

**Inside this
issue:**

Director's Report 2

Upcoming Events 2

Giving Form 2

A Survivor's
Success Story 3

Programs offered
by Safe Avenues 3

New Staff and
Board Members 3

Last year, Safe Avenues provided emergency shelter to 83 women, 100 children, and 1 man. During that same year 702 women, 16 men, and 134 children utilized our various Advocacy Programs

“Hope for Tomorrow” Gala was a Success!

After ten months of careful planning and hundreds of volunteer hours, the big night had finally arrived. Dim lights and live music set the mood for mingling guests.

Despite the extensive preparation, nobody was quite ready as Chuck and M'Liss Switzer took center stage to share their humble and heart-wrenching testimony that put a face to both victims and abusers.

Following Chuck and M'Liss was a call to help fund Safe Avenues' youth program, Project Impact. Because the program does not receive state or federal funding, it is completely reliant on grants and community donations. After real testimonies from children who have stayed in



the shelter, few dry eyes could be found. The community answered the plea for help by raising over \$16,000 in a matter of minutes! This has and will continue to help our youth program as it allows staff to keep their focus on the children rather than

working to secure financial resources to keep the program running.

This was Safe Avenues' largest public opportunity to tell the community about their new name, vision and mission since it was changed on July 1st of 2010.

“The community response was overwhelming,” says Kasey Baker, 2011 Gala Chair. People from Willmar and the surrounding area offer their skills and resources in support of Safe Avenues. “The community understands the need for the services that Safe Avenues provides. It's not just about the financial gifts. The generosity of time and of spirit is astounding.”

VAWA STOP Grant and Training

In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which brought widespread recognition to serious violent crimes against women and the commitment to utilize federal resources to address the problem. The STOP (Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) grant was birthed out of this Act with the intent of creating effective responses to violent crimes against women. This

is done by improving the criminal justice system's response to these crimes through partnership of law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim service programs. It takes a collaborative effort from each of these programs to provide safety to women of violent crimes. Safe Avenues recently received the VAWA STOP grant with four major goals in mind: multidisciplinary

training, development of a stalking protocol, development of an effective risk assessment, and creating printed resource information for law enforcement and crime victims. We are pleased to announce that the 2011 goals pertaining to the training components have already been met and efforts toward each of the other goals are on course.



Executive Director's Report



Connie Schmoll,
Executive Director

Memorial Day has special meaning to most of us as we remember and honor those who gave their lives so that all Americans can enjoy the freedoms on which our country was founded. I am grateful for our military troops, both overseas and here in America, and count my blessings on this important day to honor our service men and women. I also reflect on what freedoms I am afforded: the ability to express myself with free speech, the right to vote, own property, and worship where I choose, the right to choose to enhance my education or work a job, and the right to visit with my friends and relatives.

Regretfully, as all of the

members of the team at Safe Avenues witness each day, each week, year after year, not everyone is able to access the rights and freedoms our troops work so hard to preserve.

Each year countless victims of domestic, sexual, and child abuse live in a world of isolation and violence. Some of those victims even lose their lives at the hands of those who, above all else, should be protecting them.

In addition to honoring the American troops, Memorial Day has become a day to recommit to the work of Safe Avenues. It is a day to recommit ourselves in the fight to end violence and

secure the rights of victims of abuse: our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, and our friends.

I also wish to honor those working in the trenches: the advocates, visitation monitors, volunteers, board members and supporters. Thank you to all who help the efforts of Safe Avenues by sending gifts, investing your time, and attending our events. Please continue to spread the word about our life-saving services so that your loved ones will find safety and enjoy the freedoms that our American troops have worked hard to secure.

Last year approximately 30 men slipped into high heels to "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes"

Upcoming Events



Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is coming up on Sept 10 at the Middle School track and field. This event will raise money for Sexual Assault



Awareness. Last year six teams participated in raising over \$4,000 in an hour.

Annual Board meeting will be held on August 16

Pedal for Project Impact will be held on June 18. The event will be sponsored by Safe Avenues, Minnwest Technology Campus and Willmar Electric Service. The event will take place at the Lifecenter located on the Minnwest Technology Campus in Willmar.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and the ride begins at 9:00 a.m. Project Impact provides support and safety planning for children who have lived with violence in the home. The bike ride promotes healthy family relationships and family activity. Registration forms can be found on-line at www.willmarshelter.com or by calling (320) 235-0962.

Safe Avenues Donation Form

DONOR INFORMATION

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Safe Avenues

Safe Avenues is a non-profit organization, registered with the state of Minnesota. Your gift may be tax deductible.

MAIL DONATION TO: Safe Avenues, PO Box 568

Willmar, MN 56201

GIFT INFORMATION

Amount: \$ _____

Contributor's names are published in the Peacelines newsletter. Check this box if you want your gift to be anonymous.

Please use my monetary gift as needed by Safe Avenues.

I am making this gift:

_____ in **memory of** _____ in **honor of:**

Name _____

Relationship _____

To request that we send notice of your gift, please provide Name and address:

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



A Survivor's Success Story



My story is one of hope. Though difficult things happen, there is always a way to find a *Safe Avenue*...

abuse left me emotionally scarred and crippled. I found myself in an abusive marriage; though I didn't recognize it as such because abuse was all that I knew. I believed that

I had the "perfect" life; or so it appeared on the outside. I was a college graduate, had a good job, was married, had two beautiful kids and a home. But

below the surface was hidden turmoil from years of abuse that started in childhood. The

if I asked for help, I was weak and less of a person so I tried to over-compensate by making everyone around me happy. The harder I tried to be the perfect wife and mother, the worse things became. Overcome with emotional stress and depression, I broke down.

