

Saving Lives in So Many Ways

Every day VCS saves lives in so many ways by providing counseling services and mental health treatment with an anti-racist, social justice mission. Working collaboratively with the community, VCS identifies and fills gaps in services with programs in behavioral healthcare, training, and advocacy for those most in need.

2020 VCS Annual Report

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Sarah Goforth, MS CMC, CADCII Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am writing this message as we emerge from one of the most challenging times in recent memory. As vaccines have become available for COVID-19 and people gain hope, it is also a time when people let go and find space to feel trauma and grief. This shared experience is unprecedented. Amidst this experience, VCS is busier than ever; helping people keep hope alive and stay alive, while processing the events that have impacted their lives.

Within two weeks of the country's shut down, our clinical team managed a near complete pivot to telehealth, thanks to extraordinary work and Rockland County's financial assistance. The 70% growth from last year and the provision of a permanent telehealth license is evidence of a sustainable platform from which we can serve our most vulnerable clients, many of whom, for many reasons, find it a hardship to make in-person appointments.

While our programs have been impacted by new restrictions, we continue to serve. Support groups are virtual; COVID-19 support groups for students, healthcare workers and older adults, in English and Spanish, were added. Student Advocacy took to Zoom and Google Meet. The long-term impact this disruption has on education, parenting, aging, caring for others, and life itself, is not yet known. However, the disparity in family resources became apparent in this crisis, making our anti-racist, multilingual, multicultural mission ever more critical at this time.

The departure of senior leadership in our social justice department in 2020 created an opening for a look inward. In the wake of recent political, social and economic turmoil we asked ourselves questions we asked 50 years ago when forming the mission of this agency. From this inquiry, came the impetus to ensure we uphold that mission from the inside out. Our newly formed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee mission states: "Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a body within VCS representing the anti-racist social justice mission of our agency by way of education and support for all staff and volunteers. By centering the voices of historically excluded communities, our clients will experience a greater depth of counselor knowledge and professionalism, as they explore their own goals and personal challenges."

If you travel down South Main Street in New City after nightfall you will see the VCS sign lit for the first time in many years. The timing couldn't be more perfect. We strive for a just world that allows people to be who they are and to be treated with dignity and respect. Our charge is to provide hope through counseling, mental health treatment, advocacy and training. I could not be prouder to have had the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director for the past eight years. I am grateful for our staff, volunteer counselors, Board of Directors, and people like you. VCS could not carry out our mission without the support of our generous funders and friends.

Thank you, Sarah Goforth, MS CMC, CADCII

Mental Health Clinic

2020 was the sixth year in operation for the VCS Mental Health Clinic. We increased our capacity from 267 to 366 clients and grew our team from 23 to 30 clinicians. We worked with 616 unique individuals over the year totaling 12,238 appointments; approximately 70% growth from the prior year. Of course, this was all during the pandemic crisis.

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the clinic team and the work of our new compliance officer, we managed a complete transformation in service delivery in a two week span. As the country shut down in response to the growing crisis, we moved from 100% in-person services to about 80% telehealth services and sustained that level for the entire year.

The complexity of this challenge, and the administrative and emotional demands on staff cannot be overstated. Staff were not only dealing with the clinical transformation, but also their own personal struggles with children at home, caring for ill family members, social isolation, COVID-19 exposure and tragedy, and reduced access to the kinds of things we all need to stay well while doing this challenging work. Our dedicated clinicians pulled together to support each other through the transformation. As a result, we were able to ensure continuity of service, maintain the same excellent level of care for all of our clients, and provide for an unbroken revenue stream to support the agency.

With some foresight, we applied for and were granted a permanent telehealth license from the New York State Office of Mental Health. This has and will continue to enable some of our most vulnerable clients to access psychotherapy and medication management permanently. Many of our clients have transportation problems and/or mental health conditions that make it difficult to get out of the home, unpredictable work schedules, childcare issues and many other circumstances that make coming to in-person appointments a challenging experience.

