



# SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



Working to create a society free of domestic and sexual violence

SUMMER 2018

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Service Spotlight: 2  
Prevention Education
- Survivor's Art Show 2
- 60-Hour Domestic 2  
Violence & Sexual  
Assault Certification
- Volunteer Spotlight 3
- Mutual Ground 3  
Main Event
- Gala Sponsors  
Thank You 3

## Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

For more than 43 years, thousands of individuals of all ages, from all walks of life, have trusted Mutual Ground to provide life-changing services that have empowered them to end the cycle of domestic and/or sexual violence. For the last three years Mutual Ground faced a precarious situation as the budget crisis in Illinois played out. These circumstances left us no choice but to make budget cuts that impacted our programming.

What this meant was waiting lists for adult and children's counseling services that are finally being whittled down as we are allowed to rehire these important staff positions. As you can imagine, having waiting lists for our services is frustrating as there are members of our community who are suffering, and even dying, as the result of domestic and sexual violence. We were lucky to have our community's support during these trying times – it allowed us to keep providing life-saving services during the most difficult of situations.

Recently, a mother of three came to Mutual Ground “needy and emotionally drained”, and in fear for her life. What she received was a safe place to stay, counseling services for herself and her three beautiful children, help getting resources to move on and better her life, and “the confidence needed to move forward”. It is truly difficult to comprehend the strength and courage required of a woman facing this lonely path. We are honored to assist her in her journey, and grateful for the contributions of all of our supporters.

Thank you for being a friend of Mutual Ground – together we will continue to work towards our goal of ending domestic and sexual abuse.

Sincerely,

*Michelle Meyer*

Michelle Meyer  
Executive Director



**Mutual Ground**  
418 Oak Ave.  
Aurora IL 60506

mutualground.org  
(630) 897-0084



## Please join us 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Power Lunch

Each year SHARE Fox Valley selects and honors a Woman of Power at the luncheon. This award was adopted to be for women and selected by women who are doing amazing things in the community. Recipients range from professionals and business owners to community volunteers, whose efforts bring positive change to our society.

Thursday, September 20th, 2018  
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Pipers Banquets  
1295 Butterfield Road, Aurora, IL 60502

All proceeds benefit Mutual Ground

Tickets and Sponsorship opportunities are available for purchase NOW!  
For more information visit the SHARE Fox Valley website at [www.sharefoxvalley.com](http://www.sharefoxvalley.com)



## Service Spotlight: Prevention Education

Mutual Ground strongly believes that education is a key element in the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault. Our prevention program promotes awareness and is an important first step in breaking the cycle of abuse.

We work with the majority of the public school districts in Kendall and Southern Kane County, as well as every public school in the City of Aurora from kindergarten to grade 12. We currently present to 51 schools in our service area.

Our Prevention Educators educate students about abuse, provide them with the tools needed to break the cycle of violence, inform students what to do if they find themselves in an abusive

situation, and empower them to take a stand against violence and confide in a trusted adult. Our program also allows students to come forward with abuse in private room disclosures.

This past academic year, our Prevention Educators gave **2,480** individual presentations, **153** bilingual presentations, and made **60,884** student contacts. Mutual Ground Educators also received **94** abuse disclosures from students and **10** disclosures from adults who have encountered domestic or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.

The demand for Prevention Education Services continues to grow. A new Prevention Educator recently joined the



team to help fulfill an increasing number of schools we are supporting, as well as cover for other educators during planned and unplanned absences.

## Survivor's Art Show

Mutual Ground is excited to announce its upcoming "Survivors' Art Show" at Mixology Salon in St. Charles on August 24th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.



This inspirational and educational event is open to the public free of charge. The show will exhibit art created by Mutual Ground's clients and art contributed by community artists interested in supporting Mutual Ground and raising awareness around sexual assault/abuse issues.

The art show focuses on a theme designed to speak to a survivor's experience. The artists displayed in this show were asked to use a medium of their choice to visually capture the complex process of healing. Artists were encouraged to try and illustrate the wide range of emotions related to a survivor's healing journey.

