



voices

A tri-annual publication from Safe Haven Ministries

SUMMER 2026

Summer has arrived! Do you remember the lazy days of summer as a kid? Or perhaps the first thing that comes to mind is the chore list your parents gave you. One of my favorite summer activities with my own kids was making a bucket list of fun. From sidewalk chalk art shows to book reading goals and pool days, summer adventures are at our doorstep.



At Safe Haven Ministries, we also recognize that summer can bring challenges. Increased community violence can be heard in the sirens on our streets, and youth often spend more time on screens during their free time.

Our mission is to prevent abuse and violence by increasing protective factors. These include individual skills, healthy relationships, and community connections. Safe Haven Prevention Praxis Youth programs help young people identify and express emotions while equipping parents, grandparents, mentors, and other trusted adults to play a positive role in a child's life.

We work with schools, youth organizations, and families to nurture safe and supportive communities. Safe Haven's Grow, Engage, Read, Imagine (GERI) and My Voice Matters curriculum provide youth and trusted adults with tools to better understand healthy relationships and have important conversations.



As technology continues to shape our lives, we want youth and families to gain the skills they need to build healthy relationships, make wise choices, stay safe, and know how to get help when needed. GERI's books and conversation guides, along with My Voice Matters, use engaging lessons to address age-appropriate topics for youth.

Add our resources to your summer bucket list:

GERI uses children's books, from board books to young adult novels, to teach healthy social norms and encourage conversations about boundaries and consent.

Learn more at gerigr.org.

Rachel VerWys

CEO, SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES



How Smartphones Impact Our Families

Safe Haven Ministries created this module to connect parents and caregivers with information to better understand technology, how it's used, and how to keep their children safe. When we work together to identify a need, provide solutions, and meet those needs, we are safer as a community. Explore our conversation cards and start the discussion.

Explore the conversation cards on our website!



Always remember your own self-care.



Surviving to Thriving A Survivor's Story.

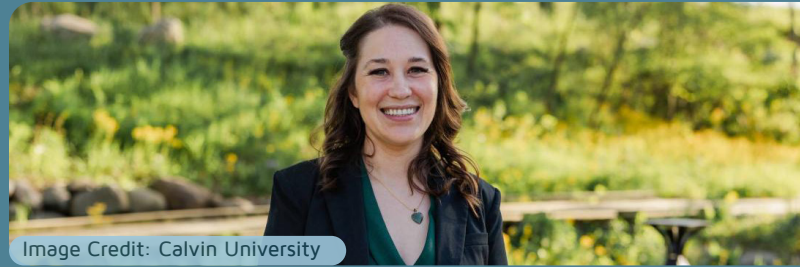


Image Credit: Calvin University

One year ago, Elizabeth Bol was surviving.

She was navigating a difficult divorce while recovering from addiction and alcoholism. Though she had a job, it just covered the bills. "I was just working to survive," recalls Bol. "I felt stuck."

One day, sitting outside Safe Haven Ministries — where she was receiving support for domestic abuse — Bol reached a breaking point.

"I was crying out to God, asking Him to literally show me the way,"
said Bol.

Within moments, she received an email from an advocate at Safe Haven encouraging her to apply for the Wayfinder Program, an eight-credit college experience offered by Calvin University that's designed for adult learners who are facing social or economic barriers to higher education who want to enter or re-enter education in a supportive environment with barriers removed.

So, she applied. And to her surprise, she was accepted.

Read more about Elizabeth's story by Calvin University.



Introducing Safe Haven Ministries' Legal Services Coordinator

For many survivors, escaping abuse is not the end of the struggle, but the beginning of a new one.

After finding safety, they often face a maze of legal challenges. The legal system's intent is to provide resolution and protection, but it can become another way an abusive partner exerts power and control.

99% of 103 domestic violence survivors studied reported economic abuse.

– University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011

Economic abuse is not limited to one form, but the result is always the same – financial instability for a survivor. When faced with high legal costs, many survivors make the choice to represent themselves in complex domestic violence cases. Cases in which litigation is often weaponized to maintain control and keep survivors trapped in conflict.

Every survivor deserves access to information, support, and guidance as to how abuse impacts legal outcomes. To help fill this need, we have recently expanded our legal advocacy services by welcoming Courtney Ward, a Legal Services Coordinator. Courtney can assist victims and survivors in various ways – from explaining legal rights and court processes, to helping prepare for hearings, creating safety plans, connecting survivors to legal resources and coordinating with community partners to reduce barriers.

While we do not provide legal representation or give legal advice, our legal advocacy helps survivors understand and navigate the legal system – creating a more accessible path forward.

Safety is more than leaving.

Safety means having the support necessary to rebuild, recover, and move forward.

You're Invited

2026 Fall Luncheon



Join us as we gather partners, supporters, survivors, family, and friends to stand together against violence and be a voice for hope and healing in our community. Experience an afternoon with lunch, refreshments, powerful stories from survivors and advocates, and opportunities to connect, reflect, and inspire action.

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

JW Marriott Grand Rapids

11:30 a.m. Networking | 12:00 p.m. Lunch

235 Louis St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Individual ticket prices start at \$35.00.

Annual Sponsorship Opportunities

We invite you to empower survivors and help change lives by joining us as an Annual Event Sponsor. This investment will strengthen our ability to provide immediate safety, ongoing support, and lasting hope for survivors and their families.



Anchor of Hope (\$20,000)

Two tables at our Fall Luncheon. Website logo representation and recognition with logo on promotional materials, social media platforms, e-news, and at the event.



Ambassador of Hope (\$10,000)

Two tables at our Fall Luncheon. Website logo representation and recognition with logo on promotional materials, social media platforms, e-news, and at the event.



Ally of Hope (\$5,000)

One table at our Fall Luncheon. Website logo representation and recognition with logo on promotional materials, social media platforms, e-news, and at the event.



Advocate of Hope (\$2,500)

One table at our Fall Luncheon. Website logo representation and recognition with logo on promotional materials, social media platforms, e-news, and at the event.



Agent of Hope (\$1,250)

One table at our Fall Luncheon. Recognition with logo on promotional materials, social media platforms, e-news, and at the event.

Your Sponsorship

Welcomes victims into safe shelter

Opens the door to a survivor moving into a secure home

Sets the table for weekly support groups

Ensures our 24/7 response connects survivors to critical resources

Engages youth in violence prevention activities

Equips community leaders with resources to support survivors



Help further our mission of ending domestic abuse and human trafficking. Together, we can ensure no victim faces their journey alone.

Scan the QR code to learn more about sponsorship opportunities and registration.



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Healing Happens in Community

You are not alone.

Free, confidential support groups are available this summer.

Relationship Abuse Virtual Support Group

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
(7/1 – 8/19)

Advanced Relationship Abuse Educational Support Group

Thursdays, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
(7/2 – 8/20)

Relationship Abuse Educational Support Group

Thursdays, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
(7/2 – 8/20)



Christmas in July

Join Christmas in July and help stock essential items for Safe Haven families. Scan the QR code to view our wish list.

