



# voices

from Safe Haven Ministries

A semi-annual publication from Safe Haven Ministries

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

## A NOTE FROM MEGAN



It has been a blessing to be part of the good work God is doing in our community while serving as the Interim Executive Director since May. Domestic violence not only impacts families,

but also our neighborhoods, faith communities, schools, and workplaces. Safe Haven's work through prevention and education reached over 6,000 people throughout West Michigan this past fiscal year. Your support as donors and community partners enables us to expand these services to meet our community's needs.

Our capital campaign continues to move forward. In the month of June, we received \$550,000 in gifts and pledges, and from July through early August, we received \$315,000 in pledges. We are grateful for God's blessings and provision. To date, we have raised \$3,160,000 toward our \$4,800,000 capital campaign!

The new facility will double our capacity to serve families, while also providing additional prevention and education services to our community.

Thank you for helping us serve so many women and children and offer resources to our greater Grand Rapids community. You are helping to bring an end to domestic abuse.

I truly thank God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you...and I am confident of this: that He who began a good work will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ (*adapted from Phil. 1:3-11*).

Have a beautiful fall!

Many blessings,  
Megan E. Hopkins

## GLADYS' STORY

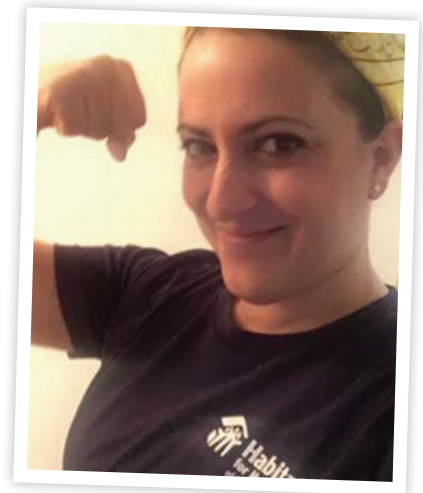
I never thought I would be the person seeking services at a place like Safe Haven; I was the nurse educating women about domestic abuse. My marriage was not the greatest, but my husband never touched me in a violent way. I did not want to be ungrateful. Marriage is hard, right?

So why was I so lonely? Why was I constantly exhausted, on edge, depressed and unmotivated? He always had an explanation: I was a lazy slob in need of meds to fix my craziness.

He spent our money. My car was repossessed twice, he made me withdraw from my retirement, take out fake student loans, payday loans, and turn over my portion of our tax returns to him. Despite this, none of our bills were getting paid. Our electricity and water were shut off and we went into foreclosure.

There is more, but the wake up call came when my two young boys started calling me lazy and crazy. I could not allow them to follow his lead. I told my oldest son, "This is not how moms and dads are supposed to treat each other, and I hope one day when you get married you will treat each other with love and respect. I do not want you to live like this." Then the light turned on ... if I did not want this for him, why did I want it for me? This was an abusive relationship and that reality blew my mind. Things were not going to get better and my kids were being harmed.

Fast forward a few years—I was divorced and broke, unable to even be approved for a \$100 credit card or an apartment! I needed help. I first sought support at an agency that I could not afford because of their fees. I went without help for a while, and found myself contemplating ending my life because I felt so hopeless and helpless. I decided to keep fighting and that is



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when I found Safe Haven. I remember my initial phone conversation. They took me seriously! This was going to be a partnership.

My advocate, Susan, changed my life. She validated my experience, bolstered my confidence, and supported me in my grief. She even came with me to court, as a support person, when I was terrified to have to face my ex. And for all of this, I did not owe a penny. If I could, I would donate a million dollars to Safe Haven. I am so grateful to those who choose to support this ministry, which empowered me to become independent and strong; to see my beauty and my strengths; to be the kind of mom I always wanted to be.



## NEW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR FAITH LEADERS

At Safe Haven, we understand how difficult it can be to support a survivor of domestic abuse, but we also understand the important role the church plays in supporting survivors. *Creating a Safe Haven* is the first-of-its-kind program designed to help faith communities develop skills, policies, and procedures to support someone experiencing domestic violence.

On August 2, Mars Hill Bible Church and St. Pius X Parish participated in the pilot of our certification program that will launch this fall.