The art exhibit is free of charge, but will include a silent auction with all proceeds directly benefiting Mutual Ground.



august 24, 2018  
mixology salon/spa  
116 w main street  
saint charles

art show:  
5-8 pm  
silent auction:  
5-7 pm

MUTUAL  
GROUND

email: [maryellencombs@gmail.com](mailto:maryellencombs@gmail.com)

## 60-Hour Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Certification

Are you interested in helping individuals affected by domestic violence and sexual assault? Here's your chance!

Our next 60-Hour Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advocacy Training will begin on Tuesday, September 11th, and end on Saturday, October 6th. Training will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. and on Saturdays from 8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Our certification provides basic training for individuals to work directly with those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. For more information visit our website at [www.mutualground.org](http://www.mutualground.org) or contact Jenaleigh Turner at 630.897.0084 ext. 162 or at [jturner@mutualground.org](mailto:jturner@mutualground.org).



## Volunteer Spotlight - NXT Youth Group at Calvary Church

Cece Hughes, the NXT Ministry Coordinator at Calvary Church, contacted Mutual Ground recently and asked us to be a service location for their youth group's day of community serving. Of course we said yes!

"We wanted to do some work that was hands on, whether it's working on the grounds, helping sort donations, or whatever might be needed at the time. We also wanted our students to understand the importance of what Mutual Ground does, and then play a role in helping in some way," according to Cece.

With five NXT teen volunteers and six hours of time, this youth group

managed to sort, inventory, clean and organize Mutual Ground's large food pantry. While it was not a glamorous job, these hard-working teens jumped right in and got to work.

We are teaming up with Calvary Church again and look forward to having different NXT high schoolers come in on Fridays to serve.



## The Mutual Ground Main Event was a Huge Success!

We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who came to the Main Event on April 25th and made it the most successful gala in Mutual Ground's history! More than 300 revelers raised more than \$200,000 to support our mission of ending domestic and sexual violence. The Embassy Suites was the perfect venue to "roll out the purple carpet" and greet our guests.

The speakers – survivors Kalyn Hutchinson and her mother, Beth Wagmeister - left us in awe of their strength in overcoming a challenging household of fear and abuse and coming out on top. Their story was amazing and inspirational, and we cannot thank them enough for sharing it. Our auctioneer, Dan Campbell, kept the crowd going throughout the night; and the entertainment of Peter Miletic had the crowd rocking into the evening.

Other highlights included the Champagne Diamond Dip where one lucky winner enjoyed a glass of

champagne and found a real, amazing diamond with it! Others imbibed and walked away with a beautiful cubic zirconia – still winners of sort. The #PutTheNailInIt campaign that we highlighted at the event was a huge success with the majority of attendees adorning their ring fingernail with purple polish to begin a conversation about domestic violence and let survivors know they are not alone.

I would like to extend a special thanks to the Main Event Committee who came together to make this the special, memorable, and successful night that it was! Our volunteers are SO important to us. Thank you!!! Anyone out there that would like to be on the committee next year? Contact Kathy Melone at 630-897-0084 ext. 131 or kmelone@mutualground.org if so. We would love to have you!

We hope to see you next year at the Main Event on Friday, April 26, 2019. Mark your calendars now – you won't want to miss it!!



## Special Thanks to all our 2018 Gala sponsors!

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**Mutual Ground**  
418 Oak Avenue  
Aurora, IL 60506

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St. Charles, IL



## Upcoming Events

### Survivor Art Show

Friday, August 24th  
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Mixology Salon and Spa  
116 W. Main St, St. Charles, IL

### 60-Hour Advocacy Training

September 11th - October 6th  
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays  
Location TBD

### Women's Power Lunch

Thursday, September 20th  
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Piper's Banquets  
1295 Butterfield Road, Aurora, IL

### Walk for Hope

Sunday, October 14th  
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Blackberry Farm  
100 S. Barnes Road, Aurora, IL

### Mutual Ground Main Event

Friday, April 26th  
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

418 Oak Avenue  
Aurora, IL 60506  
(630) 897-0084

Visit us on the web at  
[www.mutualground.org](http://www.mutualground.org)

Follow us on social media!

