



E-NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2023 | SPECIAL EDITION



FOR ALL YOU ARE. FOR ALL YOU DO. THANK YOU!

## TO OUR WONDERFUL FVAP COMMUNITY

To celebrate and honor Erin Smith's incredible 11 years as the Co-founder and Executive Director of FVAP (Family Violence Appellate Project) and her upcoming departure from FVAP, we would like to share a sampling of the beautiful messages from the Board members, Staff, and FVAP supporters.

If you would like to share your own messages with Erin, you may do so by adding them to the Kudoboard here <https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/fLirOsh9> or send an email to [erine@fvaplaw.org](mailto:erine@fvaplaw.org).

Erin, we wish you well in your future endeavors. Thank you for everything you have done for the organization and the survivors of family violence; you and your dedication will not be forgotten!



# *We Appreciate You!*

In the short time that I have had the honor of learning from you and getting to know you, I have been so deeply inspired by your love and commitment to our field. Words absolutely cannot express how grateful I am to have had the chance to share in leadership with you and for this opportunity to forge FVAP forward. I will hold your teachings and the love you shared with me as I continue this path. Thank you, thank you, thank you for changing the world for the better.

Warmly,  
Deborah Son, Executive Director, FVAP

Your vision for FVAP has been an inspiration. You have centered the experiences of survivors and built an organization that embodies a commitment to improving their lives. It has been a honor to be part of the board and see first hand the impact your leadership has made possible. You have a bright mind and a kind heart and I know you'll do great things in this next chapter of your life. Thank you for being an amazing steward and passionate advocate!

In appreciation,  
Maricela Rios-Faust, President, FVAP Board of Directors

I feel so fortunate to have worked with you and served on the Board under your leadership at FVAP. The impact you've had on survivors in California and Washington is truly astounding, and your tireless commitment to FVAP and its mission has been a source of inspiration. Thank you so much for all you have done and making my first experience serving on a Board so fulfilling.

Thank you and best,  
Nora Puckett, Vice-President, FVAP Board of Directors





# *Sweet Memories...*







JENNIFER WAGNER

"THANK YOU FOR  
EVERYTHING YOU  
HAVE DONE BEHIND  
THE SCENES."

What can I say? What you have accomplished was inconceivable when I joined you on this journey a short 10 years ago! All I asked for was a promise your little start-up could make payroll, and you built a powerhouse! What we can see up front is astonishing enough -thousands of survivors lives touched with 57 published cases in California, and 5 in Washington State! Growing from 1 paid employee to 10 attorneys, a development team, and over 3 full time support staffers, and expanding to a second state! So many former law clerks and pro bono attorneys practicing with an understanding of domestic abuse and its impacts, many of whom have gone on to make strides in the field on their own! FVAP has a stellar reputation, advocates and attorneys across the state(s) know they can rely on us to be a sound resource to help them help their clients. I also want to share my deep appreciation for all you have done behind the scenes, as a caring and supportive supervisor to me personally, and in working tirelessly to keep everything running smoothly for us all. From figuring out how to employ people in multiple states (and doing it!), to engaging a supportive board, to making 3, 4, 5, or even 6 budget revisions so we can meet different grantors quirky rules to keep that payroll coming and doing it all with a smile, and grace, and purpose. I will miss you greatly! And I thank you with all my heart.

**Jennafer Wagner – FVAP, Director of Programs**

Thank you Erin! So appreciate you and enjoyed working with you, from discussing intense bits of family code to your consistency in attending oh so many Partnership Policy Round Up calls. Appreciate your kindness and dedication to your work and you will be so missed.

**Christine Smith  
CA Partnership to End Domestic Violence**

CHRISTINE SMITH

"APPRECIATE YOUR  
KINDNESS AND  
DEDICATION TO  
YOUR WORK..."

CAROLINE MITCHELL

"YOU CHANGED THE  
HISTORY OF  
CALIFORNIA...  
FOR GENERATIONS  
TO COME..."

You've changed the history of California. Across the state, everyday, women and children, now and for generations to come, will wake up better protected from the scourge of domestic violence because of the way you carried FVAP forward, with integrity and devotion to them. It's impossible to thank you enough. You with the support of the board and others, willed this organization into what it is today. It's a lifetime achievement and I am so very proud of you and honored to call you my friend. All the best!

