



SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



Working to create a society free of domestic and sexual violence and the harms of substance use.

FALL 2022

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Mutual Ground
 Main Campus
 418 Oak Avenue
 Aurora, IL 60506
 (630) 897-0084
 mutualground.org

Substance Use Services
 120 Gale Street
 Aurora, IL 60506
 (630) 897-1003
 breakingfreeinc.org

Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We entered our new fiscal year at the start of July, which makes June a time to reflect on our accomplishments and struggles as an organization. One thing I can say is that we were definitely not immune from experiencing what people are calling the Great Resignation. Many of us in the nonprofit sector faced the harsh reality of rising need and the lack of resources to meet that need.

I usually focus on the clients we serve, but today I would like to focus on our passionate and dedicated staff. From our victim services advocates, legal advocates, counselors, prevention educators, and case managers to our administrative team. We employ close to 70 people! This last year we experienced an unparalleled 50% employee turnover rate. The reason is the same for us as it is for so many other social service providers: we are just unable to pay individuals enough money to continue to retain them to provide these vital services 24/7.

When you think about it, it makes perfect sense. Working in the domestic/sexual violence and substance use field is extremely difficult. Burn out is always a possibility, but even more so when you are trying to do the work of two people due to staffing shortages, while also dealing with your own family's COVID concerns and financial strains.

Unfortunately, the importance of the services we provide sometimes go overlooked, until one of us or one of our loved ones needs help. We are incredibly fortunate to have people like you who understand just how important this work is.

This last year, we also needed the State of Illinois to understand that importance. We needed more State dollars in order to

bring salaries up long term, so that we would be able to retain and recruit people who are committed to our mission day and night. After months of planning with other centers across Illinois, and countless meetings with legislators, we were able to secure additional funding. This is a huge accomplishment, and I thank every person and every legislator who made it possible. I would also like to thank the Kane County Board for granting us the funding to offer sign-on and retention bonuses to staff while we wait for increased State funding. What a life saver! We do not have the State funds in hand yet, but we are actively working on the grant that will procure that desperately needed money.

I realize that it isn't always as heartwarming to hear about the ins and outs of this work as it is hearing about the countless clients we are serving and their amazing stories, but talking about HOW we do this work is important to make certain that it keeps getting done.

As we move into the fall season, I ask that you continue to support us on our journey to ensure there is always someone on the other end of that hotline call, a welcoming face at our front desk, a caring person at our court houses and emergency rooms, and a passionate presenter in our schools. Please follow our work on our social media platforms, attend our events, volunteer and donate. It takes a village and you are part of our village! Thank you for always being there for us.

Sincerely,

Michelle Meyer

Michelle Meyer - Executive Director

Mutual Ground's Black & White Ball is on October 14, 2022!



When

Friday, October 14, 2022

Time

6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Where

Hotel Arista

2139 City Gate Lane, Naperville, IL 60563

Our Annual Black & White Ball will be an incredible event filled with food, drinks, music and hope- all to support Mutual Ground. Most importantly we would like to spread the word that domestic violence, sexual violence, and substance use are not always black and white issues in terms of the victim's feelings and options. There are many shades of gray and Mutual Ground is here to support anyone going through a crisis related to these issues.

To learn more or to purchase your ticket to the event visit: www.mutualground.org/black-and-white-ball



SCAN ME

National Recovery Month

Mutual Ground would like to recognize National Recovery Month. National Recovery Month is observed every September and was established in 1989 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). The purpose of National Recovery Month is to educate the public about mental health services and substance use treatments. This yearly awareness event strives to educate the public to help reduce stigma and also to celebrate those who identify as a person in recovery.

Stigma can be one of the primary barriers to overcoming substance use disorders, preventing people from seeking the treatment and support needed to overcome the disease. Stigma is negative attitudes, beliefs or behaviors about or towards a group of people because of their situation. It includes discrimination, prejudice, judgment and stereotypes, which can isolate people who use substances or have mental health disorders.

Many people still see addiction as a choice and not a disease, even many of those afflicted with the disease. This misconception makes it harder to seek out help when someone feels they did something to cause or somehow deserve the consequences of their "choices". While mental health issues may be seen more as a disease than a choice, it still has many inaccurate stereotypes that affect a person's desire or ability to seek help.

The way we help more people get the support and services they need for substance use and mental health disorders is by educating ourselves and others, by talking about it and spreading awareness through events such as Nation

Recovery Month. Untreated substance use contributes to tens of thousands of deaths every year and impacts the lives of many more. With that being said there are more than 23 million Americans in long-term recovery from substance use disorders. These individuals are living proof that recovery is real and that it benefits themselves, their families, and communities. Imagine what the recovery rates would be if we were able to eliminate the stigma associated with substance use and mental health disorders.

So, you might ask, how can I help? How can I help to support people in recovery and help end the stigma? One of the first things you can do is change your vocabulary. One term you can change is by not using the word "addict" to describe someone with an addiction, but use first person language and say "a person with a substance use disorder or addiction". We do not refer to someone who has cancer as cancer, we would refer to them as a person who has cancer. We can also stop using the words "dirty" or "clean" to describe someone using substances or no longer using. Saying someone is "dirty" implies they are filthy or socially unacceptable and saying they are now clean implies they were and might still be filthy and unacceptable. We need to remember these are real people with symptoms of a disease and treat them respectfully and continue to educate ourselves and remember that words matter. This can help reduce stigma and give people a chance to live a life of recovery.

