent examples are a housing co-op member inviting her housemates
to a discussion in their own living room, and a local neighbor inviting all of the families on his street. In each case there was a common connection or bond to create a basis for relationship building and feelings of safety in discussing such sensitive issues.

Apart from Kitchen Table conversations, Close to Home does host more general community events, often in partnership with other local community organizations. Our belief is that the more neighbors and community members connect, get to know each other, and develop relationships the stronger our individual and collective ability becomes to offer and ask for help when faced with domestic and sexual violence situations. One of our most popular events of the last 2 years is a summer neighborhood block party attended by roughly 200 local families and organized by Close to Home staff and volunteers. The idea behind the block party is simply to have families and neighbors have fun together, rather than only focusing on the pain of domestic and sexual violence. Throughout the year we host holiday parties, as well as events designed around specific social marketing campaign messages or goals. This year’s social marketing campaign “Know Your Neighbor” kicked off in February with a community party with food, music, games, and also facilitated small table discussions for about 80 people on the connections between domestic violence and street violence. Part of our vision is creating a world where music, food, laughter, fun and community replace the isolation, shame and pain of domestic and sexual violence. Community events help create that vision in a tangible way, while encouraging violence prevention at the same time.

3) Do you have statistics on the viewership of digital stories? Website traffic?

According to our youtube page, our digital stories have been viewed about 5000 times. We have also distributed at least 200 DVD compilations of our digital stories over the past year. These have been given to individual attendees at our events, shared with businesses and organizations and shared with the Department of Youth Services. In the fall of 2010 we hosted three digital story showcases where members of the public were invited to view a selection of stories and approximately 50 community members participated in conversations about what communities can do to prevent domestic and sexual violence. We also use the digital stories in our trainings.

At this time we do not have the technology infrastructure (staff or technology) to effectively track the traffic to our website. Refreshing our website and integrating it more effectively into our social marketing campaigns (including tracking) is on our list of projects for FY2012.

4) Do you offer training sessions geared towards specific groups, such as young people or members of different cultural groups? Is there discussion of domestic violence in same-sex relationships? Are all meetings open to the public?

Our training sessions that take place in Close to Home’s office space are open to the public and advertised widely. We try to be as inclusive as possible, but also recognize that there are times where individuals may feel safer in groups of people like themselves.
There is a balance that we try to strike in serving the unique needs of sub-groups within our community, but also in trying to create an integrated community that is accepting of differences.

We do target trainings specifically to young people and our Youth Team delivers trainings to their peers in schools, after school programs and at conferences state-wide. For the past four years, we have also had a staff organizer dedicated to working within the local Vietnamese community, which is a significant sub-group in our Dorchester neighborhood. Our Vietnamese-specific programming offers a Vietnamese language support group, materials in Vietnamese (including neighborhood marketing campaigns) and events specific to the Vietnamese community (e.g. annual Tet celebration).

When discussing the dynamics of domestic, sexual, and teen dating violence we address various myths including that it only occurs in traditional heterosexual relationships. We discuss that domestic violence takes place in same-sex relationships and also that often the person being abused may be male or the abuser might be female or gender queer. Identifying gender norms and gender myths is an important element in changing the attitudes and behaviors that allow domestic and sexual violence to continue.

5) How do volunteers become qualified to lead or present?

Volunteers become qualified to lead through participating in our Community Organizer training and / or attending a significant number of meetings and events and being recommended by other staff or volunteers.

6) “Process” and “Impact” are two elements of your program; you write, “Close to Home would be pleased to share all components of these evaluation systems.” We would be interested to learn more about your evaluation systems; have you seen evidence of growing numbers of people participating in your programs? Do you have any idea if local services have seen increased numbers of people willing to seek support?

Measuring our effectiveness has been a constant challenge for Close to Home. Domestic and sexual violence prevention is a long-term process, and measuring the prevention of anything is always a challenge. From Close to Home’s earliest days, evaluation and data-driven decision-making has been an important principle of the organization. Over the years we have tried several different approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of our programs and or organization, with varying degrees of success. At present, we are in the process of designing and implementing a new outcomes assessment and tracking process, with the intention of implementing it beginning this fall. Below is a summary of our most recent evaluation systems work and learnings.

