



SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



Working to create a society free of domestic and sexual violence

FALL 2019

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Service Spotlight: Domestic Violence Services 2
- 12th Annual Walk of Hope 2
- Thank You to our sponsors 2
- We're Better Together 3
- Thank you to the Zonta Club 3
- Types of Abuse 3

Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is upon us once again. I have been asked by some, why do we have an awareness month about domestic violence? Isn't everyone aware by now? My answer to this question is simple. No.

If they saw what we see on a daily basis here at Mutual Ground, they would understand why continuing to spread awareness is so important. It's not only important during the month of October, but every month, actually every day. That's why the word "awareness" is part of our mission statement. Here at Mutual Ground, bringing awareness to this issue is an important step in getting victims and survivors the help they need. Not just awareness of the issue, but awareness of how to prevent it, how to intervene, and how to get the support needed to live a safe and happy life.

Over the past several weeks we have held many awareness events – from our Walk for Hope to our Purple Porch Light Campaign to our new Mutual Ground mural ribbon cutting ceremony at Water Street Studios. I would like to send a sincere thanks to anyone who participated in any of these activities. Your support is vital in raising awareness of domestic violence and the issues surrounding this abuse. Together, we are making a difference!

Sincerely,

Michelle Meyer

Michelle Meyer
Executive Director



Mutual Ground
418 Oak Ave.
Aurora IL 60506

mutualground.org
(630) 897-0084



Save the Date

MUTUAL GROUND
MAIN EVENT

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

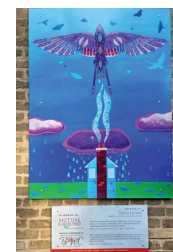
6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Embassy Suites by Hilton
1823 Abriter Ct, Naperville, IL

Mutual Ground Mural at Water Street Studios

We are excited to be the first mural reveal of the Activate the Alley pARTnership project with Water Street Studios! The mural entitled "Soar", was created by artist Laura Lynne Art and generously sponsored by Batavia Woman's Club.

The mural represents a domestic violence survivor going from isolation to community and is joined by a plaque displaying information on how to receive help from Mutual Ground. According to Kathy Melone, Advancement Director at Mutual Ground, "We are thrilled to partner with Water Street Studios to promote awareness of our mission and services, and add beauty to our community. We want to make sure that everyone that needs our services knows that we are here to help, everyday of the year, free of charge. This mural will be a beautiful addition to Batavia and remind victims and survivors of domestic violence that they are not alone, and there is hope."



Service Spotlight: Domestic Violence Services

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 37.7% of women and 25.7% of men in Illinois experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes.

Mutual Ground is a safe place where people come together to break the cycle of domestic violence. Mutual Ground provides a wide range of domestic violence services to residential and non-residential clients, including: Counseling (Individual, Group, Family and Hotline); Case Management, Housing Advocacy, Educational Advocacy, Employment Advocacy, Linkage to Economic Supports; Legal Advocacy, Civil & Criminal, and Medical Advocacy.

Last year, Our Domestic Violence Program served **903** adults and **314** children. We provided emergency shelter to **363** residents for a total of **8,654** nights of stay and victim advocates responded to **83** hospital calls.



Mutual Ground's Domestic Violence Department implemented many program changes, such as expanding services for

children and families, and enhancing training and outreach that has resulted in the provision of shelter services to more trans, gender non-conforming and male-identified victims.

Mutual Ground is a safe, inclusive and affirming environment. Services are provided in Aurora, Batavia, Oswego and Yorkville.

If you or anyone you know needs help or someone to talk to, please contact us at our 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline at (630) 897-0080. Spanish speaking advocates are available - we offer bilingual services to anyone who reaches out to us.

12th Annual Walk for Hope

Thank you to everyone who came out to Walk for Hope on Sunday, September 29th at Blackberry Farm. We had over 350 people attend the event in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month! Thank you to our fundraisers, donors, sponsors, and Walk for Hope committee members for making this event possible!



Thank You to our 2019 Walk for Hope Sponsors!

Gold Sponsors

Aurora Generation, Caterpillar, GL Precision Tube, Guaranteed Rate, The Hartford, Hollywood Casino, Meadowvale, Molly Maid

Silver Sponsors

Aurora Firefighters IAFF Local 99, BEI Properties, Comcast, Miscella Real Estate, Oxford Bank, The Rotary Club of Geneva, Sunshine Cleaning Services, Vertical Financial Group, XPO Logistics, Youngren's Inc.

Bronze Sponsors

Alarm Detection Services, The Exchange Club of the Tri-Cities, Fairview Dental, Fox Valley Credit Union, Fox Valley Park District, George Sterling, CPA, Kane County Sheriff's Office, State Representative Keith Wheeler, Magnetrol International, Orchard Road Animal Hospital, Rush Copley Medical Center, Tiechart and Associates, Inc.

