



voices

A tri-annual publication from Safe Haven Ministries

FALL 2026

Connected in Hope

I wonder if we are living in a crisis of connection because I know we are existing in a crisis of violence.

Perhaps the reason I leaned into the story in Theo of Golden is because it offers the possibility that each of us can alter disconnection.

Written by Allen Levi, the book made the reading lists of many this past year. The story presents questions and insight about purpose, grief, and being known. It is a story about connection and, often, its absence. I shared the book with many others this summer as I heard stories of weariness and grief because it offers a path toward kindness and hope.



Theo, the main character in the book, connects with Ellen, a woman who lives between the streets of Golden and a shelter. Theo becomes friends with her through an exchange of a gift and his celebration of her artistic talents.

In one of their conversations, Theo shares, "Ellen, the older I get, the more convinced I am that every hurt the world has ever known is somehow the fault of every person who ever lived. Maybe not directly and never entirely, but somehow, I fear, we own all of the world's hurts together."

This might be a wild assertion for Theo to ask Ellen to consider. And yet, I have a notion Theo's wondering may be the hope we all long for; that we are connected to one another in both the beauty and the pain of the world.

Safe Haven Ministries' mission is to follow Christ's example and be motivated by our community's needs to prevent and end relationship abuse and human trafficking. Our community and our connection to one another bring us to a place to collectively care and act.

The pain of abuse, human trafficking, and violence has marked our community and left a trail of hurt in its wake. Our state is reeling from two domestic violence mass murders this summer, and over the last few months, we have been navigating higher numbers of cases involving extremely dangerous incidents of abuse.

Every day, our staff and volunteers work to ensure that when someone reaches out for help, Safe Haven is there. We are here because our community is individually and collectively committed to support survivors. Our connectedness to one another makes our community healthier and builds our resilience to walk toward healing and empowerment.

This fall, cuts in funding will become reality for our state grants. Uncertainty will continue to surface, and domestic violence and human trafficking will continue to alter the lives of our neighbors. This is why your partnership continues to be so important.

Your kindness, compassion, and commitment to community make it possible for Safe Haven to continue saying, "Welcome" whenever someone needs help.

The crisis of violence decreases when our connectedness to one another and ownership of building thriving families and communities grows. We invite you to consider how each one of us builds hope through generosity and compassion. These practices connect us and write a story that weaves us together in the hurt and the healing.

Rachel VerWys

CEO, SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES



Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Find meaningful ways to connect, learn, and take action this fall.



Unbroken Wings: A Vigil of Remembrance

Blue Bridge Downtown
Grand Rapids

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 6 p.m.

Domestic Violence and Anti-Trafficking Seminar

Safe Haven Ministries

Thursday, Oct. 15, 6-9 p.m.

Wear Purple Day

Domestic Violence

Awareness Month

Thursday, Oct. 22

Praxis Faith Gathering: AI and Relationships

Safe Haven Ministries

Thursday, Oct. 22, 9-11 a.m.

Sacred Space: A Night of Prayer, Practice, and Lament

Crossroads Bible Church

Monday, Oct. 26, 7 p.m.

Creating Safer Community: Understanding Domestic Violence

Safe Haven Ministries

Thursday, Oct. 29, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Coffee with CEO

Safe Haven Ministries

Thursday, Nov. 5, 10 a.m.



**View all our
upcoming events
and join us!**

Steady Support, *Lasting Impact*

This October, as Safe Haven Ministries recognizes Domestic Violence Awareness Month, our commitment remains steady. Funding cuts may change the resources available to organizations across Michigan, but they do not change the need for safety, advocacy, education, and prevention. We will continue showing up for survivors, equipping our community, and creating opportunities to learn, connect, remember, and act. Through every event, conversation, and act of support this month, we are reminded that lasting impact is possible when a community chooses to stand together.



**Please join us in
providing steady support
and a lasting impact.**





Seen, Heard & Helped

Human trafficking is often discussed through headlines, statistics, and high-profile cases, but behind every conversation there are real people whose lives have been shaped by exploitation, manipulation, fear, and control.

Just as recognizing the realities of trafficking is an important step, so is knowing where support is available.

Safe Haven Ministries is here for victims and survivors of human trafficking and exploitation. Whether someone is looking for a safe place to talk, contemplating their options, or seeking connections to resources and ongoing support, our team is here to listen and help them navigate.

There is no single experience of human trafficking, and there is no single path forward. Safe Haven meets each person with compassion, dignity, and respect for where they are in their journey.

As we continue moving the conversation beyond the headlines, we also want our community to know this: If you or someone you care about has experienced human trafficking or exploitation, support is available. You do not have to navigate what comes next alone.

Windows of Hope

Help us spread more safety, more hope, and more visibility throughout our community. Safe Haven Ministries' new Windows of Hope clings feature a QR code that helps connect people with our services and resources. Pick up a cling at our Fall Luncheon or stop by the Safe Haven office during normal business hours, then place it in a visible window to show your support and help give those in need of our services a safe place to turn.





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Home for the *Holidays*

It's almost that time of year!

For many of our clients, Safe Haven Ministries will be their home for the holidays. Donate today and help survivors with household items and the joy of our free Christmas store.

**Check out our
wish list!**

