



SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



Working to create a society free of domestic and sexual violence

WINTER 2019

Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe we have already welcomed in 2019! The holidays are behind us and we are focusing on the year ahead.

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 90 families through this program thanks to our generous donors! It was truly a successful and well received event.

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 535 calls to our emergency hot-line for domestic violence crisis situations or requests for new service. This is a 41% increase from the prior year! In that same time period, we helped 81 victims of sexual violence – a 25% increase from prior year!

Is it because domestic and sexual violence was more prevalent in 2018? We don't think so. We think, and hope, that we are getting our message out 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 or sexual 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 2019 takes us!

Sincerely,
Michelle Meyer
Michelle Meyer
Executive Director



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Mutual Ground
418 Oak Ave.
Aurora IL 60506

mutualground.org
(630) 897-0084



Please Join Us

Please join Mutual Ground for a memorable night of incredible food, live entertainment, raffles, auctions and more!

All proceeds support the programs of Mutual Ground.

Friday, April 26, 2019

Embassy Suites by Chicago Hilton • 1823 Abriter Ct., Naperville
\$150 per person

Hors d'oeuvres • Gourmet Dinner • Open Bar • Live and Silent Auction • Live Music by Peter Miletic
Tickets available on-line starting Valentine's Day!



Service Spotlight: Emergency Shelter Program

When female survivors and their children are in danger and have no other support system in place, we provide a safe haven at our emergency shelter. Our shelter is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 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.

The Mutual Ground Shelter has 28 beds and 7 cribs for residents. In Fiscal Year '18 we had a 91% occupancy rate and it is not uncommon for our shelter to be at full capacity multiple times during the year.

During their stay, shelter residents receive guidance from our counselors to find housing after they leave the shelter as well as a multitude of other services.

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 last year, our shelter provided accommodations for 38 adults and 42 children. We believe this increase is due to survivors in the community becoming more empowered to seek help and break the cycle of domestic violence. If you or someone you know wants more information on our shelter services, please contact us at (630) 897-0080.



Student Advisory Board

Mutual Ground announces the formation of a Student Advisory Board to allow young people the opportunity to support the agency's mission of providing life-saving services to those experiencing domestic or sexual violence. At the Student Advisory Board's first meeting on January 16th, thirty students from twelve area high schools came together to begin the planning of the board's activities. Students ranged from high school freshman to seniors.

Students from Batavia High School, St. Charles East High School, St. Charles North High School, Geneva High School, Kaneland High School, East Aurora High

School, West Aurora High School, Rosary High School, Oswego High School, Marmion Academy, St. Francis High School, and Neuqua Valley High School were present.

Student Advisory Board President, Sonika Menon from Neuqua Valley High School led the meeting and said, "We wanted to create an opportunity for students from our area high schools to come together to promote understanding of issues surrounding domestic violence, and brainstorm ways that we can help. We will be doing community service projects to support the mission of Mutual Ground and even a small fundraiser in the future."

"It was truly inspirational to see the outpouring of support we had from the young people at these high schools. We expected an initial board of about ten students, so to have thirty kids – both girls and boys – come to the first meeting was amazing. They were very engaged." Said Kathy Melone, Mutual Ground Advancement Director.



The Student Advisory Board meets once a month with the goal of giving young adults a leadership opportunity and a way to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and promote the mission of Mutual Ground. "With community issues like teen dating violence and sexual harassment being very real, having these students participate in our mission is a huge step forward. We look forward to the awareness they can bring to their high schools and their student body", said Michelle Meyer, Mutual Ground Executive Director.

Mutual Ground supports victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Kendall and Southern Kane counties by providing counseling, education, shelter, court advocacy, hospital advocacy, and family services. More information regarding Mutual Ground's mission and services can be found at <http://www.mutualground.org>.

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, June 4th, and end on Saturday, June 29th, 2019. 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 or contact Jenaleigh Turner at 630.897.0084 ext. 162 or at jtturner@mutualground.org.

Volunteer Spotlight - Santa's Workshop

When victims arrive at our shelter, they often have nothing but what they could fit in their car in a hurry, or as little as the clothes on their back. The adults and children who stay in our shelter are in the midst of tremendous chaos, uncertainty, and disruption in their lives. The holidays can be especially stressful, so Mutual Ground tries to provide the most positive, warm environment we can. That is why we created Santa's Workshop, a free event that helps us share the magic of the season.

Each December, we transform part of Mutual Ground into a virtual holiday shop, where our shelter residents and walk-in clients, and their immediate families, can shop and select free gifts for their loved ones. We depend solely on the generosity of donations and volunteers to provide this free event.

During their holiday shopping, adults browse

one room to select gifts for their children, while children shop in another room to select gifts for their loved ones. Once they have made their selections, these gifts are wrapped at wrapping stations. Children are invited to make handmade crafts with our Family Services department team. And this year, Santa made two stops during Santa's Workshop. We also provided a hot cocoa bar, complete with cookies and candy.

This year, we provided a significant Christmas to 90 Mutual Ground client families and donated almost \$2,000 in gift cards to our high-need families.

We received gift donations from more than 25 community groups and organizations, sorted and stocked thousands of donated gifts, and were helped by more than 150 volunteers over the week - who served more than 430 volunteer hours!



Thank you so much to all of our amazing volunteers and donors who helped make Santa's Workshop a success!

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. 1130 or kmelone@mutualground.org.



Thank You Aurora Generation for Shelter Renovations

Thank you Aurora Generation for picking Mutual Ground as your 2018 Community Involvement Project! Aurora Generation provided building renovations valued at more than \$50,000! This generous donation funded a new Adult Living Room in our Shelter, an updated, modern Shelter kitchen, new flooring in our Donation Room and Clothing Closet, extensive electrical work and new ceiling fans.

We so appreciate all the donated time, materials and expertise from Aurora Generation as well as the other project sponsors: Swedberg Electric, Bollino Painting and Decorating, West Flooring Company, Mechanical, Cervantes/Salgado Architectural Woodworking and Luse Holdings.

Check out the amazing before and after photos of our resident kitchen!



We are so happy to announce that we have expanded our counseling services! We now have counseling offices located in Aurora, Batavia, Yorkville, and at Hesed House.

Our services are available to survivors, family members, and significant others who have been affected by domestic or sexual violence. Group and individual counseling is offered, completely free of charge!

We currently do NOT have a waiting list for services, and our crisis hotline is open 24/7. If you are interested in receiving services, please call us at (630) 897-0080.

Mutual Ground
418 Oak Avenue
Aurora, IL 60506

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
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St. Charles, IL



Follow us on social media!

www.mutualground.org

Visit us on the web at

(630) 897-0084

Aurora, IL 60506

418 Oak Avenue

Mutual Ground

Give us a call for more
information about
our services

Contact Us

Where the Healing Begins

**MUTUAL
GROUND**

Upcoming Events

Mutual Ground Main Event

Friday, April 26th

6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Embassy Suites by Hilton
1823 Abriter Ct, Naperville, IL

60-Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Certification

June 4th - June 29th

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays

Location TBD