In 2008, with the help of Root Cause consulting, Close to Home implemented an activity tracking system designed to quantitatively track the number of events, volunteers, community members (including demographics) touched by Close to Home. As we used the system from 2008 – 2010, we found ourselves focusing overly on the numbers and
technical tracking definitions, and not effectively tracking the quality of the interactions or changes in attitudes or behaviors. While the tracking system did show increases in the size of our network, we’ve since scaled back in our use of the quantitative system, focusing on the numbers that we have the most confidence in.

In 2009, with assistance from Boston University, we designed a set of surveys for volunteers to understand the changes in individual attitudes and behaviors over time. While well intentioned, the implementation of the survey again proved unwieldy and a poor fit with our values about a strength-based approach to asset-building. The survey was too long, the vocabulary not reflective of our work, and required internet access in order to be completed (meaning it could only be filled out in our offices). Again, we have put aside the evaluation tool, but not the belief that it is necessary to evaluate short-term and longer-term outcomes of our organizing work.

The third significant piece of evaluation work we’ve had done was a study in 2010 of the three Massachusetts organizations to try replicating Close to Home’s methods and approach. This piece of work is forming the cornerstone of our current discussions with the Massachusetts DPH in developing our next round of program dissemination in Massachusetts. An outline of the key themes of the research (in draft form) is included with the packet.

7) Provide more information about your curriculum. Is the primary focus on victims’ issues and services, or do presentations include information on accountability for batterers?

Our general curriculum for all volunteers and community members focuses on:

- Understanding the need for community involvement in domestic and sexual violence prevention,
- Understanding the basic dynamics of domestic violence including root causes, warning signs, myths and facts etc.
- Discussion about what people can do to support someone who is experiencing it and what we can do to prevent it through addressing social norms that tolerate it.

This curriculum is also the core of what is shared with youth and community groups outside of the Close to Home network here in Dorchester. Volunteers and staff consistently refine and improve the training content and delivery based on feedback from participants and their own judgment about what works and what doesn’t.

In addition to the core curriculum, we do offer training sessions to develop and deepen specific skills in order for our Youth Team and volunteer members to be more effective in their project work. If the needed expertise is not already “in-house” in the Close to Home network, we bring in outside trainers to effectively deliver the material and concepts. Recent examples include:

- Teen Dating Violence “101”
- Community Organizing “101”
- Public speaking and communications
- Project specific skill development: silk screening, video technology, survey writing, improvisational theater

Training is delivered on an “as needed” basis. For the Youth Team, which follows a predictable school year calendar, trainings are scheduled in a more structured, repeatable way. Community volunteers receive training based on the current needs of All volunteers and Youth Team members receive significant “hands-on” experience in developing their organizing, leadership and project management skills, e.g.: asking local businesses to support our events, speaking to elected officials about the issues of teen dating violence, delivering training to peers and neighbors, analyzing and communicating assessment data.

8) In your application you state that you are collaborating with UNC Chapel Hill to assess the effectiveness of your program replication across five pilot sites. Please provide a copy of the report if it has been completed.

The final report has not been completed, and we have not yet seen a copy of it. We will be pleased to send you a copy just as soon as it is available!
### Projected Budgets FY 2010 and FY 2011

**Note:** Fiscal year is October 1 - September 30

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<th>Income</th>
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**Net Income**

$3,863  $1,479
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P.O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: MAY 23 2007

CLOSE TO HOME DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION INITIATIVE INC
42 CHARLES ST
DORCHESTER, MA 02122

Employer Identification Number:
30-0082690

DNL:
1705309080007

Contact Person:
RICHARD COMBS

Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 822-5500

Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)

ID# 31024

Dear Applicant:

Our letter dated December 2002, stated you would be exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and you would be treated as a public charity, rather than as a private foundation, during an advance ruling period.

Based on the information you submitted, you are classified as a public charity under the Code section listed in the heading of this letter. Since your exempt status was not under consideration, you continue to be classified as an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

Publication 557, Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization, provides detailed information about your rights and responsibilities as an exempt organization. You may request a copy by calling the toll-free number for forms, (800) 829-3676. Information is also available on our Internet Web Site at www.irs.gov.

If you have general questions about exempt organizations, please call our toll-free number shown in the heading.