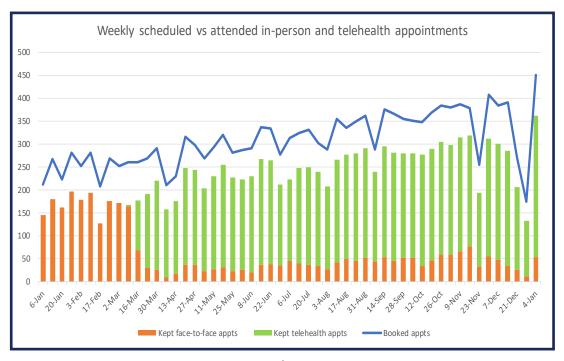
Toward the end of the year we made a major decision and changed billing companies. This was a huge task to take on in the middle of the pandemic, but has paid off greatly. We have since made a significant improvement in our insurance billing process, with greater efficiency, and increased clinic revenue during a time when this was much needed for the agency.

Our revenue target for 2020 was 70% higher than that for 2019, and despite all of the challenges presented in 2020, we again exceeded the target by 26%. We could not have done it without an amazing, professional, talented and dedicated team of clinicians, and also the support of the board and executive team. Times of crisis put your resiliency to the test, and our success in the past year has been unmistakable evidence of the strength of our clinic team. We could not be more proud.

Clinical Services for Youth

The closing of our schools during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in having to provide services via telehealth. As the year progressed, we have seen continued growth and success engaging young clients via the telehealth modality. Through the pandemic, we continued our expansion efforts with a site license application to run a Ur Space Clinic at Pomona Middle School. We look forward to continued growth of our clinic services throughout Rockland County.

Despite the pandemic, our youth services program at VCS has seen substantial growth with a total of 1,986 appointments for 135 clients under the age of 18. We hope to continue seeing steady growth with the implementation of telehealth services and the expansion of services in our local schools.



Counseling and Family Services

The General Counseling Program

• Through the pandemic we served a total of 335 clients in 2020. These are people of all ages, backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender identities, dealing with mental health issues, domestic violence, adverse childhood experiences and other forms of trauma.

Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP)

- Offers counseling, education, school advocacy, referrals and support to grandparents and other relatives raising children.
- 17 families were assisted through the pandemic via two Zoom meetings per month. This support group became a lifeline to grandparents raising children, filled with education about programs, referral services and counseling on issues pertinent to their situations.

Youth Program FINS (Families in Need of Support)

- Throughout the pandemic, we continued to work closely with local schools to identify children/adolescents in need of in-school services throughout Rockland County.
- We were able to continue services remotely with a few students, however, there were many obstacles that made continuation of services impossible such as lack of access to technology and lack of privacy in the home.

Older Adults Counseling Program

• In 2020, the Older Adults Counseling Program started offering free counseling to anyone over 60 through a grant from the Rockland County Office for the Aging. Due to the pandemic, our in home counseling switched to virtual platforms. Counselors speak weekly with clients about their health, finances, grief and emotional wellness. The volunteers serve 30 to 40 clients whose ages range from the 70's through late 90's.

Caregiver Support Group

VCS offers three free Caregiver Support groups; two in-person, and one early evening, virtually. The groups offer support to anyone who is taking care of a relative age 60 and over. We began planning for a COVID-19 Support Group in 2020 and the group started in January of 2021. This support group is open to anybody age 60 and over affected by the pandemic. The groups provide caregivers a safe space to express sadness, frustration, and grief related to a loved one who experienced a mental or physical decline or recent loss.

Information & Assistance

 Family members and clients call daily for information regarding: subsidized senior housing, home care agencies, adult day programs, nursing homes, assisted living, etc. This service helps families understand what options are available to help with aging in place.

Parenting Apart

- In 2020, due to the pandemic, we altered how we provided all our services. We moved to holding our classes virtually on Zoom, and doing all of our counseling remotely.
- We received positive feedback with regard to the new process for attending the class.
- We continued to offer classes alternating between Saturday and Sunday.

Center for Parents Education and Counseling At-Risk Youth

• Counseling for youth and parenting classes were held virtually for men and women as the pandemic crisis put families at greater risk for violence and trauma in the home.

