



SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



Working to create a society free of domestic and sexual violence

WINTER 2018

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Letter from Our Executive Director

Happy New Year!

It's hard to believe that 2018 is already here. We hope you had a wonderful Holiday season!

Our Holiday season was rewarding due to so many of you donating to our annual holiday mailing and helping us with our Santa's Workshop. At Santa's Workshop the women and children who are utilizing our services had the opportunity peruse all of the items and pick that special gift to be given to their family members. We were able to bring joy to the hearts of 33 adults and 78 children through this program thanks to our generous donors!

Although we were able to help so many throughout the holidays, the sad reminder of the need for our services was evident. In October and November of last year alone, we received 379 calls to our emergency hot-line for domestic violence crisis situations or requests for new service. This is a 24% increase from the prior year! Is it because domestic violence was

more prevalent in 2017? We don't think so. We think, and hope, that we are getting our message out to those in need that we are here to help, free of charge, anytime that is needed.

While it is depressing to think of individuals enduring the hardship of domestic violence during a joyous holiday season, it is the reality. We are incredibly thankful to have your support as we enter the new year, and feel that together we can make a difference and help our clients achieve a life free of violence.

Thank you again for your commitment to helping us end the cycle of domestic and sexual violence. With the programming we have in place, and your support, I am excited to see where 2018 takes us!

Sincerely,

Michelle Meyer

Michelle Meyer

Dunham Fund Incentive Award/#GivingTuesday

In November, Mutual Ground participated in Giving Tuesday and a statewide giving campaign called #ILGIVE. The goal of this campaign was to raise as much money as possible in a two week time period. We had generous donors who agreed to match up to \$10,000 that was donated to Mutual Ground during this campaign. We are happy to announce that we met our match and ended up raising \$28,645! Our organization was the recipient of one of the Dunham Fund's Incentive awards this year and received an additional \$3,000 from the Dunham Fund! Mutual Ground won in the category, Most Donors: Medium Organization.



Dunham Fund Executive Director, Bob Vaughn, awarding Mutual Ground a check for having the most donors for a medium organization on Giving Tuesday

Thank you to ALL who donated to our #ILGIVE and #GivingTuesday campaign! Your generous support allows us to provide life-changing services for victims of domestic and sexual violence. We couldn't do it without YOU!

Save the Date! **Mutual Ground Main Event • Friday, April 27, 2018**

Embassy Suites by Hilton - Naperville • Live Music by Peter Miletic
Dinner, Drinks, Raffles, Auctions and More! • Tickets are Available at www.mutualground.org



Mutual Ground
418 Oak Ave.
Aurora IL 60506

mutualground.org
(630) 897-0084



Service Spotlight: Shelter Program

Survivors of domestic violence are often told to “just leave” their abusive partners. If only it could be that simple. Statistics show that the most dangerous time for a victim is when they decide to leave an abusive relationship. At Mutual Ground, we provide



the keys victims need to break the cycle of domestic violence.

When female clients and their children are in danger and have no other support system in place, we provide a safe haven at our emergency shelter. We can also arrange accommodations for family pets. Our shelter is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In light of the previous Illinois State Budget impasse, this year the Domestic Violence Department focused, primarily, on maintaining essential services related to safety. While significant changes were inhibited by the lack of sufficient funding, we were able to make some positive changes to the shelter program. Mutual Ground implemented changes to shelter intake policies and procedure in order to increase

the number of victims served through our shelter.

Last year, 90 women and 113 children had a safe place to call home at Mutual Ground. We provided 5960 nights of shelter for women and children and the average stay for clients and families in shelter was 29 nights. In addition to shelter, residents received counseling, legal advocacy, vocational and housing guidance, and children’s programming.