**Caroline Mitchell, FVAP Board Member**



*Sweet Memories...*



*Memories*





# *Wishing You All The Best!*

You have transformed the legal landscape for survivors of domestic violence. When we sat in my office over a decade ago and discussed *Ritchie v. Conrad*, I knew you were on to something great. The impressive record of FVAP is due to your leadership and commitment. Thank you for your dedication, inventiveness, and sensitivity. Best of luck as you start this next chapter!

Jessica Dayton

We only got to work on a few things together, but I always enjoyed it! Thanks for being such a great member of our legal aid community. Wishing you all the best in your next chapter!

Zach Newman

You have poured your heart and soul into FVAP and under your tutelage it has blossomed into a powerhouse of a nonprofit that has drastically improved the legal landscape for survivors of domestic violence. It has been an honour to work with you and to witness the journey from a tiny shared office on Telegraph to the bustling nationwide team that exists today. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and talents. Wishing you all of the best in all that is to come.

With admiration,  
Amanda Case



TAYLOR CAMPION

"YOU INSPIRE ME TO  
KEEP PUSHING  
MYSELF TO GROW AS  
AN ATTORNEY AND  
ADVOCATE FOR  
SURVIVORS."

Thank you so much for all you have done. I have always been in awe of you for creating FVAP and growing it into this robust multi-state organization that has positively impacted so many survivors. In the past 4.5 years I watched you lead FVAP forward, expanding its reach and scope of work thoughtfully and successfully. The growth and victories FVAP has achieved is a direct result of your tenacity, vision and care for survivors. More than once I have said to myself "damn, at my age Erin had already started and was running a FVAP." You have inspired me to keep pushing myself to grow as an attorney and an advocate for survivors. I hope you know how much you have accomplished and how grateful I am to you for all you have done. I can't wait to see what you do next (of course after a long well deserved break)!

**Taylor Campion, FVAP Senior Managing Attorney**

As you move to your next play, I want to thank you for all your work, leadership, and support!!! You took an idea and made it into a movement. The mountains you climbed, the journeys you took, and the trials and tribulations are unknown to us - we reaped the benefits of your leadership and for that, thank you always! Cannot wait to see what you build next, bet it will be as awesome! Be amazing always! Onwards and Upwards. Love,

**Protima Pandey, FVAP Advisory Board**

PROTIMA

"THE MOUNTAINS YOU  
CLIMBED...THE TRIALS  
AND TRIBULATIONS  
ARE UNKNOWN TO US  
- WE REAPED THE  
BENEFITS OF YOUR  
LEADERSHIP."

JOANNA MCCALLUM

"YOUR VISION  
AND PASSION IS  
INSPIRING..."

I can't thank you enough for all you have done for FVAP during my tenure on the Board. Your vision and passion are inspiring, and your mastery of all of the details of virtually every aspect of the organization was extremely impressive. We will miss you but I am excited to see what you do next. Thanks!

**Joanna McCallum, FVAP Board Member**





# *Wishing You All The Best!*

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you for the last many years, and watch as you have grown FVAP into the incredibly impact organization that it is today. I joined the board based in large part (entirely?) on the passion and vision you brought to the DV prevention community. I'm so thankful for our time together, and look forward to seeing what you do next!

Best,  
Loni Mahanta, FVAP Board of Directors

Erin! What a pleasure to get to work with you! I am so glad we got to be office-building mates for a while and I am sorry that we haven't gotten to see each other in real life since COVID. Congratulations on moving on to your next adventure! I wish you all the best and hope our paths cross again soon.

Madeline Howard - Western Center

I have always, always, always loved working with you. It was amazing to me back when I first met you that you had the drive and the skills to start a nonprofit. Still today, it impresses me that the idea you and a few others had, has grown into what FVAP is today. There are so many projects that y'all launched that filled a huge gap in our community (I remember how your project to get unpublished opinions published was just amazing and no one was running a project that comprehensive). I hope we continue to work together in your next role and that we get to meet up in person again soon. You've been a great partner and collaborator with so many other EDs, and you will always be a trusted member of our community. I hope you find a lot of time to rest and travel in the next few months before one of us makes you go back to work.

Salena Copeland





KRISTA COLON

"IT'S BEEN  
ASTONISHING TO  
WATCH THE GROWTH  
OF FVAP UNDER  
YOUR STEADY  
LEADERSHIP!"

It has been such a privilege to get to know and work with you over these 10+ years! From 2012 when I joined the coalition and met you for the first time at our conference, it's been astonishing to watch the growth of FVAP under your steady leadership. I always appreciate your thoughtful approach to issues, and have learned so much from you. I hope that the next adventures bring you joy and fulfillment in all that you do. Thank you for being such an important part of the DV field.

