

40
YEARS

1981-2021

FORTY YEARS SERVING AS THE COLLECTIVE VOICE PROMOTING THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH CAROLINA



Our vision of a violence-free South Carolina demands united action. We believe in the value of collaboration to create change, passionate advocacy for survivors, education for prevention and the credibility that emerges from persistence. We ground our work in humility as we learn and grow, leveraging our collective leadership to influence the greater good.

www.sccadvasa.org



Introduction

In the early 1980s, a small group of community leaders and grassroots activists from across South Carolina gathered in Columbia to discuss a topic that was close to their hearts: advocating for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

It wasn't something most people at the time were comfortable talking about. Domestic violence and sexual assault had long been issues that were swept under the rug.

"Survivors had to deal with this themselves and typically very quietly because of stigma and shame and embarrassment," said Nancy Barton, current Executive Director of Sistercare, a domestic violence agency in Columbia.

At the same time, resources were limited, and attitudes among law enforcement, legislators, pastors, and other community leaders often included victim-blaming or put survivors at greater risk.

"It was an uphill battle," said Arlene Andrews, one of SCCADVASA's cofounders. "A very uphill battle."

The activists and advocates in this group met monthly, mostly at the YWCA in Columbia, and had each become involved in anti-violence movements in their separate corners of the state. Some had long been passionate about ending violence. Others had been awakened through consciousness-raising discussions facilitated by feminist

organizations. Some were survivors of domestic and sexual violence themselves. Still others came to the work from the professional fields of psychology, law, and social work.

All of them were leaders—and often cofounders—of domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers in South Carolina. There were only a handful of such services available by the time they started meeting in 1981—and the oldest among them was launched in 1974.

As they worked to provide direct services to survivors in their cities, towns, and regions, they discovered similar work was being done in other parts of the state. And as they found each other, they realized they wanted—and needed—to work together.

"The thinking at the time was that there is strength in numbers and that there may be some advantage to working together toward changing some of the attitudes and some of the laws," said Vicki Bourus, who became executive director of Safe Harbor in Greenville in 1988 and also served as executive director of SCCADVASA from 1999 to 2011. According to Bourus, this new coalition "was peopled with very passionate women who truly cared about these issues and really laid the groundwork in this state."

From this, the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA) was born.



Top: Anti-rape activists participate in a march in support of victims.¹

Bottom (L to R): Nancy Barton, executive director of Sistercare, Inc. (left) receives donations collected during the 11th Mayor's Walk Against Domestic Violence in 2017 from Mayor Pro Tem Tameika Isaac Devine.² Columbia YWCA in 1945.³ (L-R) Case manager Linda Collins, counselor Veronica Akong, and co-executive director Vicki Bourus sit together outside the Family Justice Center of Horry County counseling office in 2016.⁴



The Origins of a Movement

In the United States in the 1970s, multiple social justice movements were at the forefront of national consciousness, and activists across the country were spearheading women's rights; civil rights; anti-war; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) rights efforts.

As these movements grew across the country, they took root in South Carolina, too. And in the feminist movement, women began to speak out about domestic violence, sexual violence, and other major issues that affected their lives.

For example, according to Dean Kilpatrick, a cofounder of People Against Rape (PAR), one of South Carolina's first rape crisis centers, the National Organization for Women (NOW) organized consciousness-raising groups in which women gathered to discuss major concerns—including one in Charleston that led to the launch of PAR in 1974.

"People were talking about what had happened in their life, which included domestic violence, child abuse, and in a big-time way, sexual assault. And they were talking about how those things had affected them over their lifetime," Kilpatrick said. "I don't know if this was the intent of it, but it actually did kind of appall people, shock them, and infuriate them. And so, there were a group of hotheads at the end of that meeting who decided, well, by God, we've got to do something about this. What are we going to do in Charleston?"

Other rape crisis centers in the state soon emerged, including the Greenville Rape Crisis & Child Abuse Center (now Julie Valentine Center) in Greenville, which was also founded in 1974.