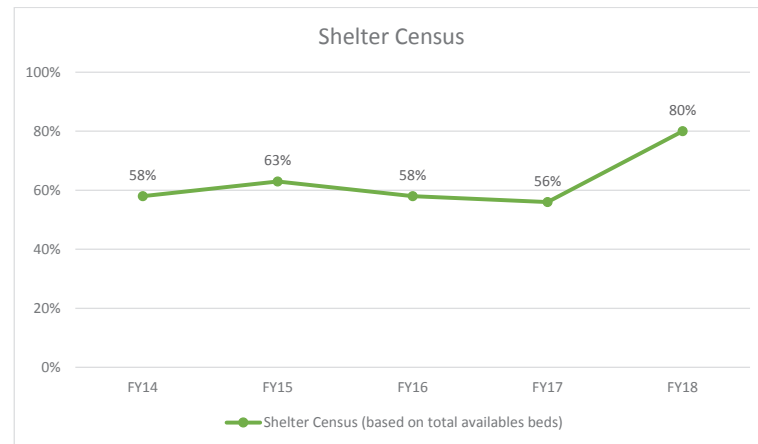
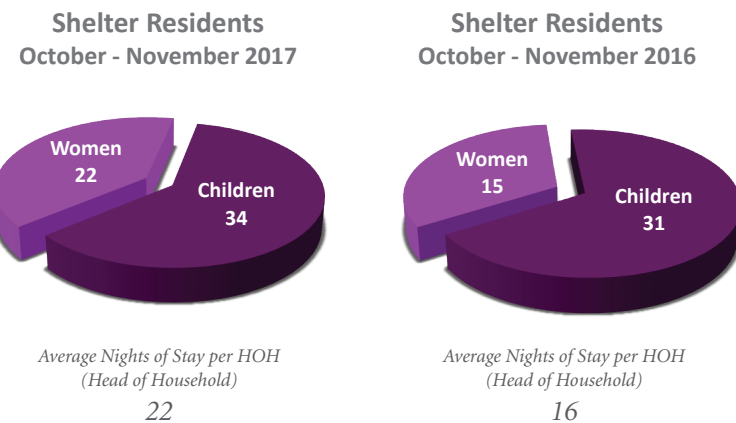
Mutual Ground is an emergency shelter, which means clients are able to stay at our shelter for up to 45 days, free of charge. During those 45 days, our team provides support and resources to clients to help them transition to a safe place after they leave the shelter.

Total Residents in Shelter Program from October - November

We have seen an increase in the number of residents and the average nights of stay compared to last year.

In October and November of 2017, our shelter provided accommodations for 22 women and 34 children and the average nights of stay per head of household was 22 days.

We believe this increase is due to women in the community becoming more empowered to seek help and break the cycle of domestic violence.



Shelter Census (Fiscal Year '18 to Date)

The Mutual Ground Shelter has 28 beds and 7 cribs for residents.

In Fiscal Year '18 we have currently had an 80% occupancy rate. It is not uncommon for our shelter to be at full capacity multiple times during the year.

During their stay, shelter residents will receive guidance from our counselors to find housing after they leave the shelter.

Recovery After a Controlling Relationship

Leaving an abusive relationship is never easy, but how do survivors begin the healing processes after leaving? Every survivor recovers from abuse in their own ways, but here are just a few ways survivors can begin to recover and heal after leaving a controlling relationship:

- Reclaiming activities that had been blocked by the abuser
- Connecting with family, friends, and supportive professionals
- Organizing time and physical space to feel less overwhelmed
- Verbalizing and sharing the true story of the relationship, in ways that feel right
- Expressing oneself creatively through art, poetry, journaling, dancing, singing, or other hobbies
- Resuming a regular schedule when ready to do so
- Reclaiming one’s own body through physical activity and eating well.

Volunteers of the Year Awards

This past year we had many amazing companies and individuals volunteer with us. In Fiscal Year 2017, we had 938 volunteers that provided a total of 11,169 hours of service! Each year we host a Volunteer Awards Night to celebrate all of our incredible volunteers, and honor those companies and individuals who have gone above and beyond to help Mutual Ground.



2017 Corporate Volunteer of the Year, Nicor

We were excited to present our Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award to Nicor Home Solutions! We would like to thank

Nicor and their employees for all that they have done for us this year, including volunteering in the shelter and helping beautify our yard.



2017 Volunteer Award Night

We would also like to thank and congratulate Wendy Weis for receiving Volunteer of the Year, Andi Danis for receiving Board Member of the Year, and Greg Boyles and Faith Lutheran Church of Aurora for earning Volunteer Group of the Year. We would not be able to do what we do without their kindness and generosity!



Have You Considered Leaving a Gift to Mutual Ground in Your Will?



In recent years, donors have informed us of their intention to include a gift to Mutual Ground in their wills and we are so grateful. These gifts provide an estate tax deduction to the donor and have a tremendous impact on our ability to provide life-changing services that empower individuals to end the cycle of domestic and sexual violence.

Once you have provided for loved ones in your will, you may want to include a gift of money, stock or property to charitable organizations making a difference in your community. A gift to Mutual Ground would be a lasting tribute to your concern for our cause, while guaranteeing our long-term future.

For further information on how to include Mutual Ground in your charitable giving plans, please contact Kathy Melone, Advancement Director, at 630-897-0084 ext. 130 or kmelone@mutualground.org.

Thank You to our 2017 Volunteers and Donors

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers and donors who have supported us this past year! Volunteers are an integral part of Mutual Ground, helping us meet our goal of preventing domestic and sexual violence and assisting victims of these crimes.

Mutual Ground always welcomes the valuable contribution of volunteers. Please visit our website if you are interested in being a volunteer. We are flexible in terms of time commitment, requesting part-time, seasonal and full-time help.

MUTUAL GROUND

Where the Healing Begins

Upcoming Events

Mutual Ground Main Event Gala

Friday, April 27th, 2018
6:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Embassy Suites by Hilton
1823 Abriter Ct.
Naperville, IL 60562

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

Follow us on social media!



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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