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BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION AWARDS WOMEN'S CENTER \$107k TO BOLSTER CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The Women's Center is launching an effort to strengthen domestic violence services for African Americans

STOCKTON -- Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) announced that it is awarding the Women's Center of San Joaquin County \$107,711 to work with domestic violence survivors and engage community members in San Joaquin County to promote culturally competent domestic violence services.

"Our research shows that many of California's ethnic groups experience higher rates of domestic violence, but may be less aware of and less likely to seek services," said Peter Long, Ph.D., president and CEO of BSCF. "Together with organizations like the Women's Center, we can make great strides in ending domestic violence in California by addressing this issue."

This is one of 14 grants made to organizations throughout California working on domestic violence issues. According to the California Women's Health Survey, more than 40 percent of California women experience physical intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Research indicates the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence are believed to be higher in three key groups – Native Americans, African Americans, and recent immigrants – while knowledge of and access to services may be disproportionately low.

"The Women's Center is grateful to the Blue Shield of California Foundation for giving us this opportunity. We know there are still victims here in San Joaquin County who are suffering in silence. We want to do everything we can to reach out to them, and to make sure that our services and programs are truly reflective of our community's needs," said Women's Center Executive Director Joelle Gomez.

Blue Shield of California Foundation (www.blueshieldcafoundation.org) is one of the state's largest healthcare grant making organizations. The Foundation was formed by Blue Shield of California, a not-for-profit corporation with more than 3.4 million members, 4,800 employees, and 20 offices throughout California.

The Women's Center is dedicated to its mission to provide a wide range of supportive, educational and crisis intervention services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, enabling them to regain control of their lives. The agency is the only provider of free, confidential services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in San Joaquin County, and operates the only two undisclosed emergency shelters for battered women and their children. The Women's Center now serves over 22,000 women, children, and men each year through its direct services and outreach and prevention programs. For more information on the Women's Center and its programs and services, please visit www.womenscentersjc.org.

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