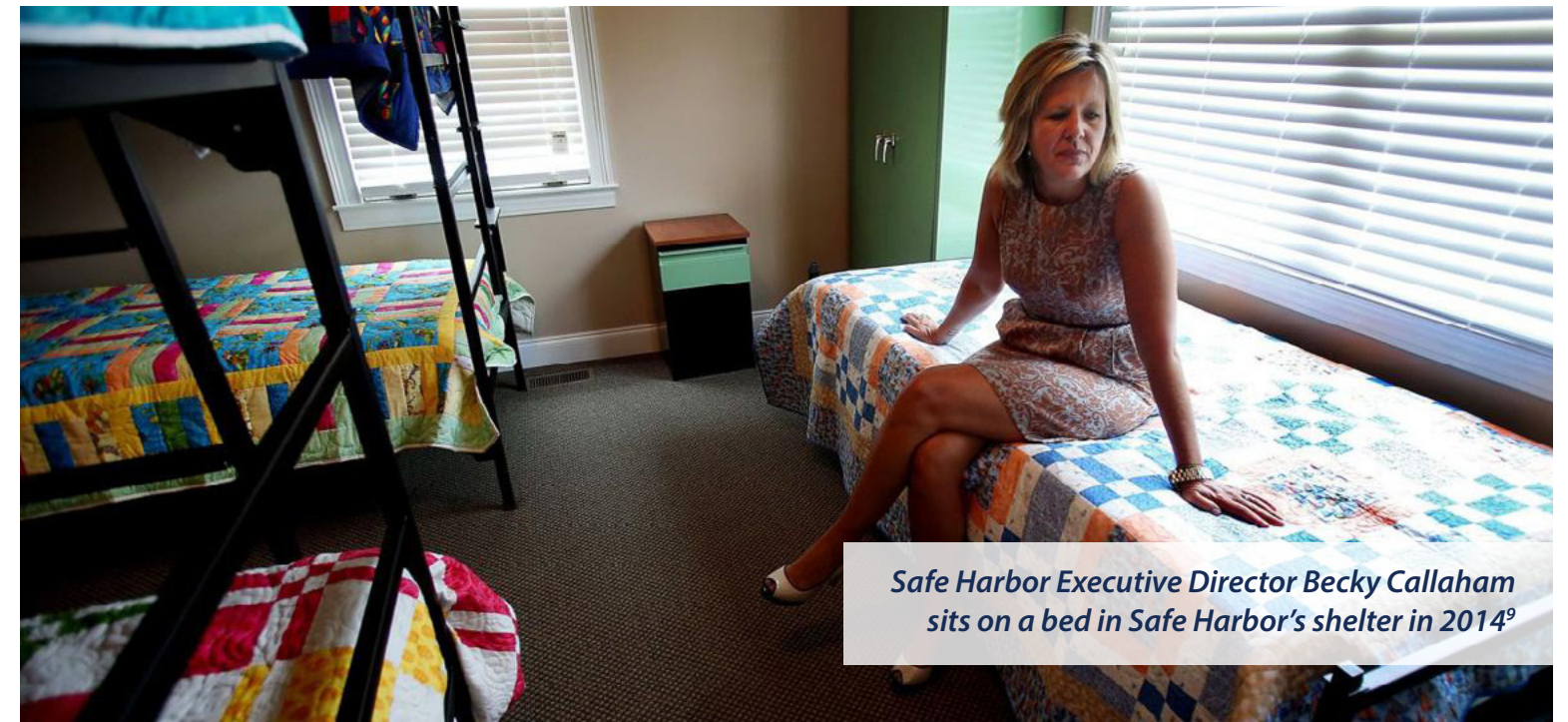
"The rape crisis programs tended to start primarily with volunteers going to hospitals, and they were entirely volunteer programs," Andrews said.

Eddie Weinburg was one of the cofounders of the Rape Crisis Network in Columbia, which was incorporated in 1983 and is now called Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands. "We were all just unrelated volunteers who happened into this project, which turned into being an incredible project because it was a group of women working together," she said.

At the same time, others in the state were working on creating safe spaces for survivors of domestic violence.

"They really had no place to go," said Weinburg, who often met survivors of domestic violence in her work at Palmetto Legal Services. "There were no places to go with your children, nobody to advise on the making of a safety plan, how to prepare yourself for making an escape."

To address this, grassroots activists in the 1970s created support groups, safe homes, and eventually, shelters.



Safe Harbor Executive Director Becky Callaham sits on a bed in Safe Harbor's shelter in 2014⁹



Dr. Arlene Andrews, founding executive director of Sistercare, Inc.¹⁰

"The first thing we did at Sistercare, and I think this is true of some of the other programs, was not [create a] shelter but form support groups so people could support one another and feel less isolated and less helpless," said Andrews, who was Sistercare's first executive director.

One of the organizations that grew from these initial efforts was Safe Harbor in Greenville, which was founded in 1978 and opened The Women's Shelter, South Carolina's first domestic violence shelter.

Shortly thereafter, in July 1979, Tri County CASA (Citizens Against Sexual Assault) was chartered by a group of citizens in Orangeburg,

with S.C. Representative and one of SCCADVSA's cofounders, Gilda Cobb-Hunter, leading the charge. According to a 2017 interview by [ELYSIAN Magazine](#), Cobb-Hunter shares "long story short, from '85 up until this point, I consider the work I do with victims of family violence as the most important work I do."

While this grassroots growth was occurring, there was also movement within the professional sphere, especially among social workers and lawyers, to reach out to and improve services for survivors.

As these autonomous but parallel movements swept across the state in the 1970s and 80s, domestic violence programs and rape crisis centers emerged, growing into a network of organizations providing access to help in communities in all parts of South Carolina.



"I consider the work I do with victims of family violence as the most important work I do."

Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, SCCADVSA cofounder¹¹

Top to Bottom: Women's liberation movement in Washington, DC, August 26, 1970.⁵ Dean Kilpatrick, a researcher at the Medical University of South Carolina, speaks with a room of reporters about "Rape in America: A Report to the Nation" in 1992.⁶ Picture from early days of the Greenville Rape Crisis & Child Abuse Center, now Julie Valentine Center.⁷ (L-R) Eddie "Ethel" Weinberg, cofounder of Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands and Liz Norris, the first executive director of STSM, are honored during the organization's 30th Anniversary Celebration.⁸

CREATING A COALITION

As grassroots efforts grew across South Carolina, leaders of these new domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, and other such programs advocated for and served victims locally. But they soon set their sights on changing laws and attitudes across the state—and realized that their voices would be amplified by joining them together.

“At that time, there were serious problems with sexual assault legislation and serious problems with domestic violence legislation,” Andrews said. “So, the main reason we started to come together was around the need to get better laws, specifically in the area of domestic violence.”