Out of sheer desperation I confided in my co-worker about my instability and the abuse that I was facing in my relationship. She suggested I seek help from the women's shelter. Although reluctant at first, I later realized the decision to find counsel from Safe Avenues would be the very refuge I needed most.

I found myself facing great challenges in the struggle to leave my abuser; physical assault, homelessness, divorce, financial devastation,

and even the ability to see my own children. Safe Avenues helped me on a very deep and personal level, while keeping everything confidential. I knew that I would not have to face these issues on my own. The advocates were always there when I needed them; day or night.

I am currently involved with a support group offered through Safe Avenues. From this group I have been able to find continued healing and solace by sharing my experiences with others and discovering that I am not alone in facing these types of challenges. I have learned that asking for help is not a weakness, rather it is a fundamental strength in facing life. Though life's challenges may seem insurmountable, there is always a "Safe Avenue" to help us find hope.

"I found myself facing great challenges in the struggle to leave my abuser; physical assault, homelessness, divorce, financial devastation, and even the ability to see my own children."

*Names have been omitted for safety and privacy reasons

New Staff and Board Members

Jeremy Evans, Chaplin at Project Turnabout in Granite Falls joined our Board of Directors in February.

Greg Lecy, Vice President of Concorde Bank joined our Board of Directors in April.

Gladie Hagen of the University of Minnesota Extension in Renville County joined our Board of Directors in April.

Julie Kveene, Deputy County Recorder of Kandiyohi County joined our Board of Directors in April.

Cathi joined our Renville County Outreach Program as a Domestic Violence Advocate on March 28.

Amy joined our staff in Kandiyohi County as the Interim House Manager on April 25th. She will be with us until the end of May.

Stephanie joined our Kandiyohi County staff as a part time receptionist on May 6. She will be with us until June 30th.

Corie has been part of our staff in Kandiyohi County as an Interim Sexual Assault Coordinator since November of 2010. She stepped into the position of Court Advocate in mid-March.

Kasey joined our Kandiyohi office as the Sexual Assault Coordinator on April 18.

Programs of Safe Avenues

Safe Avenues Programs	Phone
Shelter House, Willmar, Emergency Safe Shelter	320-235-0962 800-792-4210
Project Impact Youth Program	320-235-0962
Renville County Outreach	320-523-1015
Swift County Outreach	320-842-3206
Chippewa/Lac Qui Parle Outreach	320-269-6520
Safe Avenues Sexual Assault Program	320-235-0962 800-792-4210
Harmony Visitation Center	320-214-0799
Criminal Justice Intervention Project	320-222-4030
Safe Avenues Administrative Office	320-235-0475

Jade joined our staff in Kandiyohi as a part time Relief Advocate in November 2010. She stepped into the position of Community Education Coordinator in early March.

Anel joined our staff in the Kandiyohi office as a part time Relief Advocate near the end of April.

Fadumo joined our staff in the Kandiyohi office near the end of April as a part time Relief Advocate.

Brenda joined our staff in the Kandiyohi office near the end of April as a part time Relief Advocate.



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To inspire social change while restoring safety, value and dignity to all in the cycle of interpersonal violence including children at risk of abuse and survivors of domestic abuse or sexual assault.

In order to cut costs, Safe Avenues has decided to publish PeaceLines two times per year. Be sure to check our website regularly to keep up on Safe Avenues news at www.willmarshelter.com

Board Members

Rev. Susan Engholm,
Chair

Ann Amundson,
Secretary

Vera Novak, Treasurer

Paola Morrell

Christie Kurth

Linda Nelson

Marti Nieland

Robert Bonawitz

Jeremy Evans

Greg Lecy

Gladie Hagen

Julie Kveene

Community Responds to the Gala



Over \$50,000 was raised at the Fifth Annual "Hope for Tomorrow" Gala. The financial success exceeded expectations, but more important was the community response. This event brought people from Willmar and the surrounding area together to take a stand against violence by choosing to promote healing, justice, and peace for all.

Safe Avenues would like to thank everyone for their contribution in turning it's vision into a reality.



Gala Sponsors Hon. Catherine Anderson * Heritage Bank * Florence Kerkhoff * Forstrom Family * North American State Bank * Duinick Companies * Jennie-O Turkey Store * Ella Meyerson * APMC * West Central Sanitation * McDonald's of Willmar * Bremer Bank * Sue Torgerson * Swenson Motor Co. * Mick Quinn State Farm Insurance * Donna Lilleberg * Johnson, Moody, Schmidt, Kleinhuizen PA * Lake Region Bank * Dennis & Ruthanne Neeser * Christianson & Associates, PLLP * Kenneth & Alix Behm Kandiyo County Attorney's Office * Bernice Grabber-Tintes* Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP * Q102/KWLM/K100/The Train * KKLN 94.1 * AliLu Studios * Interiors by Beverly * West Central Tribune * 1590/K95.3/97.3 The River *

Thank You to All Sponsors!

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