

Intern's Choice

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The start of August marks the last few days of my internship at Project SAVE. I've been with the organization since the middle of May and in that short period of time, we have assisted over 40 victims of domestic violence and their families.

The primary insight that I have gained through my internship is that domestic violence exists within every community. Our clients represent a multitude of ages, races, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Only some of our clients are married to their abusers. Many of our clients have children, some from their present relationship and others from past relationships. Domestic violence is a pervasive problem within our community and it is through non-profit organizations such as Project SAVE and the NOFJC, as well as community education programs, that we are

able to break the cycle of domestic violence and provide hope and healing to victims and their families.

Let me share with you a brief story about one of our clients that I have been blessed to meet this summer. She came into the NOFJC seeking assistance with filing a temporary restraining order on behalf of herself and her two young children. With the help of the legal advocate, she was able to get her paperwork in order and I was asked to accompany her and her daughter to court so that she could file the restraining order. The young client was very nervous and I was thankful for the opportunity to provide her with moral support and guidance (the courthouse can be very confusing). The filing process took a few hours and during that time I talked with her about her situation, her children, and what had led her here. Through the provisions granted in the TRO, she was able to obtain temporary sole custody of her two children. We went to court earlier this month and unfortunately had to reset the court date, which is very common due to the short turn-around on these types of cases. While waiting for her case to be called, I provided her with support and a listening ear as she shared how she has been progressing since I first saw her a few weeks ago right after she decided to leave her abusive situation and file the TRO. She and her children are doing well and they have found a safe place to live. Although we are still awaiting her new court date where she will hopefully obtain an 18-month or permanent Protective Order from the judge, she has already begun attending counseling sessions and GED classes.

As important as emergency legal services such as TROs and POs are to survivors of domestic violence, they are just one of the many comprehensive services that organizations such as Project SAVE and the NOFJC provide. Comprehensive services include legal services, mental health services, employment services, and family services. All of these services work in harmony to allow a victim of domestic violence to rise above his or her situation and become a true survivor of domestic violence. Each survivor is a unique individual with inherent value and dignity. The care and support that each survivor receives is catered to their specific needs. If you are, or know someone who is, a victim of domestic violence, please know that there are free resources available. If you're in New Orleans, please reach out or direct others to Project SAVE and the New Orleans Family Justice Center. If you live outside the city, please contact [your local Family Justice Center](#). There is hope and healing to be found for victims of domestic violence!