In 1981, informal meetings among these local leaders turned into a formal statewide coalition, the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA). Along with advocating for better laws, the individuals involved with the new coalition sought to receive more funding from the state, train people and institutions about domestic violence and sexual assault, establish more services for victims and survivors, and create a cohesive system of support in South Carolina.



“We really had to do a lot of education—we had to build relationships with law enforcement leaders, legislators, and social workers.”

Vicki Bourus, former executive director of SCCADVASA

Bourus is celebrated during the 2019 Family Justice Center fundraising gala in honor of her retirement¹³



“We had to work on what we thought the state ought to look like . . . and try to plan for the future.”

Ellen Hamilton, executive director and founder of the Pee Dee Coalition¹²



Early SCCADVASA logo

EARLY SUCCESSES

In the years after its founding, SCCADVASA's goals centered on increasing money for spousal abuse programs via the Department of Social Services, securing the passage of meaningful state legislation to protect victims of spousal abuse, and conducting a needs assessment and long-term planning. By 1985, the organization had shifted to three focus areas that would direct the Coalition's work for years to come: networking, education and public policy, and technical assistance.

“There wasn't any way to get the work done unless you had an association of all of the member organizations that could speak on behalf of everyone,” said Ellen Hamilton, founder of the Pee Dee Coalition, which currently serves eight counties in South Carolina. “All of us were instrumental in not only growing the capacity in South Carolina through the state coalition but also getting the resources that we needed from the state legislature.”



The Pee Dee Coalition office at 220 S. Irby St. in Florence¹⁴



“We would have a directors’ retreat, and it would be at one of the director’s houses, and we’d be sleeping on sleeping bags on the floor, so it’d be like laying in front of the fire, drinking wine, and planning the world.”

Lynn Hawkins, former executive director of SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition

In its first decade, SCCADVASA advocated for South Carolina’s first marital rape bill (which was passed in 1991) and the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA, which was passed in 1994). It also helped create a domestic violence task force, which brought together representatives from across the justice system to discuss systems that domestic violence survivors come into contact with, such as legislative systems, judicial processes, law enforcement, and victim service providers.

Additionally, SCCADVASA solicited input from advocates and leaders across the state to create minimum standards for sexual assault programs, which included salary ranges, staffing recommendations, standardized reporting forms, and volunteer training standards.



Top to Bottom: Sen. Joseph Biden meets reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington on July 19, 1994, to discuss the Violence Against Women Act. He is joined by Attorney General Janet Reno (left) and Rep. Patricia Schroeder (right).¹⁷ President George W. Bush signs H.R. 3402, The Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 on January 5, 2006.¹⁸



Top to Bottom: Vicki Bourus holds her Distinguished Humanitarian Award and stands with other advocates and community leaders including Pamela Jacobs, former executive director of SCCADVASA in 2012.¹⁹ A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) uses a swab to collect evidence.²⁰

“We had some support from certain legislators, but advocates were in some ways a voice crying in the wilderness,” Bourus said. “We had to really build a system of support by educating people and doing public awareness campaigns and seeking out and developing allies.”

By the late 1980s, SCCADVASA was providing training and engaging in tabling events across the state, and as the years went on, the Coalition increased the scope and reach of its educational activities. In 1989, the Governor’s office provided funds to develop a training manual for the nurses in emergency rooms doing rape exams, and by the mid-1990s, SCCADVASA was providing trainings for nurse examiners, law enforcement, and other agencies. In 1990, SCCADVASA was asked to host its first conference, which focused on family violence, demonstrating its growing leadership in the field. In 1993, SCCADVASA was approached to host the Southeast Regional Conference on Domestic Violence for the following year.

According to Andrews, “One of the reasons for SCCADVASA was to coordinate all this training that needed to happen and getting the message out to medical professionals, law enforcement, the magistrates, the family court judges, and all the others about how grave this was and how life-threatening it was and how important their actions were to the safety of people. So, very gradually, we saw that begin to change over time.”

Through meetings, retreats, and networking, SCCADVASA members also found spaces of support and solidarity. Many of these leaders were experiencing secondary and vicarious trauma; facing huge legal, social, and cultural obstacles; and running up against issues of sexism and discrimination.

“It was agency directors getting together, trying to throw our information and our influence together, and having somebody who can empathize with where we were coming from,” said Lynn Hawkins, former executive director of SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition in Spartanburg. “Sometimes, it was just holding [each other] while we cried.”



Lynn Hawkins, executive director of the SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition, is hugged by Mary Lou Paschal, the office’s court advocacy director.²¹

BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

In the 1980s and 90s, SCCADVASA’s leaders and members faced an array of obstacles and barriers, including victim-blaming, biased magistrates, difficulties with law enforcement and health care, and access to affordable housing and transportation for survivors.

“We were always at odds with law enforcement, always at odds with the court system, always at odds with the solicitor’s office, and with their state [organizations],” Hawkins said.

“I think law enforcement was the biggest struggle because we fought against them like they were the enemy,” said Charlene McGriff, executive director of Palmetto CASA. “They were doing certain things one way, and we knew that it needed to be done another way to protect the victim.”

Beyond law enforcement, among those working with survivors of sexual violence,



advocates often struggled with the ways that hospital staff treated survivors.

“I remember going to the hospital with a survivor and maybe showing up at one o’clock, and we would be there all night long, and no one saw them,” said Tricia Phaup, former director of the University of South Carolina’s office of Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention and Prevention. Phaup noted they

were finally seen at shift change, and the survivors Phaup accompanied often had to endure rude and negative comments made by hospital staff.