Rockland Student Advocacy Program

Provided information, referrals and direct advocacy via virtual platforms to nearly 122
Rockland families throughout all eight Rockland school districts in 2020. While some
students were able to be successful with remote instruction, many struggled and were
unable to learn without the structure and support of teachers providing in-person
instruction. Children with special needs were particularly at risk.

Employee Assistance Program

 Provides workshops and/or counseling services for people within companies. We work with 10 to 20 employees from local organizations every year.

Graduate Student Internship Program

VCS is a highly sought after placement for social work and counseling programs
throughout the New York Metropolitan area. We accepted 17 graduate interns from 12
local universities in 2020. In the last few years we have mentored over 120 students.

Counselor Training Program

- An effective and practical preparation for counselors and highly regarded throughout the county and by prominent educational institutions.
- In 2020, we trained three interns who are now active and dedicated counselors.
- The diversity of this training group continues to grow. We currently have counselors who are fluent in Spanish, Creole, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

PUENTES

• In the middle of a pandemic year PUENTES celebrated it's third year in operation. Although we canceled the annual fundraising event, we continued to offer all of our services in Spanish. In 2020, 29 counselors served approximately 200 clients.

Social Justice and Domestic Violence Initiatives



Highlights from VCS Social Justice Initiatives

- VCS hosted two Undoing Racism Workshops (URW) in 2020. One held prior to the pandemic (early March), became the last in-person workshop with 40 participants in one room. The second workshop (held in August) was the first done virtually and the last hosted by VCS.
- VCS held 50 Working Together for Racial Justice Meetings: eight in the morning, 35 in the afternoon (new for 2020) and seven in the evening (with close to 300 people). Due to the pandemic, all meetings went virtual in April of 2020 and attendance increased dramatically. These monthly discussions filled the gap of not being able to attend an Undoing Racism Workshop. Those who have not yet taken the URW are invited.
- In September 2020, after 40 years, Phyllis B. Frank left VCS to continue her social justice work. In doing so, she began hosting the workshops on her own.
- In July 2020, VCS began a new social justice initiative by creating the first ever
 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee. The committee meets bi-weekly and is
 made up of both staff and volunteers. This newly formed group worked hard at
 creating their own mission statement and will continue to find ways for VCS to be
 socially just and inclusive.

Our Mission: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is a body within VCS representing the anti-racist social justice mission of our agency by way of education and support for all staff and volunteers. By centering the voices of historically excluded communities, our clients will experience a greater depth of counselor knowledge and professionalism, as they explore their own goals and personal challenges.

NY Model for Batterer Programs National Training Institute

Designed for court personnel, probation and parole officers, prosecutors, defense bar, and domestic violence advocates.

NEW YORK MODEL for

BATTERER PROGRAMS

Trainings were canceled due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.

VCS was invited by the NYC Criminal Justice Agency to present on Intimate Partner Violence. The six-session training took place in February 2020, in-person for two sessions, with the final four sessions held virtually in May 2020. With the departure of Phyllis B. Frank, this was our last New York Model for Batterer Programs training.

VCS participated in domestic violence elimination and prevention grants and projects in conjunction with the Center for Safety & Change.

VCS Domestic Violence Program for Men

Classes for court-mandated participants conducted in Rockland, Orange and Westchester Counties serving domestic violence, criminal, family and IDV courts in those counties.

Due to the pandemic, all classes were suspended for three months. We returned first as weekly individual phone call check-ins, and then back to group sessions on Zoom.

In keeping with our multi-language support, there were 10 Spanish registrations, one Arabic registration and one Haitian Creole registration in 2020.

Instructors: Haki Baruti, Linda Berns, Geoffrey Cabrera, Barry Goldstein, Peter Heymann, Cherron Petruzzi, Andrea Massoud

"They show respect as they teach respect!"

VCS at a Glance

"We are a resource for countless people across the lifespan who would not otherwise have access to services in Rockland County."

Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion

Elizabeth Alvarado Chief Operations Officer

General Counseling Program
Relatives as Parents Program
Services for Older Adults & Families
Youth and Families in Need of Support
Parents Education & Support
Rockland Student Advocacy Program
Employee Assistance Program
Graduate Student Internship Program
Volunteer Counselor Training Program

All VCS services provided in VES PUENTES Spanish in the PUENTES Program Azu Nieves
Director Counseling
& Family Services
and PUENTES

English, Spanish, Creole, French, Portuguese, Arabic

Bari Lewar

Patti Tricho Special Projects Coo **Board of Directors**

Nancy Rosa Chief Financial Officer



Sarah Goforth
Executive Director

lan Laidlaw
Director,
Mental Health Clinic

English, Spanish, Creole, Portuguese

t strator

n ordinator Domestic Violence Program for Men



Spring Valley High School Clinic Satellite

Haverstraw Elementary School Clinic Satellite

English & Spanish

VCS in the Community

A Look Inside the Rockland Student Advocacy Program

2020 was an extremely challenging year for parents, students and educators. When schools closed in March and everyone went to remote learning due to the pandemic, it was a difficult transition for all. The program worked remotely through the school year by connecting through email, telephone and meetings on Zoom and Google Meet.

Some students were able to be successful with remote instruction – many struggled and were unable to learn without the structure and support of teachers providing in-person instruction. Children with special needs were particularly at risk. By September, some children were able to go back into school with CDC guidelines in place. Priorities were to provide in school learning for the most at risk student populations and to provide a hybrid program – remote and in-person to other students. Many families chose to keep children home to prevent exposure to COVID-19 in order to protect family members or children that had compromised immunity.

Families that were able to have a parent at home to help their children, or provide tutors and had good Wi-Fi connections, were at an advantage. Many Rockland families who did not have these advantages had a very difficult year. We did our best to support them and connect them to resources in the community. We are hopeful that 2021 will be a better year for our students as life gradually goes back to a "new normal". We look forward to continuing to provide advocacy support to Rockland County families and to support the educational needs of their children.

A Look Inside the Domestic Violence Program for Men

The VCS Domestic Violence Program for Men was one of the many programs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Courts were not in session; referrals to the program stopped entirely. Like the rest of the world, we were on hold until things could be reconfigured. Last summer, we redesigned the program so that participants would have a phone session with an instructor in the program. As courts slowly got back to holding virtual court appearances, referrals slowly started to come back. Then, using the Zoom platform, we had the ability to have an instructor lead group discussions. From November 1st, 2020 through April 30th, 2021, we had 31 men register for our DV program. We continue our outreach to the courts and probation departments in Orange, Rockland and Westchester counties.

A Look Inside Services for Older Adults & their Families

In 2020, the Older Adults Counseling Program started offering free counseling to anyone 60 and over. The counseling service is free through a grant from the Rockland County Office for the Aging. Due to the pandemic, counseling that was traditionally held in the home, switched to either over the phone, FaceTime or Zoom. Counselors speak every week with their clients about concerns related to health, grief, finances and emotional wellness — this is critical to helping older adults successfully age in place. The volunteers served 35 to 40 clients, whose median age ranged from the 70's through the late 90's.



The Fall Gathering in the VCS parking lot introduced the new Services for Older Adults and their Families.

Many volunteers, as well as new and existing clients came out to catch up with VCS and each other.





International Women's Day in March



Healthy Haverstraw in November

Donors and Special Recognitions

\$10,000 or more

Jerome A. Chazen Donor Advised Fund Professional Disposables International, Inc. (Jonathan Kupperman)

\$1,000 - \$9,999.99

Apple Bank for Savings
Arthur & Marlene RudderRogovin Family Foundation
Kathy Perrotte
LCM247
M&T Bank
Mario Occhicone
Mary Ann Tozer
Nancy Seeback

\$500 - \$999.99

People's United Bank

Fiona Santos
Gail Maurer
Mimi Gelb
Prestige Employee
Administrators, Inc.
Sharon Wollman
Wegmans Food Markets

\$250 - \$499.99

Anita Levine Berard and Associates Charles F. McGarvey Good Samaritan Hospital James Barry "Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference."