Please keep this letter in your permanent records.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Choi
Director, Exempt Organizations Rulings and Agreements

Letter 1050 (DO/CG)
July 29, 2011

Marcia Roth
Executive Director
Mary Byron Project
10401 Linn Station Road
Louisville, KY 40223

Dear Ms. Roth,

I am happy to be writing to you in support of Close to Home’s semi-finalist application for the Mary Byron Project's Celebrating Solutions Award. Close to Home is an important leader and innovator in the intersecting fields of domestic and sexual violence prevention, and community organizing, and an organization committed to sharing its approach and its learnings with colleagues all over the country.

As Coordinator of the Domestic and Teen Dating Violence Prevention Project, I have had the chance to work with Close to Home for the last two years. In 2010, after an extensive nationwide search for domestic violence prevention models, we selected Close to Home, along with 2 other organizations, from a field of over 60 organizations to pilot their approach with two community-based domestic violence organizations in California. Since that time, Close to Home has worked with these two organizations, sharing tools, providing training and technical assistance in support of strengthening community mobilization efforts for teen dating violence prevention in each of the communities. Close to Home’s mentorship has had an important impact on those organizations, particularly in modeling approaches to build capacity for “community-driven” work. Internalizing the value of youth-led organizing on the issue of teen dating violence has been a transformative paradigm shift inside these organizations.

I fully support Close to Home’s application for the Mary Byron Project’s Celebrating Solutions Award. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 916-552-9846 or by email at Nancy.Bagnato@cdph.ca.gov if you have any questions about our collaboration with Close to Home. We are looking forward to a continued partnership with them in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bagnato, MPH, Coordinator
Domestic and Teen Dating Violence Prevention Project
Violence Prevention Unit
July 27, 2011

Marcia Roth  
Executive Director  
Mary Byron Project  
10401 Linn Station Road  
Louisville, KY 40223

Dear Ms. Roth,

We are writing to you in support of Close to Home’s semi-finalist application for the Mary Byron Project’s Celebrating Solutions Award. The NoVo Foundation has been a funder of Close to Home since 2010. We see Close to Home as pioneering an important community-driven approach to ending domestic and sexual violence, and believe that with its particular values and approach, the organization serves as a model for communities across the country. We also recognize the leadership it has already demonstrated in providing training and support to several communities in Massachusetts and California, in collaboration with each state’s Department of Public Health.

In 2010, the NoVo Foundation launched Move to End Violence, a 10-year program designed to strengthen the collective capacity of advocates and organizations working to end violence against women and girls in the United States. Aimee Thompson, founder and Executive Director of Close to Home, has been named to our first cohort of leaders – in recognition of her leadership to date on ending violence against girls and women, and her visionary approach to work in this area. She was selected after a rigorous and highly competitive application process, and joins a class of advocates who we believe will help shape and lead a collective movement to end violence against girls and women in the United States.

Within this cohort of 16 leaders we believe Close to Home represents a key perspective. In designing its violence prevention work, the organization seeks out and integrates local voices and leadership, which in turn helps build stronger communities. We look forward to Aimee’s colleagues in Move to End Violence learning more about the organization’s work, and potentially adapting its model towards their own organizing and advocacy work.

We also see strong alignment between the core values of Move to End Violence and Close to Home. Both our program and Close to Home emphasize the practice of building the Beloved Community, participant leadership, and storytelling. We see these same qualities as instrumental in building a movement to end violence against girls and women in the United States, and have been pleased to see Aimee highlight them in her recent speeches at the Texas Council to End Family Violence’s bi-annual conference (“Make it Real: Building Community Through Reflection,” May 2011) and the California Department of Public Health’s conference (“Ending Violence Against Women and Teen Dating Violence: a Forum for Primary Prevention Advocates,” June 2011).
We would be pleased to discuss either Close to Home, or the Move to End Violence program in greater detail with you. Please do not hesitate to contact either of us. Puja can be reached at 212-808-5400 or pdhawan@novofoundation.org, and Jackie can be reached at 202-587-2863 or jpayne@rabengroup.com.

