



Safe Haven

Shelter and Resource Center



VOICES

WINTER 2020

SHARING OUR STORY

Ever wondered what goes on inside the walls of Safe Haven's Shelter and Resource Center? You are not alone. Our supporters know we are doing important work, but the need for privacy and security can make it difficult to highlight the scope and depth of Safe Haven's impact. We hope this quarterly publication will provide a "slice of life" from inside our organization and show the impact our friends and supporters have on our work and the survivors we serve.

Thank you for reading along and supporting Safe Haven!



SHELTER

Our facility provides temporary shelter, food, and safety in a supportive environment to more than 500 individuals and families who are being abused every year. Crisis calls are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and we are always at or near capacity. Each and every survivor can expect:

- A safe place to call home while building a life free from violence
- Parenting assistance and support programs for their children
- Transportation assistance to work, appointments, and other needs
- Advocacy and access to life-saving social services



RESOURCE CENTER

Our secure drop-in center is open to any and all survivors of domestic violence, no matter where they are on their journey. We specialize in responsive and comprehensive services, including:

- Assistance with restraining orders and navigating the legal system
- Resources for housing, education, employment, and childcare
- Safety planning to escape a dangerous situation
- Access to police, attorneys, therapists, healthcare, and other support providers
- Support groups for adults and youth
- A safe environment equipped with full kitchen, shower, comfortable lounge, and internet access

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A warm hello!

When I began my work at Safe Haven many years ago, I knew that my heart had found its home. As an Advocate, I was humbled by the countless survivors who overcame seemingly insurmountable barriers to break free from the cycle of violence.

It is now my sincere privilege to greet you as Safe Haven's new Executive Director. It's an honor to share in the work of the bold and courageous women that came before me: our founding mothers of the Women's Coalition, and of course my mentor and friend, Susan Utech- Safe Haven's first Executive Director. I will always work hard to make them proud, and uphold their legacy as trail blazers, change-makers, and fierce advocates for women's rights.

For over 40 years Safe Haven has been a beacon of hope for all survivors of domestic violence. Hand-in-hand, we trudge through the murky waters of disadvantage to find opportunities to thrive. Our goal as an organization has always been to embrace, empower, and guide survivors as they journey from violence, hopelessness, and fear to a place of safety, tranquility, and confidence in a brighter tomorrow. With great anticipation for all that the future holds for our agency and those we serve, and with sincere gratitude for our community of supporters-



Brittany Robb

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Support is available 24/7



(218) 728-6481

IN HER OWN VOICE

Co-written by Brittany Robb and October Allen



I met October Allen shortly after becoming the Shelter Supervisor at Safe Haven. She had a fire within her that I had rarely seen during my short time in crisis work. I was intrigued and inspired by her approach to her goals- nothing was going to stand in her way. For the first of what would be many times after, I saw a survivor of unimaginable trauma overcome the odds and thrive.

HOW IT BEGAN

"I first experienced domestic violence by my mother when I was a child. That is what conditioned me to seek validation from others and gave me a distorted view of what healthy relationships look like. She encouraged me to 'find a man' when I was just a teenager. So, at the age of 16 that is what I did. He was a married man in his 30's with seven children and had an addiction to drugs. For six years I stayed with him and it changed not only who I was, but who I could have become."

October had two daughters with her boyfriend, and ultimately ended the relationship. As a young mother, she was lured in by a new partner who took advantage of her vulnerability. She had hoped for the best, and she thought this new relationship would be better for her and her family. Unfortunately it was worse than she could have imagined, and October eventually learned that he assaulted one of her children. This put her on the watch list of child protective services, and her children were removed from her care.

SEARCHING FOR HOPE

"I was lost and desperate. I had a county attorney telling me that he would never give me back my children if I was in the same home as this man, and I had nowhere to turn. I needed a place to tell my story. I needed someone to listen to me and help me process my emotions. I sought help from Safe Haven because I knew they would not give up on me and they had the resources to help me get better while I fought for my children and my life."