Michael Seidenfrau Roy Wooters RRC CPAs P.C.

\$100 - \$249.99

Beth Kipperman Bob Goldman Carlos Martinez Chani Getter Charles Apotheker Connie Coker Dennis Fleming* Derek Nelson **Edward Delgado** Everlyn Pacheco-York Frank Orzo Genaro & Daiva Bathan **Geoffrey Cabrera Ginny Geerdes** Harriet Cornell James Gallagher Jeffrey Mann John Sadowski Jonathan Kupperman Jose Rodriguez Judy Ryan

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Phyllis Bernstein-Eisenberg
Phyllis Sirois
Rena Finkelstein
Rosemary Moscato
Sarah Goforth
Stephen Seward
Suki Robins
Susan Silver

Under \$100

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Julie Wendholt

Donors (continued)

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Maria Souto Sandy Wolf

Marie Clerjeune Susan Branam

Marigene Behrens Sylvia Miller

Mariluz Hernandez Timothy Goley

Marilyn Gayle Tracy Dressner

Martha Singer Vivienne von Wiederhold

NAMI of Rockland

Special Donations

Ian Laidlaw Ira Levin & Julia Bordenaro Levin Zachary Chaikin

2020 Special Recognitions

All the first responders, board, staff, volunteers, Terry Knight for graphic design and John Sadowski for marketing . . .



A Legacy of Giving



*Dennis Fleming (1948-2021) will be remembered for all the good things he did in Rockland County. Dennis helped VCS establish its youth programs and sat on the VCS Board of Directors for over six years. In the photo Dennis is accepting the award for Outstanding Volunteer of the Year at the Rockland Development Council's 2018 Philanthropy Day. Dennis, we will keep your legacy alive by helping young people achieve their goals and providing them with the emotional assistance they need.

2020 Volunteer Counselors, Student Interns and Supervisors

Counselors

Raquel Abreu Margie Adames Deana Adams Judy Aiston Denet Alexandre Amy Aronson Barrie Austin Yosmeirin Baez Kathy Bareket **Darcy Bauer** Kathy Bernhardt **Ruth Berrios** Marilyn Blocker Nancy Bowen Eileen Burge **Shelly Burns** Jill Butterman Diane Campbell **Evelyn Carayannis** Zachary Chaikin Tina Chamak **Tess Coggins** Laura Coleman Susanna Cruz Chinee Dunn Vara Edara Theresa Egan Phyllis Eisenberg Nancy Elcik Joan Faison Joseph Felix Sheila Foster Michelle Francois Lynn Gartenberg Malki Gartenberg **Ginny Geerdes**

Marina Gigante

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Kareen Viviana Ruiz Pietro

Darla Salmon Monserrat Santana Sue Saslaw Phyllis Sirois Alice Taylor Rebecca Tipa Melissa Turk Rosanna Ventura Chrystelle Wade Edna Ward Joan Ann Wasser Eli Waxler Zvi Weiss Marie Wood Smith Carmen Zapata Alba Zayas

Student Interns

Akiel Andrew Jamesha Bradley Ravi Dasari Julie Fadl Baila Glauber **Hunter Harrow** Sarah Hatkoff Mariluz Hernandez Jacqueline Kelly Ileana LaGrutta Jamer Linares Brianna Morrell Wonda Perez Christine Puett Eva Rappoport Snathalia Supreme Jill Torrente

Supervisors

Jill Bieber **Shelly Burns** Liz Carl Kathy Carty Simona Chazen John Corcoran Phyllis Eisenberg Reka Foster Lynn Gartenberg Sarah Goforth Christine Haskell Ian Laidlaw Gail Maurer Dina Neiman Azú Nieves Judy Ryan Marsha Safran Steve Safran Rosa Serrano-Delgado Dale Singer Celine Stillman

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little."

