



SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



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

SPRING 2023

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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 CEO

As I prepare to leave Mutual Ground, Inc at the end of the month, I've been reflecting on what a privilege it has been to serve our community over these 23 years as an intern, legal advocate, Legal Advocacy Program Manager and, finally, as CEO.

The experiences I have had over the years in these roles throughout the organization have made me who I am today. People have been at the center of all of these experiences. I have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many incredibly amazing individuals. Clients, co-workers, vendors, volunteers, donors, community members, and colleagues...it has been an absolute pleasure. Even in times of crisis we have had many amazing accomplishments as an organization, and we did it together.

Domestic violence, sexual violence and substance use disorders are extremely heavy subjects. Some of the things we see and hear at Mutual Ground, others only read about once in a while in the news. I have personally witnessed how the gravity of this work affects people in countless ways. Some, much like myself in my early 20's, come into this work intent on saving the world only to find that the barriers society throws in the path to healing sometimes feel insurmountable. It has taken a lot of patience, time and perseverance to keep pushing forward to keep looking for ways to chip away at those barriers so that the people reaching out for help (which is the hardest first step) do not lose hope.

As I leave this field of work to find my next journey, I would like to remind the team of Board, staff and volunteers that every time you are able to find the strength to push through those barriers to healing through your work with Mutual Ground, you have taken another step toward positively changing the world we live in - one person at a time. I'm so incredibly proud of the team at Mutual Ground and can't thank you all enough for your passion and commitment to our mission and the people in our community who need us. I am so excited for the next chapter at Mutual Ground. I will be standing at the sidelines supporting all of the new ideas, energy and steps taken to further the mission of an incredible organization that I have had the privilege to lead.

Sincerely,

Michelle Meyer

Michelle Meyer - CEO



Mutual Ground's Walk for Hope will be at a NEW location!



Join us for our 2023 Walk for Hope at a NEW location this year! Join us at the beautiful Waubonsie Lake Park pavilion for a wonderful evening to support Mutual Ground's mission to provide education, awareness, and life-changing services that empower individuals, families, and communities to end the cycle of domestic and sexual violence and the harms of substance use.

This year's re-imagined family friendly event will feature a group 1-mile walk or the option to run the scenic 5K course around Waubonsie Lake! Followed by an after-party featuring live music, food truck vendors, and impact displays. As usual the event is completely free to attend!

To register or donate to the event visit www.mutualground.org/walk-for-hope or scan the code on your smartphone to go directly to our Walk for Hope website!



What

15th Annual Walk for Hope

When

Friday, June 9, 2023

Time

5:30pm – 8:30pm

Where

Waubonsie Lake Park
998 Kautz Road, Aurora, IL 60504

Service Spotlight: Substance Use Prevention Programs



Mutual Ground's Substance Use Prevention Education Team works with local schools and communities to spread awareness on the effects of alcohol and substance use and prevent drug and alcohol use among youth. Prevention Educators encourage students to make positive, healthy decisions for themselves. Funded to provide services to Aurora and Kaneland, here some of the programs that we offer:

- Too Good for Drugs is an evidenced based curriculum taught to elementary school and middle school students in Aurora. The interactive lessons introduce and develop skills for making healthy choices, building positive relationships, developing self-efficacy, communicating effectively, and resisting peer pressure and influences.
- Communication Campaigns utilize a purposeful promotional strategy to change knowledge, attitudes, and/or behavior in a specific intended audience via marketing and advertising techniques. Communication campaigns can help to counteract the negative impact of alcohol and tobacco advertising by promoting healthy behaviors and working to change community norms. Currently, we are providing campaigns focused on preventing underage drinking for students at West Aurora

High School and Kaneland High School. We also offer a parent campaign at these schools, giving parents/caregivers the tools to have conversations about the negative effects of underage drinking with their student.

- Youth Advisory Committees (YAC) are groups of students seeking leadership opportunities to positively benefit their school and community by supporting healthy choices. One of the projects our YACs focus on during the year is planning activities for National Prevention Week in May. You can find our Substance Use Prevention Educators working with groups at West Aurora High School and Kaneland Harter Middle School.
- The Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) is a self-reported survey administered in school settings and is designed to gather information about a variety of health and social indicators including substance use patterns and attitudes of Illinois youth. Substance Use Prevention Educators recruit schools in the surrounding area to participate in the biennially survey.
- Our resource guide is a booklet that identifies substance use disorder treatment and human service organizations (e.g., afterschool programs, mental health counseling, sexual assault prevention, school-based health clinics) that serve the Aurora and Kaneland areas. Each year, our Substance Use Prevention Educators

verify the organizations listed to ensure the information provided is correct. You can find the updated resource guides on our website at www.mutualground.org/resources.