Survivors of intimate partner violence also experienced discrimination in health care systems. Andrews recounted a story of a woman who showed up at the ER covered in blood from being battered. The ER sent her to a domestic violence shelter instead of helping her. The shelter had to take her back to the hospital because they could not take care of her wounds. “That was real egregious,” Andrews said. “We were dealing with things like that—a lot of people just not wanting to deal with this.”

Sometimes, conflicts emerged from within SCCADVASA and among its member organizations as well.



“I can remember the first time I met with the sheriff [in the mid-1990s] . . . I went to talk to him about advocacy and victims. And the deputy sheriff said, ‘Now tell me, what is advocacy?’ Oh, I just about fell out the chair . . . I was like, Oh, God. Oh, help me.”
Charlene McGriff, executive director of Palmetto CASA²³



Bottom (L-R): Pamela Jacobs, executive director of SCCADVASA, with Rep. Joan Brady, Sen. Joel Lourie, and Rep. Bakari Sellars participate in a press conference to protest Gov. Haley’s cuts to rape crisis centers, July 16, 2012.²⁴ Tricia Phaup, SCCADVASA program coordinator for prevention & specialized advocacy.²⁵ Kelli Clune, a SANE training instructor, leads the first in-person education session within the grant-funded SANE training program.²⁶



Each year in October, the S.C. Attorney General hosts a Silent Witness ceremony to honor the victims from the preceding year. Each cutout represents an individual who lost their lives to domestic violence.²⁷

“We had a lot of what we now call intersectional issues that we constantly had to be mindful of and respectfully trying to work through,” Andrews said. “We had issues of large urban programs and small rural programs. We had issues of race and people of color feeling excluded. We had issues of sexual assault [agencies] almost feeling as if domestic violence got too much attention or vice versa in different communities. We had issues of the grassroots feminist model versus the professional social work model and mental health model.”

Some early members discussed conflicts between the domestic violence and sexual assault agencies.

“They [the domestic violence and sexual assault movements] were happening simultaneously, but along two separate paths, and because funding was tight, that kept them competing,” Weinburg said. “Which one is more important? Who’s getting the most attention?”

Others noted regional differences, including culture and rurality.

“It’s especially hard in rural areas because not only do folks not quite understand or want to understand exactly what goes on, [but] it’s a cultural thing, and it’s a family thing that they don’t want to talk about,” said McGriff.

Many of those involved described arguments regarding funding, inclusivity issues, and regional differences.

“What happens in Myrtle Beach doesn’t really bear a whole lot of similarity to what’s happening in Spartanburg,” Hamilton said. “You’ve got different cultures across the state, and what I learned as chair of the Coalition for two years . . . [is] that each area of the state has its own challenges and politics and financial capacity and history. And so, as a state coalition, it’s really knowing all of that. That’s the challenge.”

The diversity of member organizations’ needs, backgrounds, and perspectives could sometimes make coalitional work difficult. Yet, current and former SCCADVASA leaders and members highlighted the importance of working through those differences to achieve larger Coalition goals—which typically won out in the end.

As Sara Barber, SCCADVASA’s current Executive Director, said, “You can’t get this work done if you’re fighting each other.”



SCCADVASA Executive Director Sara Barber engages in a lively conversation with partners and allies.²⁸

WORKING AT THE INTERSECTIONS

While the road has sometimes been bumpy, SCCADVASA’s leadership, member organizations, and staff have long been journeying toward inclusivity and intersectional social justice.

As early 1982, SCCADVASA members were challenging leadership and staff to empower and actively involve women of color, who often felt excluded or marginalized within predominantly white leadership structures. As a result, SCCADVASA’s Women of Color Caucus was established in 1986.

While the Women of Color Caucus worked to support agency staff who were Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), challenges remained. McGriff noted the limited number of Black directors when she started attending SCCADVASA meetings in the 1990s—and how many agencies had all-white staffs.

“I told the directors . . . when Blacks come into your agency with all white staff, they don’t feel comfortable,” she said. “If you’re going to provide quality services, your agency needs to look like your community.”

Today, barriers faced by BIPOC—both within and outside of SCCADVASA and its member agencies—persist. “Implicit and explicit racial bias still shows up in this work,” said Valerie Ekue, director of member support and community justice at SCCADVASA.



“To be inclusive, it takes work, and you have to always focus on the question, ‘Why are we doing this?’ Because everyone should have access.”

Tricia Phaup, SCCADVASA program coordinator for prevention & specialized advocacy²⁹

Since 2015, Ekue has led SCCADVASA’s Communities of Color Engagement Project, which works to identify the specific needs of communities of color in South Carolina, reduce sexual violence and intimate partner violence among such communities, and develop resources that address the diverse and intersecting needs of victims and survivors across the state. As part of this SCCADVASA initiative, Ekue facilitated listening sessions with women of color throughout South Carolina and published the case study *With Black Women in Mind* to discuss the findings and best practices for serving Black women survivors.

McGriff highlighted the need for ongoing training for staff at all levels so that they can better understand the needs of communities of color and build organizations that provide culturally responsive services. Ekue emphasized the importance of centering Black women—who face disproportionately high rates of domestic and sexual violence—to achieve critical improvements in equitable service design and delivery. In recent years, SCCADVASA has also expanded its work to address the needs of Indigenous and Native communities, which have long been neglected by the state. By building partnerships with and supporting the South Carolina Indigenous Women’s Alliance, a committee of the South Carolina Indian Affairs Commission, SCCADVASA looks to take its lead from Native women to develop resources for culturally appropriate services.

