



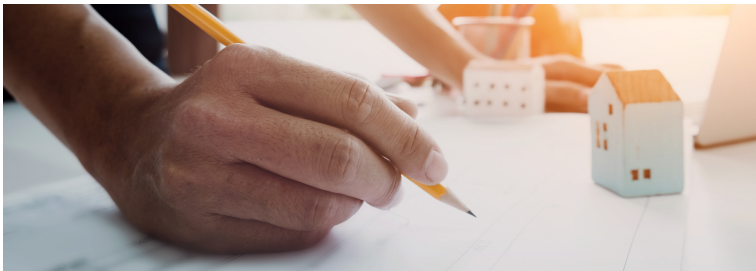
VOICES

WINTER 2021

NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNINGS

While 2021 will present us with both continued and new challenges, Safe Haven is eager to move forward into the new year with hope for change. As an emergency crisis shelter, we've had early access to the vaccine to help keep our clients and staff safe. We've received substantial COVID-relief funding that will help us remodel our shelter to create a safer, more trauma-informed environment. And we will soon be celebrating our agency's 43rd birthday - a tribute to our enduring impact on those we serve.

Thank you for supporting us on our journey!



SHELTER

In addition to our upcoming shelter remodel that will increase the number and privacy of our available rooms, we are also expanding our Self-Sufficiency program by adding new positions at our shelter location. These Transitional Support Advocates will help connect survivors to the resources they need to find stable employment, educational opportunities and safe and supportive housing. This expansion of our program will help survivors build support networks from the very start of their journeys with us in shelter, all the way through until they have reached autonomous living in a life free from violence.



RESOURCE CENTER

Our drop-in downtown location continues to provide legal advocacy, safety planning, and self-sufficiency services for hundreds of survivors every month. We're excited to announce a new collaboration with YMCA Camp Miller where Safe Haven families will have the opportunity to attend a 3 day camp in June! We are also planning for a post-COVID world where we can revive our popular Wellness Day and invite clients to join us for some needed self-care. **If you have a special skill/talent you would be interested in sharing as a volunteer, please email outreach@safehavenshelter.org*

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings!

As I write this, the air temperature in Duluth, Minnesota is a chilly -14. The bright winter sun is sparkling on the frozen ground, and it feels very much like we are still in the throes of winter. The outside world has not yet woken up after a long hibernation, but inside Safe Haven's walls there is a buzzing and a new energy and growth is happening.

Sometimes with challenge comes new opportunities, and while 2020 presented challenges like no other year before, Safe Haven is thriving in ways we couldn't have predicted last year at this time. New funding opportunities have allowed us to expand our Self-Sufficiency program to include staff at both our Shelter and Resource Center. And we are at an exciting stage in planning for a substantial remodel of our Shelter location to better serve the needs of survivors.

This March we will be celebrating Safe Haven's 43rd birthday. And while many of our services have morphed and changed, what still remains after more than four decades is our deep commitment to providing hope, healing, and safety for survivors of domestic violence. We pride ourselves on never losing sight of those values. We take with us the lessons from the past as we move forward with new beginnings, and a renewed hope for lasting change.



Brittany Robb

brittany@safehavenshelter.org

Support is available 24/7



(218) 728-6481

IN HER OWN VOICE

Board Member Deb Mitchell



I have served on Safe Haven's Board of Directors since 2013, and I became involved with Safe Haven not through my own experience with domestic violence, but as a way to heal from it. Back in the early 90's I knew Safe Haven had a shelter for battered women and their children, but that was all I really knew.

