



**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**Charity Susnick, Director of Development and Communication**

**Marjaree Mason Center**

**1600 M Street**

**Fresno, CA 93721**

**Direct: (559) 487-1313 Mobile: (559) 977-5758**

**[charity@mmcenter.org](mailto:charity@mmcenter.org)**

**[www.mmcenter.org](http://www.mmcenter.org)**

**March 12, 2020**

**For Immediate Release**

**Annual Fundraiser celebrating the life and legacy of Marjaree Mason cancelled**

The rapidly spreading coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally affecting how individuals and organizations interact with one another. To prevent the spread of the virus, government, business, schools and other organizations are limiting public contact and postponing or cancelling public events. Over the past 24 hours, California Governor Gavin Newsom announced his recommendation to cancel all public gatherings of 250 people or more through the end of March. As a result, Marjaree Mason Center has made the decision to cancel our annual fundraising event, Marjaree's Birthday Soirée, which is scheduled for Friday, March 27. The event is scheduled in the month of March annually as March 15 is Marjaree Mason's birthday. She would've turned 78 this year.

Nicole Linder, Executive Director of Marjaree Mason Center said, "While the financial impact of cancelling our only major fundraising event will be significant, we have decided our priority must be focused on protecting the health and safety of the community, our staff and our clients. While donations from individuals, organizations, and foundations in our community are the financial life-blood that enables us to serve those affected by domestic violence 24/7, we simply cannot take the risk of potentially exposing our staff, clients and hundreds of people in our community to the virus."

Mike Rolph, President of the Marjaree Mason Center Board of Directors said, "We have an immediate need to communicate the unfortunate cancellation of this critically important fundraiser to our sponsors, donors, ticket purchasers and vendors. Their support of the event each year typically generates \$300,000 in desperately needed revenue. In the days ahead, to continue to protect our clients and provide them with safety, hope and the services they need to heal, we will begin to roll out an alternative fundraising plan asking our community for financial support to help the center meet the demand for uninterrupted services."

It is the sincere hope of the Marjaree Mason Center that the coronavirus crisis subsides as rapidly as it progressed. Sadly, the cases of domestic violence in Fresno County continue to grow at 25% per year with Marjaree Mason Center serving more than 8,300 clients in 2019. We appreciate the support of the community as we navigate these difficult challenges together and continue our mission to support and empower adults and their children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy.

###

Our Mission: Marjaree Mason Center supports and empowers adults and their children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy.

As the only comprehensive domestic violence agency in Fresno County, the Marjaree Mason Center provides safe-housing, legal services, counseling and education to adults and children affected by domestic violence.