Similarly, multiple former and current leaders, board, and staff of SCCADVASA described efforts to create greater inclusivity for LGBTQ survivors—another vulnerable and often-overlooked population in South Carolina.



The South Carolina Indigenous Women's Alliance, a committee of the South Carolina Indian Affairs Commission³⁰



Dr. Valerie Ekue, SCCADVASA director of member support & community justice, speaks during a Dating Violence Town Hall at Ridge View High School, April 21, 2016.³¹



Dr. Valerie Ekue joins the S.C. Race, Equity and Inclusion Collaborative 2018 Retreat. ³²



Attendees at the 2019 Waccamaw Indian Tribe Pauwauw³³



Members of the LGBTQ and allied community came together for Trans & Queer Field Day at the South Carolina State House, May 16, 2021.³⁴

“When we were first starting out with the way the laws were written on domestic violence, LGBTQ couples were covered,” Hawkins said. “Then, when the legislators realized they [LGBTQ people] were covered, they changed the law to write them out.”

Within and outside of SCCADVASA, conflicts often arose in the 1990s and 2000s regarding creating culturally competent services for LGBTQ communities, especially when facing backlash from more conservative community members, donors, and funders. Yet, as data emerged regarding the acute needs of survivors in the LGBTQ community in the 2010s, SCCADVASA created specific trainings and a manual for member organizations on serving LGBTQ communities with cultural competency.

Gaps in services in South Carolina remain, though. “There still are no services [specifically] for same-sex couples or the trans community who are experiencing intimate partner violence,” Phaup said. “This is a huge void.”



In recent years, SCCADVASA has generated more intentionality around increasing accessibility and ensuring that an intersectional social justice lens permeates the organization and its work. Through internal and external training, advocacy, workgroups, and other efforts, SCCADVASA has worked to “center the margins,” including those who are BIPOC, LGBTQ, immigrants, living in rural areas, living with disabilities, and elderly.

For Barber, part of this involves SCCADVASA stepping outside what might be seen as “its place” to advocate both for intersectional social justice and the day-to-day needs of survivors.

“Does the Coalition need to be involved in advocating for increased broadband?” Barber said. “Yes, because it directly impacts survivors. Do we need to get involved in advocacy for

expanded Medicaid? Yes. Because one of the reasons people stay in abusive relationships is because they don’t have access to health care. It’s like all these different elements that are not seen as our place are absolutely our place.”



Kimberly Tissot from Able SC presents Sara Barber with the Adaptable Award in 2019.³⁶



In 2020, SCCADVASA launched an “Intersectionality Toolkit” on its website, which offers easy access to tools and resources for providing victim services to diverse populations and marginalized communities. www.sccadvsa.org/intersectionality



Top to Bottom: Katie Reid, former director of systems advocacy, prevention and training at SCCADVASA, provides an update on the Coalition's partnership with SC Department of Corrections and the PREA Manual in March 2016.³⁷ SCCADVASA Executive Director Sara Barber testifies before the Senate Subcommittee regarding Abortion Ban Bill (H. 3020) in 2019.³⁸ Rebekah Luttrell announces the start of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) of the Lowcountry during an April 23, 2019, press conference at the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office.³⁹

WHY SCCADVASA MATTERS: ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, COLLABORATION

In the decades that have followed its founding, SCCADVASA has maintained its commitment to serving as the collective voice for promoting the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault in South Carolina.

For many years, acting as this voice has involved advocating for legislation that would help survivors and prevent violence, as well as advocating for increased funding for sexual assault and domestic violence agencies in our state. It has also involved providing training and technical assistance for member organizations as well as the greater community.

According to Katie Reid, former director of systems advocacy, prevention, and training at SCCADVASA, the Coalition serves as a "connector." They provide a "funnel-up system" through which they take information from local service providers and elevate it to state and federal levels to highlight needs and problems. They also "funnel-down" information—for example, drawing member organizations' attention to nationwide or federal issues, providing training, and sharing promising practices that have worked in other communities. Finally, Reid said that SCCADVASA "promote[s] collaboration because

we know that no one person, no one organization, no one entity can meet all the complex needs of survivors."

As part of that commitment to collaboration, SCCADVASA has built up an array of allies over the past four decades that have created an ecosystem of support and possibility for survivors and prevention efforts.

In SCCADVASA's first decades, such allies have included the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the Department of Social Services (DSS), South Carolina Sheriff's Association, South Carolina Legal Services, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), United Way, YWCA, the SC Bar Association, university communities, and faith communities. While many of these collaborations continue, in recent years, SCCADVASA's partnerships have expanded to include Able SC, the South Carolina Indigenous Women's Alliance, batterer intervention programs, culturally specific programs, libraries, and many others. This wide-reaching group of allies and partners has been vital to SCCADVASA's work, especially as the Coalition recognizes that everyone has a piece of the puzzle in ending domestic and sexual violence in our state.

"In order for us to truly succeed in our vision of a S.C. free from domestic and sexual violence, we must do more to center the margins. We must better engage marginalized communities of color, particularly African American communities, by utilizing a trauma-informed lens and taking a holistic and intersectional approach to inform our work."

