



# voices

from Safe Haven Ministries

A semi-annual publication from Safe Haven Ministries

"A Place of Refuge and Hope" Ps. 46:1

## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.



The sky is a little darker now as I drive to work in the morning, and the sun sets a little sooner after I get home in the evening. Leaves are turning rust-colored and drift down to the ground. The air is crisp and cool, the precursor to icy blasts to come. Autumn has come to Michigan again. In preparation for the coming winter,

the trees and flowers in Michigan die away for a season so that new life can take their place in the spring. There's something deeply hopeful about this cycle of the seasons.

On September 27, Safe Haven hosted its annual Fall Luncheon at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, and we were blessed to share that time with many of our supporters. Two brave survivors shared their stories of hope and healing, powerfully reminding us that domestic abuse does not always include physical violence. Our advocate, Ruth Schoff, painted a picture of the heartbreak and triumph she witnesses every day through her work with our clients. We were also reminded of the blessing we've been given to be a strong faith-based

organization supported by so many who believe in our mission. Safe Haven is doing great work, and we simply must keep answering this call that God has given us.

This call echoes David's words in Psalm 30, "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!" Psalm 30:11 (ESV)

Because of the faithful and generous support of so many community members and partners, Safe Haven can be a place where mourning is turned into dancing. By the grace of God, victims become survivors and abusive relationships can be cast off for healthy lives. The two women who spoke at the luncheon are an example of what happens when you help Safe Haven empower survivors to thrive—much like the new growth that emerges after the warm sun and rain returns in Spring. Like all of us, their journeys are not over and their days are not perfect, but they have established new lives of freedom. I am honored that Safe Haven played a part in each of their stories.

*continued on page 2*



SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES  
2016 FALL LUNCHEON  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2016

# EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY:

## Highlights from Our Prevention and Education Program

“Motivated by Christ’s love, our mission is to end domestic abuse.” We know this is a lofty mission statement. We also know that such an ambitious goal calls us to action. For this very reason, Safe Haven Ministries is so much more than a shelter. Not only does our staff provide critical services to victims, but they help victims, witnesses, and community members identify and pursue healthy relationships.

Through our Prevention and Education Program we get to see how the greater Grand Rapids community is mobilizing to end domestic violence and support survivors. Our team has been especially encouraged by the desire so many of our partners have shown in pursuing deeper conversations through longer and more numerous training sessions. We are increasingly confident in the lasting impact of our efforts.

“Danielle was a great presenter, very articulate, intelligent and knowledgeable. As a doctor, I will refer patients to YWCA or Safe Haven if domestic violence is taking place.”

– Doctor, MetroHealth

“Being able to provide this level of expertise to our team has improved motivation, self-confidence, and overall employee satisfaction. Safe Haven Ministries totally exceeded our expectations.”

– Kim Carter,  
Executive Director of CETUSA

“Danielle and Sarah did an awesome job helping my classmates and I learn about promoting healthy relationships and expanding our knowledge on abusive relationships.”

– Forest Hills Central  
High School Student

Letter from the Executive Director, *continued from page 1*

In the next few sections, I hope you will see that your support of Safe Haven Ministries involves you in God’s powerful movement throughout our community. Each of our programs is designed to empower individuals and groups—from victims to witnesses—to end domestic abuse. We engage in conversations and efforts in the greater Grand Rapids area, not to only raise awareness of domestic violence, but also to equip our youth, workplaces, and faith communities in actively participating with this mission-driven work. We cannot provide these services without your help. The stories shared here and in our annual report (now on our website) are not possible without community partners like you.

Thank you again for being part of the Safe Haven network of support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue this important work.

Many blessings to you,



Cindy Sielawa



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Kizzy T. and Jennifer H.

“She carries so much with her when she walks through our doors. Children in one hand, a few necessary possessions in the other. What we can’t see is the heavy burden she carries from years of abuse, lies and manipulation. For many clients, this burden weighs down on them to their very core where they wrestle with questions of faith, love and self-worth.”

This October, SHM volunteers, Pastor Kizzy and Minister Jennifer, began hosting an 8-week spirituality series titled “Lifting Weight – Learning to live free from the weight of this world.” Clients who are interested may attend this bi-weekly Sunday service hosted right at our shelter. We desire for this series to be a sacred time of spiritual healing for our clients. Through our partnership with these two faith community leaders, we hope to walk alongside our clients so that they don’t have to carry this weight alone.

To get involved with our volunteer program, please contact Sarah Omicioli at [somicioli@safehavenministries.org](mailto:somicioli@safehavenministries.org).

### JOINING THE JOURNEY

“Many years ago, my husband was working in the court system on behalf of women suffering abuse at the hands of the men in their lives. It broke his heart and mine. Even worse, some tried to justify the violence with (misquoting) Scripture. This is not how Christ wanted the church, His bride, to treat one another. Safe Haven’s mission statement ties the work of ending domestic violence directly to the heart of Jesus so that from Him, healthy relationships might flourish. We are grateful that the counselors, advocates, and volunteers at Safe Haven Ministries have the commitment and expertise to walk with women and children through such a long, and oftentimes otherwise very lonely, journey.”

– Julie Benison, Donor



## SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES LEGACY SOCIETY

Gifts that make a difference. Impact that lasts a lifetime and beyond.

Earlier this summer, Safe Haven launched its Planned Giving Program as a way to continue the legacy of our donors whose compassion and love speak to a commitment greater than their personal stories. For more than 26 years, this donor community has come alongside Safe Haven to ensure that victims and survivors have the support and services they need to heal and achieve independence.

A gift through your will or estate is one of the easiest gifts you can make today to continue your legacy of compassion and care for years to come. Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, we will be able to expand and sustain the programs and services that are necessary to break the cycle of abuse in our communities, while making sure hurting women and children have a place of refuge and hope.

To learn more or to become a member, contact the Development Department at [development@safehavenministries.org](mailto:development@safehavenministries.org).



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## JOIN THE SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES COMMUNITY TODAY!

Please visit our website to view our Fall Wish List or to make a financial gift. Safe Haven is completely donor funded and we cannot do this work without the generosity of people like you!

Also on our website you can find our 2016 Annual Report. Please contact our Development Department with any questions.

[safehavenministries.org](http://safehavenministries.org)



## A SPECIAL THANKS...

To everyone who attended our Fall Luncheon and our Fashion Show! The support of our community is such an encouragement to all of us. **Thank you for making our work possible.**