THE POWER OF DENIAL

If you have experienced domestic violence or know someone who has, my story will sound familiar. The abuse started slowly; emotionally at first. As time went on, arguments became aggressive and then physical. While it was happening, and even for some time afterwards, I didn't realize how violent it had become. I didn't think of myself as a "battered woman" let alone someone who needed to seek help from a shelter. *This was something that happened to married women and older women with families; it was awful and terrible, but it surely wasn't me?! I was young; I couldn't even legally drink alcohol!* We weren't married and we didn't have children together. He just got really angry if I caught him lying to me. But most of all, I fought back. If he pushed, I pushed back. If he came at me I'd yell and push him away from me. Sometimes it would end there. Sometimes he would leave, sometimes I would leave, but too many times it escalated to his friends pulling him off me while his hands were around my neck. Either way, I didn't think I was experiencing abuse the way the commercials I'd seen depicted it, where the woman was cowering on the floor. I assumed I was at fault too and I had some control...at least that's what I told myself.

IN HER OWN VOICE

Continued

SHAME AND SELF-DOUBT

Eventually I decided I had to do something. I would file a restraining order. I remember being at the courthouse, staring at the paperwork, asking for dates, times and details that I couldn't remember. Days, times, and specifics all blended together - I couldn't think straight. *Maybe it wasn't so bad...after all I DID push back, and maybe it WAS my fault. Maybe filling out the paperwork meant it WAS bad! Maybe it meant I was weak. Besides, who is going to believe me if I can't even remember specifics?* I was fighting with myself. I kept hearing this voice in my head saying, "You are crazy it's nothing" and also "If you don't go through with reporting this, you must like it." *Did I?!* I was confused and scared. I left the paperwork on the table and never went back. I did go back to him though - ashamed. Ashamed for going back to him, and ashamed for even thinking of getting an Order for Protection.

BREAKING, AND THEN HEALING

There is much more to my story, but let's just say it took another year and some terribly traumatic experiences to end the relationship, and then another year and a half with an amazingly supportive group of friends and family to cut all contact. In the time since, I have been blessed to be with the most wonderful man who supports me through my healing and after 27 years he still has my back. This year we will be married for 23 years; we have a life full of children and grandchildren and life is well lived.

"You will never have to go it alone."

MOVING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

I have made it my mission to be sure no one else walks away from that paperwork feeling lost, scared and confused. Safe Haven advocates will be there with you every step of the way. You will never have to go it alone. You don't have to need a place in the shelter, but if you do, they will care for you in a way that is safe and welcoming. You will find others who understand what you have been through, and in groups you will see you are not alone. You will not be judged, and you will learn that being willing to lean on others is what really makes you strong. Safe Haven will help you not just survive, but thrive.

SUPPORTER

SPOTLIGHT

North Shore Bank



It seems fitting to start out the new year by highlighting one of Safe Haven's 2020 *Hope Circle* partners. Our *Hope Circle* is made up of individuals, businesses, and organizations whose unrestricted donations total \$1,000 or more in a calendar year. North Shore Bank has been supporting our agency since 2015, and has generously increased their contributions over the past couple years. Last year their donations landed them at the top of our THRIVE category (\$10,000+) donor list.

Part of North Shore Bank's motivation to give stems from a personal connection to one of our Board members. Being invited to Safe Haven's annual fundraising luncheon has given the bank a valuable perspective on those we serve, and helped to reinforce their company's priority to support the most vulnerable in our community. North Shore Bank is also compelled by Safe Haven's partnership with the Duluth Police Department, and found giving to Safe Haven an obvious fit with their philanthropic goals.

"We are glad to be involved, and we are humbled by Safe Haven's work."


-Chairman Doug Lewis.

We are so thankful to North Shore Bank for their generous support, and for the support of all our *Hope Circle* partners.

VOICES | Winter 2021

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

IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY!

Celebrating

43  **years**

of supporting survivors!

March 2021

www.safehavenshelter.org/birthday

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

We hope you have enjoyed the re-launch of Safe Haven's quarterly VOICES newsletter over this past year. Email us to receive an electronic copy or for more information on our programs or how you can get involved. You can also find us on social media for timely updates and opportunities.

We look forward to connecting with you!



outreach@safehavenshelter.org



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