

voices

Fall 2024



Dear Friend,

We have a critical problem in our lives today: an epidemic of violence and abuse.

The epidemic of domestic violence is complex - it reflects deep-rooted gender, power and societal dynamics that requires systemic changes, public education, compassionate response and stronger legal frameworks to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

No one can hold the pain of domestic violence, abuse or exploitation alone. What is swirling around our culture and community today is putting more and more of us, our schools, and our neighborhoods at risk for abuse and violence. And the facts show kids of color are disproportionately affected, those with limited economic resources are facing a struggle, and women continue to be disproportionately represented in experiencing harm and assault.

Together, these factors contribute to the fact that last year, Safe Haven:

- **provided 10,807 nights of emergency safe shelter;**
- **served 65 victims of human trafficking through our crisis services and transitional housing;**
- **helped 28 households secure safe housing with 38 kids through our new "Safe Transitions" supportive housing program; and**
- **engaged over 11,550 people through outreach and training activities.**

Our work across the community connects in every place and sector and we believe, together, we can transform systems...and lives.

It's why we are excited "Safe and Thriving," an initiative with Godfrey-Lee Schools, is inspiring local neighbors and leaders and introducing teens to conversations about healthy relationships.

Mary Oliver's poem "Wage Peace" resonates with our mission. "Wage peace with your breathe. Breathe in fireman and rubble, breathe out whole buildings and flocks of red wing blackbirds." To create more solutions and accountability in our community is tedious and complex, and requires imaginative intentionality - a "waging" to direct our energy toward a peace where nothing is missing and nothing is broken. We hope for the day in which no one would run in the middle of the night from a trafficker or abuser, desperate for help.

People's voices are often muffled and silenced; but we believe never extinguished; so we continue the work of empowering victims to become survivors. And together, breathe and wage peace.



Rachel VerWys, CEO

A Survivor's Restored Dignity

On December 18, 2016, when my children were 6, 4, 2, and 4 months old, I made the difficult decision to leave the home where we experienced abuse from their father. It felt like jumping off a cliff but I knew that jumping from a cliff would be safer than spending a single moment longer in that house.

While sitting with my bags, a couple of friends, and my babies, we came across a domestic violence shelter much like Safe Haven Ministries. It just so happened that a bedroom had opened up that day. And it would fit my babies! I was overjoyed!

I packed up my children and drove the grueling hour and a half to the shelter. When we arrived, it was like a long-lost family was awaiting our arrival. Everyone in the building quickly became family over the four months we were there. The advocates helped sustain our everyday living, equipped me to navigate employment, set up emotional support for myself and the children, connected us with state assistance, and helped us find housing. Just seven days after we moved in, the shelter provided my babies and me with a beautiful Christmas morning. The time spent there was incredibly healing.

Through this process, we were able to restore our dignity, thanks not only to the beautiful souls working and volunteering at these shelters but also to the amazing, generous people who supported and believed in the importance of a safe place for domestic violence victims.

Today I have a seat at the table with other domestic violence survivors on the Survivor Advisory Committee! Safe Haven Ministries has provided me with a platform to give back to a community that saved our lives. I have the opportunity to be a beacon of hope and an experienced voice in areas that desperately need it.

Whether or not your support directly helped my family, I can boldly stand here today to represent every survivor and victim you have supported and look you in the eye to say, "Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!" Know that you have altered the course of countless lives and are helping to change the narrative for future generations.

What might seem like pennies and dollars to you means freedom to many others. Your contributions have made an immeasurable impact.

- Brittany



**TAKE A STAND
AGAINST VIOLENCE**

JOIN



SAFE HAVEN
MINISTRIES

**Sustainers
of Hope**

Now...during Domestic Violence Awareness Month Consider joining our Sustainers of Hope, a group of donors who have committed to giving a financial gift **monthly** This allows Safe Haven to plan for budget consistency to support survivors and prevent violence and abuse

safehavenministries.org/support

or

Text to Give

SAFE30

to

41444



Our Impact To Date



10,807

NIGHTS OF SAFETY PROVIDED
TO INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

63

HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS SERVED
THROUGH SAFE HAVEN PROGRAMMING

3,683

CRISIS CONTACTS RECEIVED

11,558

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED
WITH OUTREACH & TRAINING

JULY 2024

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
ACTION NETWORK
LAUNCHES FIRST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SPECIALITY COURT IN
KENT COUNTY



Please Join Us!



OCT 7th



DVAN
Domestic Violence
Candlelight Vigil

Blue Bridge
6:30pm-8pm

OCT 10th

Safe Haven
Domestic Violence
Prayer Vigil

Blue Bridge
12pm-1pm



OCT 10TH
8:30-10 AM

**COFFEE
WITH THE
CEO**

**LEARN MORE
TOGETHER**

OCT 17th • Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking
8:30am-12:30pm | CoC @ Mel Trotter

OCT 26th • Bilingual Church Certification Workshop
8:30am-5pm | @ Lee St. Church

NOV 11th • Domestic Violence & Anti-Trafficking
Seminar | 9am-12pm

Visit www.shmgr.org/events to register



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“Home for the Holidays” begins November 1st!



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