Dr. Valerie Ekué, SCCADVASA director of member support & community justice⁴⁰



SCCADVASA staff members participate in a community tabling event during the 2014 Columbia Mayor's Walk Against Domestic Violence.⁴¹

As SCCADVASA has expanded its connections, it has also shifted some of the models of its work. For example, multiple individuals who have worked for SCCADVASA emphasized the importance of the organization's shift to having a community-based board in the early 2010s.

For the first three decades of SCCADVASA's history, the board of directors was composed entirely of representatives from member organizations. While the voice of membership is still strongly represented by three leaders of member organizations elected annually by their peers, today the majority of SCCADVASA's board members are community members and stakeholders from around South Carolina.

SCCADVASA continues to grow in other ways, expanding its programming to meet the increasingly diverse needs of communities. In 2018, SCCADVASA introduced a new legal assistance program to address critical legal needs for survivors in South Carolina.

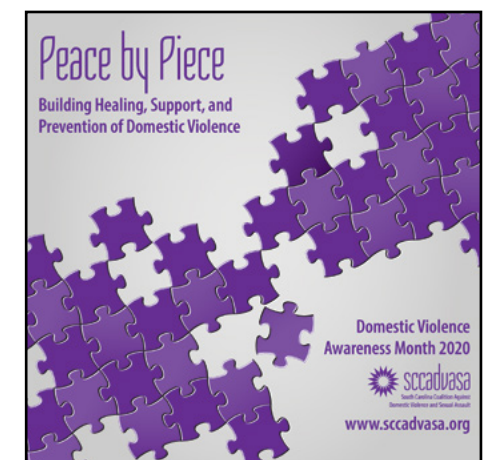
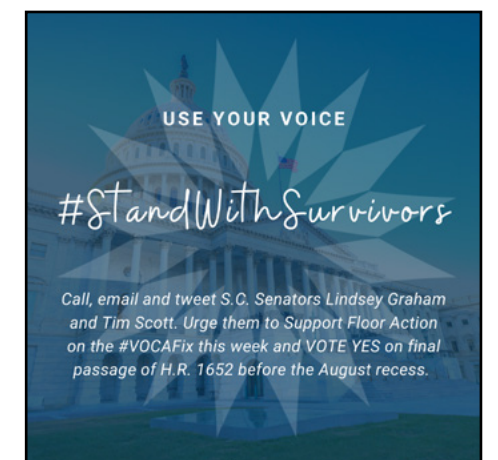


SCCADVASA General Counsel & Director of Systems Advocacy Patricia Ravenhorst prepares for 2018 meetings with S.C. Representatives and Senators to raise understanding of Domestic and Sexual Violence and the critical funding that supports survivors' healing.⁴²

This program, supported by grants from the SC Bar Foundation and the U.S. Department of Justice, pairs pro bono attorneys with survivors to provide them with free or low-cost representation in civil legal issues.

In addition, SCCADVASA has enhanced its efforts to provide services that adapt to the times in which we live. For example, the increasing importance of social media in influencing behavior has led SCCADVASA to develop prevention messaging campaigns that target youth on the platforms where they spend so much of their time. Furthermore, as the world has moved even further online during the COVID-19 health crisis, SCCADVASA has responded by providing remote trainings and supporting its members as they transform the nature of their services to respond to survivors while in-person meetings remain unsafe for those with underlying health conditions or those who are unvaccinated.

Lastly, while it would be impossible to mention all of the incredible individuals who have been a part of this organization's history in this document, it's important to note that each and every one of them has made a difference in SCCADVASA's ability to fulfill its mission as the collective voice promoting the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault in South Carolina. Working in the field of intimate partner violence is not an easy undertaking, but it is through their dedication and contributions over the past 40 years that SCCADVASA has been able to continue to move the needle and affect positive change through its work with member organizations, training, education and advocacy.





*“Change is hard and takes a really long time. We remain far from where we should be, but we must keep plugging away because trauma victims deserve nothing less than our full effort for as long as it takes.” **

Dean Kilpatrick, Founding Member of Tri-County S.P.E.A.K.S. (People Against Rape)⁴³

LOOKING AHEAD

SCCADVASA began when a handful of directors representing the few domestic and sexual violence agencies in the state started meeting in the early 1980s. Since that time, SCCADVASA has grown to support **22 independent member organizations** and **16 affiliate members**. It has also expanded from an all-volunteer organization to having a full-time staff of 10 and additional independent contractors with experience in policy advocacy, financial management, and communications.

As SCCADVASA’s founders, former and current members, and former and current staff look ahead towards the future, they expressed numerous needs, goals, and opportunities on this journey toward better serving survivors and ending domestic and sexual violence, including the following:

- Changes in **cultural attitudes** on domestic and sexual violence
- Increased **prevention** efforts and education
- Increased **funding** for domestic and sexual violence programs
- Improved **legislation** around domestic and sexual violence
- Increased **intersectional policy** advocacy
- Improved resources for multiply **marginalized survivors** (for example, Black trans women)
- Greater focus on the **mental health** of families and family systems
- Greater engagement with **faith communities**
- New ways of **sheltering, creating safe spaces, and building self-sufficiency** for survivors
- Development and implementation of **transformative and restorative justice** responses as alternative paths to justice and healing
- Continued expansion of **training for criminal legal and other systems** to improve their responses to survivors
- Continued **gun violence prevention** efforts
- Decreasing, and eventually ending, **intimate partner homicide**



“We still have issues with law enforcement. We still have issues with court systems. We still have problems with people discriminating against victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It’s only been within the last 2 or 3 years that our sheriff quit giving the rape victims the lie detector test.”