Patron Sponsors

Fox Valley Dialysis, LTD., Gamma Phi Omega, Jewel-Osco, Kendall County Sheriff's Office, Tredwell Coffee, Zonta West- Illinois

It Just Makes Sense... We're Better Together!

Two pillars in the community are joining forces to enhance the services offered by their agencies. Mutual Ground and Breaking Free have signed paperwork to combine their entities and are planning a full merger by July of 2020.



From left to right - Andi Danis - Mutual Ground Board President, Michelle Meyer - Mutual Ground Executive Director, Teddi Krochman - Retiring Breaking Free Executive Director, Cindy Heibel, Breaking Free Board President.

Both Mutual Ground and Breaking Free have served the community for more than 40 years. Mutual Ground, founded in 1975, provides education, awareness and life-changing services that empower individuals, families and communities to end the cycles of domestic and sexual violence. Breaking Free, founded in 1977, helps build strong family foundations and rebuild those impacted by substance abuse, child abuse and other life challenges. Together they will be able to provide exceptional service to members of the community who are experiencing a wide range of issues that sometimes overlap.

According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine nearly 40-60% of

domestic violence crimes are related to the use of alcohol/and or drugs. And a study by the Illinois Department of Housing Services found that of women in a drug treatment center, 90% had been physically assaulted and 95% had been raped. In addition, substance abuse is often used as a coping mechanism to help deal with the trauma endured by sexual and domestic violence victims.

According to Michelle Meyer, Executive Director of Mutual Ground, "By joining forces with Breaking Free, Mutual Ground will be better able to meet the increasingly complex needs of today's individuals and families. Both agencies provide a vital service to the community and help thousands of individuals annually. This merger just increases our ability to help people heal when they are facing overwhelming challenges in their lives."

Both agencies collaborate with schools, law enforcement agencies, local coalitions and other human service organizations to help strengthen communities in their service area. This unique approach offers prevention services, intervention services, and ongoing support for victims of domestic and/or sexual violence, and those facing substance abuse issues.

According to Teddi Krochman, retiring Executive Director of Breaking Free, "Both Breaking Free and Mutual Ground use nationally recognized prevention and educational programs to build the life skills people need to thrive and make positive

decisions for themselves and their families. Every client comes to us with unique challenges. This merger allows us to meet those challenges in a direct way, and helps clients rebuild their lives with services that are tailored to the individuals needs to best ensure success."

To learn more about the services of Mutual Ground and Breaking Free visit mutualground.org and breakingfreeinc.org.

Thank You to the Zonta Club of St. Charles, Geneva, and Batavia

Thank you to members of the Zonta Club of St. Charles, Geneva, and Batavia for decorating the Mutual Ground fence with purple bows and banners to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month! These decorations will be displayed for the entire month of October.



Types of Abuse

Abuse comes in many forms. Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in a relationship. While physical violence may be the first thing that comes to mind when one pictures domestic violence, abusers exert their control in many other ways.

Here are just a few examples of how an abuser exerts power and control over a partner:

Physical Abuse

- Scratching, punching, slapping, biting, or kicking
- Throwing something at partner
- Hair pulling and grabbing clothes
- Restraining and preventing partner from leaving
- Grabbing partner's face to make you look at them
- Using a gun, knife, mace or other weapon

Verbal Abuse

- Name calling, belittling, and making demeaning comments
- Yelling and threatening harm
- Intentionally embarrassing partner
- Undermining their partner's authority with children
- Manipulation
- Blaming partner for their actions

Controlling Behavior

- Telling partner what to wear and who they can talk to
- Accusing other people of flirting with partner
- Monitoring phone and online communication
- Extreme jealousy and obsessiveness

Sexual Abuse

- Pressuring, threatening or forcing partner to have sex or perform sexual acts
- Making degrading sexual comments
- Restricting access to contraception and birth control
- Unwanted kissing, touching or other sexual activity

Emotional Abuse

- Controlling activities
- Gaslighting partner
- Threats of violence against others or themselves
- Preventing partner from seeing or talking with family and friends
- Threatening to tell others about private things such as sexuality or immigration status

Financial Abuse

- Keeping partner from seeing shared bank accounts or records
- Taking or deny money
- Restricting access to household finances
- Not allowing partner to work or attend school

Mutual Ground
418 Oak Avenue
Aurora, IL 60506

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Upcoming Events

A Taste of Italy

Sunday, January 26th
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Villa Verone
416 Hamilton St, Geneva, IL

60-Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Certification

February 18th - March 14th
Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays
Oswego Police Department
3355 Woolley Rd, Oswego, IL 60543

Mutual Ground Main Event

Friday, March 13th
6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Embassy Suites by Hilton
1823 Abriter Ct, Naperville, IL

Contact Us

Give us a call for more
information about
our services

Mutual Ground

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Aurora, IL 60506

(630) 897-0084

Visit us on the web at
www.mutualground.org

Follow us on social media!

