



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MEDIA CONTACT

Kaysha Rajani  
Director of Development and Communications  
Marjaree Mason Center  
Direct: 559 487 1313  
Email: [kaysha@mmcenter.org](mailto:kaysha@mmcenter.org)

### **MARJAREE MASON CENTER RECEIVES GRANT TO EDUCATE FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE.**

**Fresno, CA (May 17, 2016)** – The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (CAL OES) has funded a three year grant to the Marjaree Mason Center (MMC) to expand their **KNOW MORE** program. The grant allows MMC to implement an evidence-based curriculum called Safe Dates in all 17 Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) middle schools beginning in the 2016-17 academic year.

Through this grant, in partnership with FUSD, MMC will be able to educate a large number of youth on adolescent dating violence and healthy relationships. This will be a group based program, where students opt to be a part of a club that will meet weekly during lunchtime. These meetings will be a safe place for other students on campus to come and express any personal concerns and problems they may be having in their lives, and a place to get resources. The club will also host after school/evening workshops open to any students and their families, following the Safe Dates curriculum. Topics include Defining Caring Relationships, Defining Dating Abuse, How to Help Friends, How We Feel and How We Deal, to name a few.

“One of the most impactful ways we can move the needle in reducing domestic violence is by educating our youth,” explained Genelle Taylor Kumpe, Executive Director of the Marjaree Mason Center.

“Statistics show that 1 in 3 young people will be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship. The tricky question: what does an unhealthy relationship even look like? The **KNOW MORE** program engages youth in these conversations, working to break the cycle of abuse.”

#### **About KNOW MORE**

Initiated in 1998 by the County of Fresno, Department of Public Health, the **KNOW MORE** Adolescent Dating Violence Prevention Program sought to provide knowledge and resources to teens and students affected by domestic violence. However, due to the lack of funding, the program came to a halt. In 2009, the Marjaree Mason Center adopted **KNOW MORE**; continuing the peer education program in partnership with Fresno area high schools that represent a diverse group of students. The goal of this program is to educate youth on the long-lasting effects of abuse in adolescent relationships. It was created as a forum for youth to speak to their peers and utilize drama, music, real-life situations and staggering statistics of abuse in youth relationships to demonstrate the seriousness of domestic violence. In 2015, a pilot program for middle schools was rolled out and well received. With one in every three teenagers being a victim of dating violence, it is most important that pre-teens are educated about healthy relationships.

#### **About Marjaree Mason Center**

For over three decades, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered shelter and support services to victims of domestic violence in Fresno County. Currently, the Center operates the county’s only dedicated provider of domestic violence shelter and support services, including education for victims 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. The Marjaree Mason Center supports and empowers adults and children affected by domestic violence, while striving to prevent and end the cycle of abuse through education and advocacy.



To contact MMC, call the business center at 559-237-4706, 24-hour confidential emergency hotline at 559-233-HELP (4357) or visit online at [mmcenter.org](http://mmcenter.org), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) or [Twitter](#).

### **About California Governor's Office of Emergency Services**

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) is a California cabinet-level agency responsible for overseeing and coordinating emergency preparedness, response, recovery and homeland security activities within the state. The agency was created by AB 38 (2008), superseding both the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and Office of Homeland Security (OHS). The mission of the agency is to protect lives and property, build capabilities, and support communities for a resilient California.

### **About Fresno Unified School District**

The Fresno Unified School District is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest school district in California, serving more than 73,000 students. Guided by the Board of Education's Core Beliefs that all students can and must learn at grade level and beyond, Fresno Unified is making huge strides in preparing career ready graduates. Momentum is building to boost student achievement through partnerships with the College Board and Long Beach Unified School District. The core work of Fresno Unified School District is to prepare all students to be career-ready graduates, that is being done through the equity and access work. Equity and access is about giving students the greatest number of opportunities from the widest array of options upon graduation.

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