STARTING TO HEAL

October stayed with us in the shelter for just over two months. "Safe Haven's advocates listened without judgment and were very resourceful. The Resource Center downtown also helped me rebuild my life. I was able to have lunch, talk to a friend, and use the computer to check my emails while I looked for work. Safe Haven helped me plan for a new future and find my own apartment. I also found great comfort in the legal services and advocates at the Resource Center. They helped me organize my thoughts and prepared me emotionally to go to court. I felt confident and safe when they accompanied me to the courthouse and helped me understand and file papers."

THE TRANSFORMATION

"I am totally free from domestic violence. I have done a lot of work on myself and have healed a great deal. I have found a healthy balance with all relationships in my life. I no longer seek approval or validation from others, including my mother. She passed away two years ago and prior to her passing, we were able to make peace with our pasts and I forgave her. I found out she had been a victim of domestic violence her whole life, but never had help or support in finding freedom."

THRIVING

October's passion for serving others brings her immense joy. "In the past five years I graduated from college, bought a home and some rental properties, worked as a Parent Mentor in child protection in St. Louis and Carlton Counties, and have assisted over 100 children to go home to healthy parents. I serve as the Women's Leader at Celebrate Recovery in Duluth, and I volunteer at drug and alcohol treatment centers and the St. Louis County Jail. In 2018 I became a housing support provider for St. Louis County and am currently the Director of Grace Place, which offers housing support for women who have experienced homelessness. I look forward to opening Grace Place #3 and #4 in June of 2020. I am happily married and my children are with me and are thriving. By volunteering and helping other women, it helps me be mindful of where I have been, and keeps my eyes open to the possibilities of where I can go if I have the right supports in place."

"My life is amazing and I love to serve women who need someone to believe in them and to walk alongside them, even if it is through the fire."

Safe Haven and other agencies connected to the feminist movement in the Twin Ports will be featured in an episode of *Retro Report* produced by PBS and the New York Times later this year.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Kutcher Family



Jenna Kutcher describes herself as a "small town Minnesota photographer, educator and host of The Goal Digger Podcast" who lives and works to help people celebrate their enough-ness. A social media influencer with more than 892,000 Instagram followers, Jenna has created an online presence that is both fun and powerful—and she is using her influence to support Safe Haven's work in a big way. Jenna is inspired to give because of her passion for empowering women, and her contributions go well beyond her and her husband Drew's monetary support.

Through peer-to-peer fundraising, Jenna launched a successful \$5,000 campaign in honor of their daughter Coco's first birthday, opting out of the traditional gift-giving and instead encouraging followers to donate to Safe Haven on Coco's behalf. She also linked her supporters to Safe Haven's Amazon wish list, which produced a pre-holiday avalanche of little brown packages filled with journals, pajamas, baby items and books, sent from new donors reaching coast-to-coast, and even one from as far away as Saskatchewan! The support Jenna was able to leverage illustrates the power of social media and online giving. Because of Jenna's ingenuity and generosity, Safe Haven is able to better support survivors of domestic violence on their paths toward enough-ness.


Thank you, Jenna, for your dedication to our mission and your ongoing support!


Safe Haven
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Shelter for Battered
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Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
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Permit No. 351

To remove yourself from our list or to
receive an electronic copy, email us
at outreach@safehavenshelter.org

Support is available 24/7

 (218) 728-6481

Hoppy Beer-thday Safe Haven



Celebrate our 42nd birthday!

MARCH 26 | 6-9PM

BENT PADDLE BREWING CO.

1832 W MICHIGAN ST, DULUTH, MN

Come celebrate Safe Haven's 42nd Birthday, or shall we
say, beer-thday. There will be beer, lots of local raffle
items and you get to support a cause you care about. To
stay up to date on raffle items, follow us on social media
and share your email address with us! Mark your calendars
because you won't want to miss out!

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

We are excited to re-launch Safe Haven's
quarterly VOICES newsletter, as well as
succinct monthly email updates to keep our
friends and supporters in the loop. Send an
email to: outreach@safehavenshelter.org
to be added to our electronic mailing list,
request more information on our programs
and services, or find out how you can
support our work. You can also find us on
social media for timely updates and
opportunities.

We look forward to connecting with you!



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