Lynn Hawkins, former executive director of SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Center⁴⁴



“One of the keys to ending domestic violence and sexual assault is a kinder society—a kinder society that displays empathy, that’s willing to take care of people, the less fortunate, and that’s willing to give grace to people and to each other. So, I hope for the movement that we’re all able to find those spaces of grace for each other and recognize that we’re working toward one goal.”

Sara Barber, current executive director of SCCADVASA⁴⁵

Specifically, Hamilton offered encouragement to these organizations, leaders, advocates, and activists as they journey toward justice. She reminded them to be self-reflective and willing to change, asking questions like, “Is this really what we ought to be doing? Is this really the most important thing? Are we doing it just because we’ve done it for so long? And can you be a big tent?” Though the landscape has changed in some ways in our state, the passion and fire that ignited this movement remain—and so do many challenges.

“We need to, as advocates, continue those kinds of grassroots efforts, continue to engage the media, continue to speak out, continue to write editorials, continue to educate people,” Bourus said. “Really and truly, the work needs to go on, and it is. We’ve certainly made incredible progress, but I think it would be a

mistake for people to relax and think that we’ve made it.”

Today, SCCADVASA remains committed to addressing these challenges through collaboration, with humility, and by leveraging their collective leadership as they work toward creating a South Carolina that is free from domestic violence and sexual assault.

“There is so much pressing work to be done,” Barber said. “But we also have to remain optimistic that our voices can push forward change. Hope is a critical component of our work—hope for individual survivors as they find their path to healing and hope that our communities will invest in the change that creates safety for everyone. It is through our hope that we can imagine creative solutions that will lead to our vision of a South Carolina free from domestic and sexual violence. Only then will our work be done.”



Left to Right: Debra Wilson, executive director of YWCA of the Upper Lowlands; Kimberly Tissot, executive director of Able SC; Mary Dell Hayes, former executive director of Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands; and Margaret Hollifield, violence prevention & survivor services coordinator, Able SC.⁴⁶ Sara Barber (right), executive director of SCCADVASA, and Nancy Barton, executive director of Sistercare, accept the proclamation from the City of Columbia, S.C. proclaiming October 2017 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.⁴⁷



ADVICE FOR NEW ACTIVISTS AND ADVOCATES



“Be strong and patient. You have to be strong in order to take some of the stuff that comes at you. You’ve got to be patient because, you know, we may not be paid like we should, we may not be treated like we should. People don’t understand what we do. But it makes such a difference to our victims To see a victim become a survivor, and they come to you years later and say, ‘Thank you for what you’ve done in my life.’ That makes a total difference.”

Charlene McGriff, executive director of Palmetto CASA⁴⁸



“Take the time to learn the history of what’s going on Learn the history and see how you can add to it.”

Labrena Aiken-Furtick, chief operations officer, CASA/Family Systems⁴⁹



“Do it if you care about it But I need to read you your rights before you do. It may change your life. It may frustrate the hell out of you. But it’s incredibly rewarding. I don’t know anything you can do that would be as—sometimes even fun— or meaningful and important.”

Dean Kilpatrick, founding member of Tri-County S.P.E.A.K.S. (People Against Rape)⁵⁰



Left to Right: SCCADVASA staff members volunteer during the S.C. Department of Social Services Adult Advocacy Division’s 2021 Walk to End Elder Abuse.⁵¹ SCCADVASA team members stand in solidarity with survivors during the Kavanaugh Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings in 2018.⁵² SCCADVASA staff members attend a Columbia Fireflies event during Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2019.⁵³



2019 SCCADVASA Directors (L-R): Dawn Ardel, Janie Lauve, Shauna Galloway-Williams, Shannon Lambert, Sara Barber, Becky Callahan, Alice Hodges, Kristin Dubrowski, Tosha Connors, Labrena Aiken-Furtick, Jada Charley⁵⁴

INTERVIEWEES & CONTRIBUTORS

Special thanks to the interviewees and others who contributed to this project, including the following:

- Labrena Aiken-Furtick
- Arlene Andrews
- Sara Barber
- Nancy Barton
- Vicki Bourus
- Gilda Cobb-Hunter
- Valerie Ekue
- Ellen Hamilton
- Lynn Hawkins
- Dean Kilpatrick
- Charlene McGriff
- Tricia Phaup
- Tricia Ravenhorst
- Katie Reid
- Alison Slack
- Alexis Stratton
- Eddie Weinburg
- Rebecca Williams-Agee

SCCADVASA FOUNDERS

We stand on the shoulders of these incredible women. We celebrate 40 years because of their bravery and dedication to this work.

- Kathy Adams-House, People Against Rape
- Arlene Andrews, Sistercare
- Naomi Frost-Hewitt, Coalition to Assist Abused Persons
- Charlotte Lee, YWCA
- Martha Towle, My Sister’s House
- Elizabeth Todd, Columbia Area Mental Health
- Gilda Cobb-Hunter, CASA/Family Systems

While it would be impossible to include everyone who has been a critical part of this work within the pages of this document, we acknowledge and recognize the contributions and positive impact each and every individual has made over these past 40 years. It is their hard work, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to our combined vision of creating a South Carolina free from domestic and sexual violence that has made today possible. We are, and will remain, forever grateful.

