



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marjaree Mason Center Breaks Ground on New Campus to Combat Domestic Violence

Fresno, CA — (February 28, 2024) — On Wednesday, February 28th, with several campaign donors, project partners, neighbors, Board and staff in attendance, the Marjaree Mason Center broke ground on its new campus to be named the new Isnardi Foundation Community Resource Center of the Marjaree Mason Center.

The new Center will reside in a 37,680 square foot building that will double the current physical service capacity for all non-residential services for survivors of domestic violence in Fresno County. These services include 24/7 crisis response hotline and drop-in center, mental health services for adults and children, a dedicated children's enrichment center, art therapy room, housing and job support, legal advocacy, speech and behavioral therapy room, health clinic, group therapy spaces and a large 100-seat training room.

The property was purchased by the Marjaree Mason Center in December 2022. As a nearly 60-year-old building, this site has historic roots as Queen of the Valley Catholic Girls School, New Life Christian School, Heald College and the Milan Institute. However, significant upgrades are needed in order appropriately modernize the site, meet all applicable building codes and for it to meet all of the needs to serve survivors of domestic violence and operate as a 24/7 trauma-informed facility that's both physically and emotionally safe.

For the past two years, a significant fundraising campaign has been taking place along with facility planning with City officials, construction partners Pace Management and Paul Halajian Architects, and BMY Construction who was selected as the general contractor in October last year.

Including both building acquisition and remodel, the total cost of the project is \$21 million. To date, the Center has raised \$15 million through both public and private donors.

Significant project donors include the County of Fresno with \$4.7 Million of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding towards the remodel of the existing facility. Other significant gifts include:

- The Isnardi Foundation's \$3 million gift that will be recognized with the naming of the new center now named The Isnardi Foundation Community Resource Center of the Marjaree Mason Center.

- Janell Smittcamp-Boldt's significant donation that will be recognized through the naming of the 24/7 Crisis Support Center.
- The Lyles Foundation's \$1 million donation that will be recognized through the naming of the Board of Director's room.
- Carl and Lulu Mitchell's \$1 million donation that will be recognized through the naming of the Welcome and Reception Area.
- Lynda and Stewart Resnick, through The Wonderful Company, \$1 million donation that will be recognized through the naming of the Children's Enrichment Center.

In total, 14 rooms or spaces have already been named in the new Community Resource Center. Naming opportunities continue to be available in honor of donations and pledges of \$50,000 - \$10,000,000. Additionally, a permanent donor wall inside the building will be featured in honor of all donations of \$10,000 or more.

Of the ten most populated counties in the State of California, Fresno has the highest per capita calls to law enforcement for domestic violence, according to the California Department of Justice. A public health and law enforcement crisis in Fresno County, local law enforcement reported over 15,000 offenses in 2023. Those numbers continue to grow every year and experts estimate that less than 40% of individuals actually seek help.

The Marjaree Mason Center remains Fresno County's only dedicated provider of domestic violence and supportive services.

The new Isnardi Foundation Community Resource Center of the Marjaree Mason Center will meet three critical needs: Increased capacity to grow services; be geographically accessible by all of Fresno County and ensure all services are available in one location; and be more physically and emotionally safe.

It is set to open in December of 2024.

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About Marjaree Mason Center

For over 40 years, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered safe housing and support services to adults and their children affected by domestic violence in Fresno County. As the only comprehensive domestic violence agency in Fresno County, the Marjaree Mason Center provides housing, legal services, counseling and education to survivors and youth. The Center was founded in 1979 after the murder of Marjaree Mason, a native of Easton. A graduate of Washington High School and Reedley College, Marjaree lived in Fresno for 31 years and was well known in the community. To contact MMC, call the business center at 559.237.4706, the 24-hour confidential emergency hotline at 559.233.HELP (4357) or help@mmcenter.org, or learn more online at www.mmcenter.org.