



Domestic Violence Solutions
for santa barbara county
formerly Shelter Services for Women

September 13, 2007

Steven Faulstich
Housing Program Supervisor
City of Santa Barbara
P. O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Dear Steven:

I am writing to you about an issue that is of great importance to us at Domestic Violence Solutions (DVS). Our request is that the City of Santa Barbara consider forgiving the interest on our loan and converting it to a zero interest loan. I wonder if you could help expedite this request coming before the City Council.

In 1993, the City of Santa Barbara provided a loan with RDA Housing Funds to DVS (then, called Shelter Services for Women) in the amount of \$430,000. This loan made it possible for DVS to open a transitional housing program for battered women and their children. Since 1995, since we began operating Second Stage, we have served more than 250 women and more than 500 children. These individuals first went through our emergency shelter program and then entered the Second Stage Program. Through this partnership with the City of Santa Barbara, we have literally saved their lives. Without this longer term transitional housing program (with support services that focus on recovering from the violence and abuse in their lives and on building new lives free from violence), these victims of domestic violence would be forced to either be homeless or to return to an abusive relationship. The women in this program never cease to amaze us with their tenacity, courage, and dedication to meeting their goals. In the past three years, for example, here are their accomplishments:

- 82% of the women who completed Second Stage found affordable housing after leaving the program.
- 46% of the participants who did not have jobs when they entered the program, obtained employment by the time they completed the program.
- 50% of the participants attended school, workshops, and classes to increase their skills and potential for increased income.

In FY 04-05, Domestic Violence Solutions' Second Stage Program was the grateful recipient of a capital grant from the City of Santa Barbara in addition to the annual funding the program receives from the CDBG and Human Services funds. This capital grant gave a complete facelift to the building that is now at least 30 years old. Our Board and staff are very grateful for the wonderful improvements to the building, including new heaters, new windows, new paint, new flooring, new stairs (the old ones were not

up to code), a new roof, new landscaping and sprinkler system, and new paving. But, more importantly, the women and children in the program are feeling like they have a new lease on life. They feel that their surroundings now truly feel like home to them and they have a much greater sense of belonging and even a "pride of ownership."

Dare we make one more request from the City of Santa Barbara in the presence of so much to be grateful for? We respectfully ask that the interest on the loan for this building be forgiven and that the loan be converted to a zero interest loan. The accrued interest is 4.5% per annum and the principal and any accrued interest are due in October 2023. Currently, we are showing \$753,933 as a note payable to the City of Santa Barbara Redevelopment Agency. Our auditor has estimated that, at this rate, we will owe \$1,591,768 by October 2023.

If the City would do this for DVS, it would be a great help to us in two major ways. First of all, our auditor has advised us to put funds aside to pay off the note payable. Needless to say, DVS does not have the funds available. His recommendation appears each year in our audit. This brings us to the second main reason for our request. It will help us in our fundraising efforts so that potential donors do not see this kind of liability on our books. They want to be assured that their dollars will go directly to support the work of the agency and that the agency does not have a liability of this magnitude that it will need to pay off.

I hope that you will agree that the work we are doing with battered women and their children is an important community service and that our partnership with the City of Santa Barbara has served the City well since 1977 and will continue to serve it well far into the future.

Would you be so kind as to take our request to the City Council and let us know when it might be scheduled for their meeting so that I and some of our board members may attend? We would be most grateful.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Robertson
Executive Director

