



Dallas

## **Inside The Family Place's mission to empower survivors, break cycle of abuse**

The Dallas nonprofit says it served more than 40,000 people last year and continues to face rising need.

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**The Family Place**, one of Texas' largest domestic violence service providers, says 1 in 3 Texans will experience abuse. NBC 5's Katy Blakey takes a rare look inside their mission to empower survivors as the need continues to grow.

**The Family Place** is one of the largest family violence service providers in Texas.

Ahead of their upcoming fundraiser, NBC 5 was allowed a rare look inside their operation to change lives.

"It takes a big heart and it takes a lot of skilled employees," said Chief Advancement Officer Molly Fiden.

Last year, the nonprofit provided services to more than 40,000 people.

With a mission to empower survivors and break the cycle of abuse, employees said the need is greater than ever.

"Because it affects the whole family, it affects the whole community," said Chief Programs Officer Crystal Sheppard.

Their emergency shelter allows families to stay together and access counseling, along with medical and dental services. It also offers an on-site daycare and an on-site kennel so clients can bring their pets, working to remove any barrier that may keep someone from leaving an abusive relationship.

"Unfortunately, I have not seen the numbers go down," said Sheppard.

Though Dallas' domestic violence crime tracker may show family violence reports slightly down from last year, Sheppard said more people appear scared to reach out.

The Dallas Police Department often refers victims to its services.

“Out of the 10 referrals we receive, we may get one person who walks through the door,” Sheppard said. “It’s fear — fear of family finding out, fear of their partner finding out, fear of what it might do to their children.”

Their 24-hour crisis hotline can be reached at 214-941-1991.

“Clients are not always ready, and what we tell them is we’re always here,” said Sheppard.

Next week, **The Family Place** will host one of its signature events for the last time.

The Texas Trailblazer Awards will end after nearly 30 years. The luncheon will feature Christie Brinkley and recognize women making a difference in their community. Tickets are still available.

Fiden said the change will allow the nonprofit to streamline fundraising as it grows its mission.

“Every community should be worried about domestic violence,” Fiden said.

“It affects one in three Texans. This is one of the highest rates in the country, so by giving to **The Family Place**, you are helping stop that cycle.”