To register your church for the Winter 2018 training, contact Tara Aday at [taday@safehavenministries.org](mailto:taday@safehavenministries.org) or visit [safehavenministries.org/certification](http://safehavenministries.org/certification).

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Relationship abuse can start long before youth reach adulthood, and the implications can last a lifetime. Like adults, teens experience violence in very tangible ways, and the effects of emotional and physical abuse can be intensified with the use of technology and social media. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that among high school students that dated, 1 in 5 females and 1 in 10 males experienced physical and/or sexual violence (2016). Locally, the Kent County Community Health Needs Assessment (2014), found that 9.7 percent of Kent County high school students were intentionally physically injured by someone they were dating or going out with during the previous 12 months.

Fortunately, Safe Haven continues to grow its Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program, utilizing curriculums supported by the CDC in their effectiveness to decrease rates of dating violence across the lifespan. During Fiscal Year 2017, Safe Haven facilitated sessions in over 11 school districts, reaching over 1,500 students. Using culturally and developmentally appropriate materials and activities, Safe Haven is engaging youth in positive conversations around boundaries, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention. One common theme we are seeing in our evaluations is that for many teens, this is the first time they have ever had these conversations.

If you are interested in bringing Safe Haven into your school, please contact Tara Aday, Director of Prevention and Education, at 616-452-6664 or [taday@safehavenministries.org](mailto:taday@safehavenministries.org).

Based on the data we collect during pre- and post-surveys, we see the value of this program:

Following our program,

**99%**

of students believed they could identify two warnings signs of an abusive relationship – as opposed to 66% in the pre-test.

Following our program,

**88%**

of students reported that they could describe a non-pressuring way to initiate a conversation with someone they suspected may be experiencing abuse—up from just 39% in the pre-test.



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### FISCAL YEAR 2017 PROGRAM STATS

**678** women & children served

**23** households entered permanent or permanent supportive housing upon exiting shelter

**311** individuals participated in support groups

**449** assessments provided to women and children seeking our services

**2,961** individuals received support & safety planning through our 24/7 free & confidential hotline

## 2017 ANNUAL FALL LUNCHEON

Thursday, September 14, 2017  
 Noon to 1:30 PM  
 Amway Grand Plaza Hotel  
 Ambassador Ballroom



Invite your co-workers, friends, and family to join us for this special fundraising event! In 2012, Melissa Dohme Hill's high school ex-boyfriend brutally attacked her, attempting to take her life. Following her attack and miraculous recovery, she vowed to become an advocate and speak out against domestic violence. Melissa will share her story of hope and healing as an inspiration for our efforts to end domestic abuse in our community.

Reserve your seats by September 6.

Visit [safehavenministries.org/fall-luncheon](http://safehavenministries.org/fall-luncheon) or contact Debbie Murphy at [dmurphy@safehavenministries.org](mailto:dmurphy@safehavenministries.org) or 616.452.6664.

*While we will not be selling tickets, we ask that you consider a financial gift to support our mission to end domestic abuse.*

## DONATE NOW EVERY GIFT MATTERS!

You can support victims of domestic abuse on their journey to a new beginning.

Give a donation at [www.safehavenministries.org/support](http://www.safehavenministries.org/support)

Looking for a new way to support Safe Haven? Donate much needed items from our wishlist such as baby wipes, air mattresses and pillows. For a complete list of needed items, visit: [www.safehavenministries.org/wishlist](http://www.safehavenministries.org/wishlist).



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## EVENTS & TRAINING UPDATES

Stay involved with Safe Haven all year long and attend our events!  
Visit [www.safehavenministries.org/events](http://www.safehavenministries.org/events) for more information.

**SATURDAY**

**SEPT 9**

Domestic  
Violence Seminar

**SUNDAY**

**OCT 22**

Mother/Daughter  
Luncheon

**MONDAY**

**OCT 23**

Domestic Violence  
Awareness Month  
Candlelight Vigil

**FRIDAY**

**OCT 27**

Noto's Fall  
Winefest

**THURSDAY**

**SEPT 14**

2017 Annual  
Fall Luncheon

Reserve your seats by  
September 6. See page  
3 for more details.