Best regards,

Puja Dhawan  
Manager, Initiatives for Women and Girls  
NoVo Foundation

Jackie Payne  
Director  
Move to End Violence
Marcia Roth  
Executive Director  
Mary Byron Project  
10401 Linn Station Road  
Louisville, KY 40223  

Dear Ms. Roth,

For the second year in a row, I am delighted to write this letter of support for Close to Home’s semi-finalist application for the Mary Byron Project’s Celebrating Solutions Award. Close to Home is an innovative organization that is making important contributions to domestic violence prevention here in our neighborhood. Dorchester House and Close to Home have partnered since 2003 to ensure that victims affected by domestic violence receive support and to also promote the health and safety of the broader community through several public health, environmental and anti-violence partnership initiatives. Much of what I have to say about Close to Home is consistent with last year’s letter of support, but I did also want to update you on an important new community campaign that Close to Home is heading up here in Dorchester, the “Know Your Neighbor” campaign designed to create a safer community both in people’s homes, and on the street.

Dorchester House Multi-Service Center is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center providing primary and specialty care to a primarily low-income, very diverse, inner-city community. Originally formed as a settlement house in 1897, Dorchester House also provides a wide range of public health, social service and recreational programs including after-school, fiscal health, food pantry, and technology. In addition to medical care, we provide dental care, eye care, behavioral health, radiology, lab, and pharmacy. With more than 22,000 registered patients, we annually provide 110,000 patient visits.

Since 1996 Dorchester House has been a key collaborator in the Community Advocacy Program (CAP), a community based victim services program that places domestic violence advocates in health centers throughout Dorchester. Our domestic violence advocates work out of our Behavioral Health Department and provide safety planning, advocacy, support groups to those affected by domestic violence in the context of a health care setting. In addition, our advocates provide in house capacity building for Dorchester House staff so they are able to be responsive when a patient affected by domestic violence discloses this information.

CAP advocates have a strong referral relationship with Close to Home. When Close to Home identifies a victim that is in need of ongoing advocacy services, they link community members to CAP if that is the appropriate resource for them. Close to Home has provided cross training in prevention and community organizing to our advocates and other staff over the years. In
2010 our advocate that provides services to the Vietnamese community here in Fields Corner partnered with Close to Home's Vietnamese Community Organizer to offer the first Vietnamese language support group to the community. Domestic violence is a real issue in the Vietnamese community, and women are far more likely to open up to an advocate who shares their culture and speaks their language.

For several years, Dorchester House staff has participated actively in Close to Home's organizing work. Each year for the last five years, Close to Home and its network of volunteers have created a neighborhood social marketing campaign to educate our community about domestic and sexual violence, and to get people talking both about the issue and ways to prevent abuse. This year's campaign, "Know Your Neighbor", was designed in response to a series of shootings in the neighborhood in 2010. In listening to community members reactions, Close to Home helped highlight the connections between domestic and sexual abuse at home and street violence and crime out in community. As members of the community, we believe that by getting to know our neighbors and building person-to-person relationships we will make it more likely that people will ask for and receive help when they need it, look out for one another, and generally feel safer in the community, both at home and on the streets. Close to Home's staff and volunteers held a community-wide launch party for the campaign in February 2011 that combined food, music, and fun, with earnest, facilitated small group discussions about how neighbors feel about their community and what actions they believe they can take to reduce and prevent both street violence and domestic and sexual violence. We are looking forward to the continuation of the "Know Your Neighbor" campaign through the rest of 2011.

Dorchester House also partners with Close to Home through community and coalition building efforts through out the neighborhood. Along with several other community service and law enforcement organizations, we were founding member of Fields Corner Connect, a collaborative that worked to foster community safety through enhanced communication and referral as well as building community cohesion through community festivals and events. Dorchester House and Close to Home are also active organizational participants in the Fields Corner Civic Association, a neighborhood decision making body that meets monthly to discuss and problem solve around key community issues. Because of their ongoing participation in the Civic Association over the years, Close to Home has helped make domestic violence a more visible civic issue here in the community, drawing the connections between other issues that are important to the neighborhood, such as youth violence and civic participation.

Close to Home is a particularly vital resource to Fields Corner. First and foremost, they come to the issue of domestic violence with programs aimed at prevention. Through innovative methods of community building, through youth programs designed to reduce teen dating violence, through public awareness campaigns and through broad community outreach, Close to Home is raising the level of awareness of, and lowering the barriers to communication about, a very sensitive issue that most people would rather not address. From our perspective, Close to Home plays a vital public health role in working to reduce the level of domestic violence and improve the quality of life in our community.
If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ira Schlosser
Director of Planning and Community Affairs