



Growing Up With Domestic Violence



As a boy Aaron's father had terrorized the family. Although their dad was never physically violent towards the kids, Aaron and his siblings had spent nights cowering together, hiding from the sounds of their parents fighting, sounds that always ended with the echoes of blows landing, their mom crying, pleading, begging their dad to stop.

The silence that filled the home in the wake of the violence was almost worse than the mayhem. "My dad's rage filled the house," Aaron says. "It was everywhere and we all felt it, this tension of waiting for the next bad thing to happen."

Aaron left home as soon as he could and never looked back. He worked hard, building a life that had all the trappings of happiness and success. It took him years before he realized he had taken those childhood feelings along with him.

"It wasn't until my son was born that I realized how much my childhood was still impacting me. The feelings surfaced and just about overwhelmed me. I couldn't understand why I was so sad and angry at

a time when I should have been happier than ever before."

Our children are growing up in a violent world and survivors like Aaron are all around us. More than 60 percent of kids in the U.S. have been exposed to crime, abuse, and violence – many in their own homes.

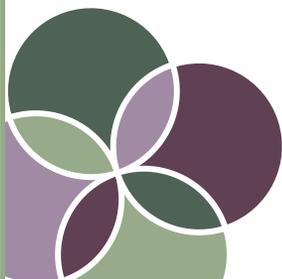
Research shows that repeated exposure to trauma and violence can impact children's brain function and structure, permanently impacting their cognitive, emotional and behavioral development. Without early intervention this developmental disruption can lead to behavioral and physical health problems, including depression and anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse. Without appropriate support these children are more likely to run away from home, engage in unhealthy sexual behaviors, and commit or be victims of crimes.

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When Aaron opened up to his partner about the feelings he was experiencing, telling her about the violence in his family for the first time, she

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From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

Shortly after I began working as a children's counselor in a domestic violence shelter more than 35 years ago, my mom, Barbara, asked to volunteer in the Shelter Children's Program. Having raised seven kids, Mom was uniquely qualified for the role. She also understood the hurt that children experience when their parent's pain ends in brokenness, having lived through her own parents' separation as a young child.

Mom passed away in January. So much of her character and essence has touched SPAN over the years. Mom embodied love. Not because it was easy or innate. But because she worked at it. Her life was about nurturing and caring for relationships. She did this with my dad, the man she loved and adored for 65 years, with her children and our families, and with her many friends. Mom loved people into being better versions of themselves.

This past year of COVID-19 isolation and separation, of political and social divisiveness, of injustice bearing down on the most vulnerable among us, has been nothing less than a call to act bravely, boldly, compassionately, and lovingly. I know this can sound trite and naive. But I believe it. When survivors tell us what they value most

about SPAN, it's not the referrals made or even the resources provided. It's the dignity and compassion they experienced. The love they felt. Our work at SPAN aspires to do what my mom spent a lifetime perfecting: to dedicate ourselves to each other's infinite possibilities.



While the loss of Mom came way too soon for all those who knew and loved her, in her passing we recommit ourselves to a dedication to love, to kindness, to being authentic, genuine, stretched humans striving to be better people and to make our world a better place. Mom understood how fragile and tender relationships and families can be; her legacy to us is to bring our higher selves – our better angels – into all that we are. I love you, Mom.

In peace,

Anne

Anne, Barbara's second oldest.



Honoring Barbara Tapp

We lost a member of the extended SPAN family in January when Barbara Jean Tapp, mother of SPAN's long-time Executive Director, Anne Tapp, passed away from complications of heart disease.

It seems important and appropriate to honor Mrs. Tapp, who we are going to call Barbara from here on, because that is what she would want. Not because she was a devoted supporter of SPAN who never missed a Chocolate Lovers' Fling; not because she was the boss' mom. Barbara merits mention and celebration for many reasons, but here we are focusing on her role as mom, the bedrock upon which her family was built, its emotional and moral core.

Barbara and Bob Tapp had seven kids, so Barbara had ample opportunity to hone her mothering skills. She could entertain, engage, wrangle, and was expert at deploying guilt to keep her brood in line. The economics of managing a household of nine made her an inventive cook and an early environmentalist, using and reusing long before it was cool. Barbara also inspired, returning to the world of paid employment once her kids were

old enough. Once all her children had finished high school, Barbara pursued her own academic passions, completing a BA from Regis University in 1991.

