

## **Celeste's Story**

Celeste has three children. While the parties were still living together, the father called her asking her to come home from taking the children to the YWCA. As they discussed separation/divorce, the husband began waving a gun around threatening suicide and asking her if she wanted to watch. The children were right inside the home and could have walked into this situation at any time. When Celeste called the police, the husband left the home. He was charged with a crime and a no contact order was issued. Celeste fled that night and remained at her parents' home with the children until the first court hearing in which the court ordered him out of the home.

Celeste obtained a temporary protection order. Despite the order being in place, he continued to harass her by obtaining his own temporary order of protection, by violating the order directly (leaving staged messages throughout the home, contacting her via text message, being within 500' of her home, and driving by as a passenger in his brother's vehicle). Consistent with batterer behavior, he dropped her car insurance (the vehicle she transports the children in), cancelled the wholesale club membership (where she buys food for the children), canceled her cell phone and the daughter's cell phone, and began using the children. He pierced the ears of their nine year old son (not once but twice, re-piercing them himself after Celeste had healed the first piercings).

Ultimately, through ELAP's staff attorney's excellent legal work, the court ordered a DVPO protecting the mother and children, dismissing the order the father had secured, and finding that he had committed domestic violence and exhibited classic batterer behavior. The court ordered him into batterer intervention, sent him to the DV Dads group, ordered a mental health assessment and professionally supervised visitation. The court will only entertain a motion for family supervised visitation after 60 days of batterer intervention program has been completed. The court also ordered \$600 in legal fees for ELAP.