Notable dates and moments from SCCADVASA's 40-year history

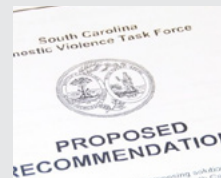
1981

SCCADVASA established



1986

Women of Color Caucus established



1990

Domestic violence task force created

1992

- First stalking bill passed in South Carolina
- Campus bill passed, which requires institutions of higher learning to report campus violence incidents
- Creation of the Crime Victim Ombudsman program to ensure that victims of crime are served equitably and treated fairly by the South Carolina criminal justice system and its victim service organizations

1994

- Hired first lobbyist
- Rape protocols added to curricula for nursing schools
- Violence Against Women Act passed
- Rape Prevention and Education Act passed, which developed and strengthened sexual violence prevention efforts at local, state, and national levels



2000

Governor's Task Force on Domestic Violence established by Governor Jim Hodges

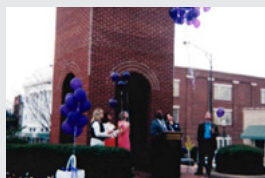


2014

- The Post and Courier publishes "Till Death Do Us Part," a multi-part series on South Carolina's terrible history with domestic violence
- The Speaker of the House establishes a committee to examine the state's response to domestic violence and recommend changes
- Governor Haley establishes a Domestic Violence Task Force to examine systemic changes that could improve the state's response

1984

- First volunteer executive director hired
- New domestic violence law is passed



1988

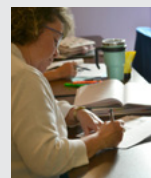
- Started providing trainings and tabling at events
- Gave testimony in support of marital rape bill

1991

- Marital rape bill passed
- Moved into first office space
- Added a nondiscrimination statement to brochure

1993

Published first newsletter



1997

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program established
- Hired first training coordinator

2003-2005

Changes made to the domestic violence laws

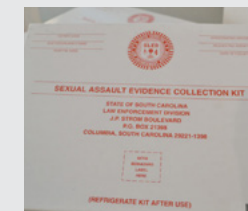
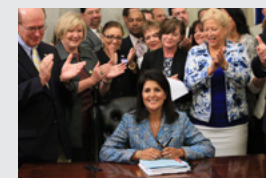


2013

President Obama signs the VAWA Reauthorization

2015

The Domestic Violence Reform Act is signed into law by Governor Nikki Haley



2020

Rape Kit Tracking Bill requiring SLED to establish a database for sexual assault forensic evidence passed

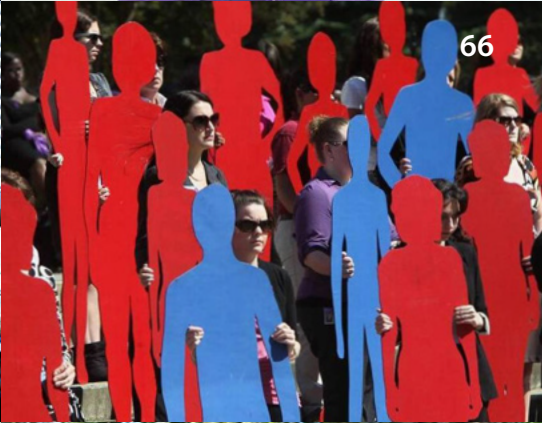
Left to Right: Governor Dick Riley sits in the Governor's Office Conference Room at the S.C. State House and poses for a picture with advocates including Ellen Hamilton (far left).⁵⁵ Purple balloons are released during a press event held outside of SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition in Spartanburg during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.⁵⁶

Left to Right: President Bill Clinton signs the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) into law.⁵⁷ Mary McGee at Prisma Health-North Greenville Hospital is a nurse enrolled in SANE training funded by a 2019 grant.⁵⁸ S.C. Governor Jim Hodges sits at his desk with advocates and leaders standing behind him, including Ellen Hamilton (4th from left).⁵⁹ President Barack Obama signs S. 47, the "Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013" (VAWA) in Washington, D.C., March 7, 2013.⁶⁰ The Post and Courier's Investigative series "Till death do us part"⁶¹ S.C. Governor Nikki Haley signs the Domestic Violence Reform Act on June 4, 2015, surrounded by advocates and lawmakers in the SC State House lobby.⁶²



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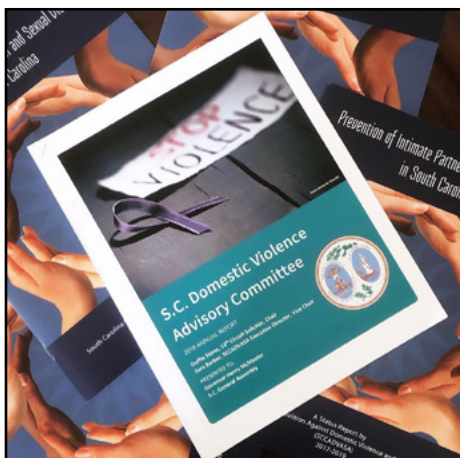
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*"We have to ask the right questions,
so that we can begin to move away
from retribution and toward
reparation and accountability."*

Aparna Polavarapu
Executive Director & Founder South
Carolina Restorative Justice Initiative

scknowmore Webinar Series Friday, March 19, 2021
11:30 AM – 1 PM Presented by sccadvasa

#CanDo

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE?
"As a member of the South Carolina House
of Representatives, I stand with survivors
by vigorously advocating for laws to
protect survivors of sexual violence."
- Rep. Gary Clary, 3rd District