Her accomplishments are only part of the story. Barbara Tapp embodied grace. She was kind, compassionate and fiercely devoted to her family, her faith, and to an abiding belief in the power of love. Love, not merely as a feeling, but as a set of actions and commitments, constantly renewed and reaffirmed. Small in stature but great in heart and spirit, Barbara's life represented her commitment to love and she worked tirelessly to live that truth.

Because that is what moms do: choose love, act with love, day in and day out, despite the infinite distractions. And these moms are moms regardless of title, gender or family configuration – like Barbara Tapp we know them when we see them. At SPAN we celebrate the power of "Mom" and invite all of you to join us in building a world that supports and acts upon kindness, compassion and love.

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SPAN Provides Supply Boxes To Improve Survivors' Access to Food

It is hard to believe that it's almost been an entire year since our lives were flipped upside down by COVID. For many of us, our daily routines have significantly changed, we are missing human connection, and many of the things that once brought us joy are simply no longer allowed to happen. In times like these we have had to reconnect to the simpler things in life: cooking, board games, reading, etc.

For survivors of domestic violence, it hasn't been so straightforward. With the onset of the pandemic many of the low-income survivors working with SPAN's Transitional Services Program lost their jobs, literally overnight, and many people have spent the past year trying to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. Many of these survivors and their families are also at high risk for the worst COVID outcomes, lack reliable transportation and are in real danger of falling into isolation and instability.

As part of SPAN's major Shelter Rehab Project, SPAN's Emergency Shelter got a major kitchen overhaul, and SPAN's full-time Kitchen Manager manages foodservice for residents. During the COVID crisis the Shelter's Kitchen Manager has also filled another critical need: organizing and packaging boxes filled with food and household supplies that are delivered to SPAN clients.

Since March 2020, SPAN staff have delivered an average of 25 supply boxes a week to survivors and their families, supporting more than 150 households in Boulder and Broomfield counties. "Due to everything that's going on with COVID, our clients are facing additional barriers when it comes to food access and security. Providing these food boxes to families is a way for survivors and their children to have one less thing on their shoulders," said Annika, the Shelter Kitchen Manager.

Living in a global pandemic is difficult enough, but imagine losing your job, trying to leave your abusive partner, fighting for custody of your children, AND worrying about your next meal. So, while those of us that are more fortunate complain about missing our favorite concert, or taking that fabulous vacation, think about these survivors and their children. SPAN is continuing to provide food deliveries, as well as rental assistance to keep people in stable housing. Whatever comes next, SPAN will still be here, thanks to the support of people like you. If you would like to help us do this work, visit www.safehousealliance.org and check out the SPAN Shelter Wishlist or make a donation.

SPAN's Development Director, Aparna Harris, appointed to Advisory Board of Directors at Boulder Chamber

SPAN is extremely excited to announce that our very own Director of Development, Aparna Harris, has been appointed to the Boulder Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Harris has been a longtime member of the Boulder Chamber and looks forward to building new relationships in the community and being a part of the leadership of such an outstanding organization. She recently completed the Leadership Fellows Program through the Community Foundation Serving Boulder County, and is poised to continue building her leadership role at SPAN and in the community. "I am so honored to have been chosen to serve on the Board for the Boulder Chamber. I look forward to working with and learning from some of our great community leaders," Harris said. "As we emerge from the long, difficult COVID times, it's important that SPAN's voice be a part of the conversation around building a stronger, more equitable Boulder. I am excited and proud to be a part of this work!"

Growing up ... continued

encouraged him to reach out to SPAN's Crisis & Information Hotline.

"That first call was very hard. I didn't know what I was even looking for, I just knew I needed help dealing with what had happened to me, to my family. The SPAN Crisis Hotline connected me with a support group for adult survivors of family violence and child abuse. My son is two now and I am still going to that support group, and I see myself changing in ways that make me really proud. I feel like I can help make a difference now, with how I raise my kids, how I live my life. SPAN helped make that happen."

SPAN

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

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Save the Date

The Chocolate Lovers' Spring Fling

Friday, June 4th 2021
at The Omni Interlocken
Outdoor Pavilion

For 40 years, the *Chocolate Lovers Fling* has brought the community together to support survivors of domestic violence and their children.

**To learn more visit
safehousealliance.org,
ticket sales begin April 1st!**

Thank you 2021 sponsors

