



voices

A tri-annual publication from Safe Haven Ministries

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



A NOTE FROM MEGAN

EXPANDING OUR MISSION & VISION

For the past 30 years, Safe Haven Ministries has served individuals experiencing domestic violence. Although our physical spaces have changed over the years to increase our capacity to serve survivors and their children, our commitment to serving victims/survivors of domestic abuse has remained the same.

The expansion into a new state-of-the-art facility comes with great responsibility. Over the course of this past year, with input from our stakeholders, Safe Haven Ministries developed a strategic plan to guide our organization for the next 3 years. Creating this plan allowed us to reflect on how Safe Haven's core mission and vision are lived out each day in the work that we do. Central to this conversation were elements of faith, inclusion, and survivor-centered care.

Safe Haven Ministries was founded by six local churches out of an unmet need to protect against domestic violence in the community. These churches continue to support our work, even as new congregations and traditions have joined in our mission over the years. Our faith continues to undergird our organization, following Christ's example to love others and serve individuals on the margins in our own neighborhoods.

In order to truly work toward ending domestic violence, we must ensure that we work to end relationship abuse for every person. We believe that every person has the right to live free from the fear of relationship abuse, regardless of their race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or socioeconomic status. This commitment can be seen through our physical space that we intentionally work to make accessible. At Safe Haven Ministries, all are welcome and all are safe.

At Safe Haven, we have always strived to empower survivors. Survivor-centric care has always been top priority for our staff, and we continue to value and respect the dignity and individuality of each person we serve. This means that our services are not a one-size-fits-all, but rather a continual dialogue between client and advocate. As advocates educate individuals on domestic violence and the resources available to them, clients are able to make informed decisions and develop goals for themselves that they can continue to work toward beyond their time with our organization.

These themes inform our work every day at Safe Haven Ministries, and can be clearly seen in our mission, vision, values statements. To view our new values statements in their entirety, please visit our website at www.shmgr.org/what-we-believe.

We thank you for your support and commitment to Safe Haven and the work we do every day to help end relationship abuse. Together, we can work to create safer and healthier communities.

With warm regards,

Megan E. Hopkins, Executive Director

MISSION: Following Christ's example and motivated by our community needs, our mission is to prevent and end relationship abuse.



VISION: We value the inclusion of all survivors. Through education, empowerment and community collaboration, we believe all individuals have a right to a healthy relationship.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

At Safe Haven Ministries, we work to meet the diverse needs of those in our community who experience domestic violence.



In order to truly work toward ending domestic violence, we must ensure that we work to end relationship abuse for every person, and we recently released a statement regarding our commitment to this mission. In that statement, we said: “The violence that has taken place in the last weeks and months, particularly against the Black community, shines a light on the long-existing injustices that have been embedded in our country since its inception...one thing will always stand true: Black lives matter. The voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of color must be heard.”

Our staff and community have continued on a journey of learning, listening and discernment. We must continue to center our work on the needs of all domestic violence victims. God’s call for us is to act justly and to love kindly toward all people.

Doing this work requires an intersectional framework. Intersectionality—a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw—helps us understand the importance of looking at different discriminatory institutions and cultural norms and how these impact how people navigate the world they live in.

Our focus on this work is an extension of our mission to end relationship abuse. In order to do this, everyone must feel safe walking through our doors.

Individuals cannot be afraid to ask for help from their employer, faith leader or neighbor. We can only end relationship abuse when no one is afraid of retaliation or increased violence when seeking help.

When every domestic violence victim can safely seek justice, we will be closer to ending relationship abuse. The same goes for the prevention of relationship abuse. When all young boys and men feel safe expressing the beautiful emotions and joy that they experience, we will have moved closer to a world free from violence. When children can easily find books in their libraries and schools that depict strong female leaders and leaders of colors, we will be closer to a world where equal value is given to every human. We can prevent relationship abuse when everyone in our community has equal access to safe and affordable housing.

Safe Haven is committed to preventing and ending domestic violence, and we hope that you too will join us in this work.

Attend our virtual fall event to learn more about how you can create a safer community!

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED.

VOLUNTEER.

Apply to be a front desk volunteer or for other positions at shmgr.org/volunteer

HOLD A PANTRY DRIVE.

Visit shmgr.org/pantry-drive or email Katie at kdevries@shmgr.org to get your church, workplace, or book club signed up to supply our shelter needs.



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OFFERING SAFE SERVICES DURING A PANDEMIC

While the Stay-at-Home order was not the cause of domestic violence, it gave abusers a new tool to isolate and further control their partners. Because it was not safe for victims to contact domestic violence service providers over the phone with their assailant constantly present, we saw a decrease in the number of hotline calls and crisis contacts between March and June. In discussion with other local domestic violence agencies, we found this to be the case throughout West Michigan.

STEPS TO GETTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT

1-on-1 Support | Emergency Safe Shelter | Crisis Planning | Support Groups



100% Free | No ID required | Services available in your preferred language



In that time we also saw an increase in email and social media contacts, a safer, more discrete method of contact than making a phone call. In July, we added an encrypted chat feature to our website to securely connect survivors during business hours. This change increased access through virtual communication, reducing barriers for those seeking services.

Now more than ever, our team of licensed social workers is needed to help families cope with violence and heal from trauma. We appreciate your continued support as we work to create safer and healthier communities during this challenging time.

DID YOU KNOW?

On an average day over 60% of our shelter residents are children.

BECOME A MONTHLY SUSTAINER OF HOPE.

Please review and return the enclosed envelope to support Safe Haven on a monthly basis, or visit shmgr.org/support today!



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Please save the date for our



Preshow to begin at 6:30pm

Tuesday,
September 29