- Mutual Ground has two coalitions that our Substance Use Prevention Educators are chairs of – the Kaneland Community Partners for Healthy Youth and the Aurora Community Alliance. Both are made up of area key stakeholders working to provide a safe and healthy community. Coalition focus includes: mental health education, suicide prevention and substance use prevention.

If you are interested in more information on any of our substance use prevention programs, please contact Nikki Lay, Substance Use Prevention Manager, at nlay@mutualground.org.

Our Services are Growing

Mutual Ground's Substance Use Services will now be offering an Adult Outpatient Group in Spanish!

Group counseling provides additional support to individuals struggling with substance use and allows them to learn and practice recovery strategies, build interpersonal skills, and reinforce and develop social support networks.

The Spanish language Adult Outpatient Group will be available at our Substance Use Services Campus on Gale Street in Aurora, Mondays from 5:00pm – 8:00pm.

For more information or to schedule an intake appointment please call our Substance Use Services at (630) 897-1003.

Volunteer Appreciation Month

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MUTUAL GROUND VOLUNTEERS

In April we take a moment to recognize the countless hours of volunteer service taking place at Mutual Ground. A big THANK YOU to each and every volunteer who has given even a little of their time to enhance our mission.



Dedicated Hearts

*Dedicated hearts like yours
Are not so easy to find.
It takes a special person to be
So generous and kind.*



*To care so much for your fellow man
Is a quality all too rare.
Yet you give of your time and talents,
For all in need to share.*



*So thank you for being a volunteer,
We're privileged to work with you.
We want you to know how appreciated you are,
Not just today, but the whole year through
~ Unknown*



Join the Mutual Ground Gala Planning Committee!

Do you love supporting Mutual Ground? Do you like to plan events? Are you full of new ideas to share? Then we have an opportunity for you!

Join the Mutual Ground Gala Planning Committee! We are looking for individuals that would like to join all the behind the scenes fun planning our annual gala, set for October 13, 2023!



If you are interested in joining, please contact Kathy Melone at kmelone@mutualground.org.

Amazon Wishlist



Have you ever wondered if there was a way to support Mutual Ground with donations throughout the year? There is! You can donate from our Amazon Wishlist! Our Amazon Wishlist is always up to date with our current needs. Shop conveniently online and ship donations directly to Mutual Ground.

Donations from our Amazon Wishlist can be shipped to:

Mutual Ground
418 Oak Avenue | Aurora, IL, 60506

Thank you to our 2023 Corporate Partners!

Thank you to our On-going Support Partners!!!



Advocate Construction is a residential and commercial construction company with locations in seven states throughout the Midwest. By prioritizing the satisfaction of its customers and the personal fulfillment of its employees, Advocate has quickly become a leader in the construction industry. The Advocate team prides themselves on being an excellent company with which to do business; they not only adhere to the highest standards in the trade, but also commit to being a part of the communities they serve.



Meijer is a family business. We believe in treating each other with dignity and respect. We are committed to strengthening the communities we serve. We focus on our customers and thrive by meeting their needs and exceeding their expectations.

Thank you to our Advocate Partner!



GreenState Credit Union is Iowa's largest credit union and one of the top financial institutions in the United States for returning profits to members in the form of better rates and lower fees. GreenState serves over 350,000 members with 30 office locations. Membership is open to anyone living or working in Iowa as well as select counties in Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Last year, GreenState contributed \$2.6 million to the communities they serve. As they grow in membership, so does their philanthropic give-back.

If you are interested in becoming a Mutual Ground Corporate Partner contact Kathy Melone at kmelone@mutualground.org.

Mutual Ground
418 Oak Avenue
Aurora, IL 60506

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Contact Us

Where the Healing Begins

**MUTUAL
GROUND**

Upcoming Events

Mutual Ground Walk for Hope
Friday, June 9, 2023
5:30pm – 8:30pm

Waubonsie Lake Park
998 Kautz Rd, Aurora, IL 60504

Mutual Ground Annual Gala
Friday, October 13, 2023

Hotel Arista
2139 City Gate Lane
Naperville, IL 60563