Written by
Stephanie Adamson LCPC, CADC, CDVP
*Director of Substance Use Services
at Mutual Ground*



RECOVERY MONTH

Every Person. Every Family. Every Community.

Mutual Ground provides supportive and empathetic outpatient substance use treatment at our Gale Street location (also known as Breaking Free).

Education, Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient groups and individual services are available for adolescents and adults.

**Monday- Thursday 9am-9pm,
Fridays 9am-3pm.**

Please call today to set up an intake appointment.
(We take Medicaid or Managed Medicaid insurance and have a sliding scale available)

630-897-1003
120 Gale Street, Aurora, IL. 60506
www.breakingfreeinc.org

Our Impact in FY22

A year of adaptability, resilience and change.

1,279

adults and children received domestic and/or sexual violence services at Mutual Ground in FY22.

13,619

hours of service were provided to these clients

In Our Shelter

206

adults and children were provided with 7,643 nights of shelter.



51%

of those clients were children

258

orders of protection were filed with the help of legal advocates



of those orders of protection were granted

236

Volunteers and staff responded to

108

calls from local hospital emergency rooms

1,291

hours of substance use recovery services were provided over the last 6 months.

In classrooms

2,366

sexual violence prevention education presentations were provided to 53,231 students



2,514

students received Too Good for Drugs substance use prevention education lessons

Miss Fannie's 16th Annual Yard Sale was a HUGE success!

This year Mutual Ground, with the support of Miss Fannie Morrison, hosted our 16th Annual Miss Fannie's Yard Sale. The event took place during its traditional weekend, on the last Friday and Saturday in July. This year the event raised over \$5,000!

As many of you may know this event is named after the amazing Miss Fannie, who has been volunteering at Mutual Ground since 1999. Miss Fannie takes the lead on this event collecting, sorting, and organizing donations; securing tents, tables, and materials needed to run the sale; and recruiting volunteers to help set up and run the event. At the event and you will find her walking around helping everyone shop and making sure that all is running smoothly!

The yard sale has become a highly anticipated event in the Aurora community as many community members have been coming to the event for years hoping to find hidden treasures, purchase clothing

for their family, or look for items they might be in need of, all while supporting Mutual Ground. Since the first year Miss Fannie's Yard Sale took place, the event has raised over \$60,000 to support Mutual Ground's mission. Thank you, Miss Fannie, for all your love and dedication to Mutual Ground!



Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer at the Black and White Ball

Volunteer with us on Friday, October 14 for a fabulous evening to benefit Mutual Ground. Help set-up during the day or volunteer at one of many fun areas during the Black and White Ball. You will be part of making our largest fundraiser a HUGE success! We are looking for volunteers to help check-in guests, assist the silent auction, raffle, and more. Volunteer opportunities for this event can be found at www.mutualground.org/black-and-white-ball.

Winter Wonderland Client Shoppe Donors & Volunteer Needs

This is one of our volunteers' favorite events all year! Volunteers help as "personal shoppers", at the kid's craft area, or at the gift-wrap station. The event is running from December 7th - 14th.

Please look for the Volunteer signup starting in September on the "Volunteer" tab of our website www.mutualground.org

For more information on volunteering at Mutual Ground contact our Volunteer Program Administrator, Krystyna Sarrazin, at ksarrazin@mutualground.org

Mutual Ground's website is now more accessible!

A banner for Mutual Ground's website accessibility. The background is a dark, artistic image of a person's hands. The text "WHERE THE HEALING BEGINS" is prominently displayed in white, uppercase letters. Below it, in smaller white text, is "SERVING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE". At the bottom, there are three purple boxes containing contact information: "ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE 630-897-0084", "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE 630-897-0080", and "SEXUAL VIOLENCE HOTLINE 630-897-8383". The Mutual Ground logo is in the bottom right corner.

Mutual Ground is committed to being an inclusive and diverse organization. We strive to provide services and support to everyone in our community, including those of differing abilities and backgrounds. With that being said, we are excited to share a new tool that Mutual Ground has invested in to help more people access essential information on our website. It is important to us that individuals with varying visual abilities, non-native English speakers, or people who have difficulty reading text on a screen are able to access our web pages more efficiently and find the support they need.

Statistics show that 1 in 4 people in the US have a disability that can prevent them from reading and understanding online content. With the introduction of Recite Me on our website, those with a disability, learning difficulty, low visual impairment, or who speak English as a second language, can access information barrier-free. The toolbar includes a variety of features, such as a screen reader, reading aids, fully customizable styling options, and a translation tool with over 100 languages. The Recite Me accessibility tool is accessible on a laptop, desktop, tablet, or mobile phone. **To learn more about this new tool visit our website, www.mutualground.org.**

Join the Mutual Ground Meal Train!



The Meal Train program has made a big impact for Mutual Ground by giving families in shelter a night off from having to worry about dinner. Individuals, groups, or families can provide a homecooked meal, restaurant takeout dinner, or catered meal for the adults and children in shelter. The menu can be as simple or elaborate as you choose, or make a financial donation which will be used toward a meal.

To get on board visit:
www.mutualground.org/meal-train



Mutual Ground
418 Oak Avenue
Aurora, IL 60506

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #40
St. Charles, IL



Follow us on social media!

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Contact Us

Where the Healing Begins

**MUTUAL
GROUND**

Upcoming Events

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Black and White Ball**

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