**Krista Colon**

Thank you for everything you've done to support survivors and grow FVAP into the amazing, thriving organization it is today! I hope you find joy and fulfillment in whatever is next for you! You will be missed.

**Renee Boman - Paralegal, FVAP**

RENEE BOMAN

"I HOPE YOU FIND JOY  
AND FULFILLMENT  
IN WHATEVER IS  
NEXT FOR YOU!"

C.H.

"EVER SINCE I  
LEARNED ABOUT YOU  
AND FVAP DURING  
LAW SCHOOL, I HAD  
TO MEET YOU, LEARN  
MORE, AND JOIN THE  
CAUSE!"

It's been a privilege getting to know and work with you for so many years, and in so many capacities. No matter what, you always bring such enthusiasm, diligence, and genuine compassion to the task. I know I've learned so much from you, and I'm excited for you in your future opportunities. California produced the first DV law textbook and, thanks to you, the first statewide DV appellate nonprofit. I recently heard from a colleague in the Judicial Council that they personally viewed FVAP's existence as a game changer in the legal landscape, pushing DV issues to the forefront and making the caselaw we've really needed to fully implement the laws we've had on the books for years. I couldn't agree more: ever since I learned about you and FVAP during law school, I had to meet you, learn more, and join the cause! Your impact on the lives of so many is unquantifiably large and, like the infinitely expanding universe itself, never-ending. Thank you!

**C.H.**



MIEKO FAILEY

"FVAP HAS MADE  
A TREMENDOUS  
IMPACT UNDER YOUR  
LEADERSHIP!"

Thank you for all you have done to improve legal responses for survivors across the state and country. FVAP has made a tremendous impact under your leadership! I wish you lots of good energy in your next chapter. With lots of gratitude!

Mieko Failey – LGBTQ Center Long Beach, FVAP Advisory Council

Although it's been short while working with you, we are in awe of your tenacity, leadership & kindness. We are truly impressed with the foundation you have built and impact you have made throughout the domestic violence community. It is not a coincidence that our paths have crossed to see the extraordinary work you have accomplished. We wish you all the best on your next endeavor. We hope our next meeting with you is at your happy place – THE BEACH!

**Tammi Relyea, Crystal Cabose, Cara Barnes – FVAP Admin Team**

TAMMI RELYEA | CRYSTAL CABOSE | CARA BARNES

"WE HOPE OUR NEXT  
MEETING WITH YOU IS  
AT YOUR HAPPY  
PLACE – THE BEACH! "

ARATI VASAN

"IT HAS BEEN A  
PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO  
A PART OF THIS  
ORGANIZATION  
WITH YOU AS  
THE EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR..."


Thank you for agreeing to take on the leading and running this organization to make it the force it is today. FVAP's reputation, leadership and fiscal stability would not be what it is today without you. Despite it being unknown territory and having to learn each and every step along the way, you have steered and stewarded FVAP to a place where the journey ahead is bright and unlimited. Far more experienced people and older organization have not been able to accomplish what you have with FVAP. You have helped to not only carve a permanent place into the legal landscape and the domestic violence movement but inspired others to believe that they can as well. It has been a privilege for me to a part of this organization with you as the Executive Director and helped restore my belief in the way legal non-profits can both make change and change from within. I hope your next steps inspire and fulfill you and you have nothing but joy and happiness in the time ahead. Thank you!

**Arati Vasan – Staff Attorney, FVAP**





# *You & I Will Continue To Thrive...*



When I asked you to be the ED of our start up non profit early in 2012 and you accepted, I was thrilled.

Your performance as our leader for 10+ years has exceeded my hopes - you have done a stellar job of growing FVAP in terms of the board, staff, budget, issues we address, and states we serve. You set a tone with the board and staff of acting humanely towards each other as well as towards our clients, and demonstrated great flexibility in meeting our needs (e.g., maternity leave, moving far away, working from home, etc.).

I have encouraged many of my students to work at FVAP as interns, fellows, and staff attorneys as I knew they would learn a lot of law and also be inspired to continue to do DV legal work in the future.

I have enjoyed reading your comments on drafts of briefs as they are consistently spot on and often raise issues I had not even noticed or provide laser-like legal analysis.

I will miss you and hope that FVAP, you, and I will continue to thrive in the future. Thanks for every minute you have given to help end domestic violence through the work this agency does.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lemon, Co-Founder, FVAP