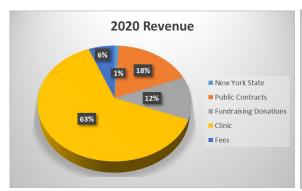
Alice Taylor

Funding Sources

During 2020, VCS received funding from many generous private foundations, corporations and individual donors, as well as the following contractors:

Camp Venture
Jerome A. Chazen Donor Advisor Fund
Medicare
NYS Medicaid
NYS Office For The Prevention Of Domestic Violence
NYS Office of Children & Family Services
NYS Office of Mental Health

Rockland BOCES
Rockland County Dept. of Probation
Rockland County Dept. of Social Services
Rockland County Office for the Aging
Rockland County Office of Mental Health
Rockland County Youth Bureau
United Way of Rockland County





Collaboratives

The VCS General Counseling Program continues to collaborate with the following organizations:

Catholic Community Services
Center for Safety & Change
Central Presbyterian Church in Haverstraw
Haverstraw Community Center
Hudson River Health Clinic in Haverstraw
Hudson River Health Clinic in Spring Valley
Montefiore Nyack Hospital
Refuah Health Center
Rockland County School Districts

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed."

Board of Directors and Staff









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Amy Baldwin Littman, Esq.
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George Menken, DDS
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Selma Porter, LCSW
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Sarah Goforth, MS CMC, CADCII, Executive Director Nancy Rosa, Chief Financial Officer Elizabeth Alvarado, LCSW-R, Chief Operating Officer

Administrative Staff

Yosmeirin Baez, Front Desk Coordinator Bari Lewart, Executive Administrator Patti Trichon, Special Projects Coordinator

Counseling and Family Services and PUENTES

Azú Nieves, LMSW, Director
Shelly Burns, LCSW, Parenting Apart Supervisor
Kathy Carty, MS, LP-MHC, Youth Program Manager
John Corcoran, LCSW, Student Intern Program Coordinator
Beth Kipperman, Student Advocacy Program Coordinator
Dina Nejman, MSW, Services for Older Adults & Families Coordinator
Darla Salmon, MFT, Services Specialist

Mental Health Clinic

Ian Laidlaw, LCSW-R, Director
Kathy Carty, MS, LP-MHC, Youth Program Manager
Kevin Greco, Compliance/Privacy Officer
Bari Lewart, Executive Administrator
Richard Price, MD, Psychiatrist

Clinicians

Denet Alexandre, MHC
Felicia Asch, LCSW
Bill DeSiena, LMSW
Delia Esposito, LMSW
Julie Fadl, LMSW
Stella Farrell, LCSW
Reka Foster, LMFT
Colleen Gallagher, LMSW
Hunter Harrow, LMSW
Eva Hernandez, LCSW-R
Jamie Hopper, LMFT

Jacqueline Kelly, MSW
Bonnie LaBar, MHC
Ricardo Lima, LMSW
Jamer Linares, LMSW
Maria Lucibello, LMHC
Brianna Morrell, MSW
Willie Mae Murphy, LCSW
Eva Rappoport, MSW
Geraldine Ryan, LMHC
David Shipper, LMHC
Jill Torrente, LMSW
Migdalia Valdes, LMSW

Social Justice

Susanne Fitzpatrick, DVPM, Records & Administration
Maria Gonzalez, DVPM Registrar, Court Liaison; English/Spanish
Darla Salmon, MFT, DVPM, Services Specialist



Our services to the community are always growing.

In order to continue to flourish and provide valuable services to the individuals and families of our community, we rely on our generous donors. You can make a difference in someone's life with a donation to VCS. Visit us online at vcs-inc.org to find the best way to contribute.

Services currently available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Creole, French, Japanese and Arabic.

Mental Health Clinic

Counseling & Family Services

General Counseling Program

Relatives as Parents Program

Youth & Family Programs in Schools

Services for Older Adults & their Families

Parents Education and Support

Rockland Student Advocacy Program

Employee Assistance Program

Graduate Student Internship Program

Volunteer Counselor Training Program

Puentes: All VCS Programs & Services in Spanish

Social Justice Initiatives and Trainings

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Domestic Violence Program for Men

Saving Lives in So Many Ways





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