



# SEEDS of CHANGE

Where the healing begins



Working to create a society free of domestic and sexual violence

WINTER 2020

## Letter from Our Executive Director

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Hello 2020!

It's hard to believe we have already welcomed in a new decade!

Our Holiday season was busy and rewarding at Mutual Ground 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 to "shop" all of the wonderful items donated to us and pick that special gift to be given to their family members. We were able to bring joy to the hearts of 464 people from 130 families through this program thanks to our generous donors! It was an incredibly 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. Our shelter has been running at 112% occupancy, forcing us to utilize blow-up mattresses and other means to make sure our clients are safe and free from the violence in their homes. In October and November of last year alone, we received 653 calls to our emergency hot-line for domestic violence crisis situations, counseling and support, and requests for new service. In that same

time period, we helped 222 victims of sexual violence – a more than 100% increase from prior year!

Is it because domestic and sexual violence was more prevalent in 2019? 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 the next decade will take us!

Sincerely,

*Michelle Meyer*

Michelle Meyer  
Executive Director



**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, March 13, 2020**

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

Hors d'oeuvres • Gourmet Dinner • Open Bar • Live and Silent Auction • Live Music

**Purchase your tickets at [www.mutualground.org](http://www.mutualground.org)**





## Service Spotlight: Youth and Family Services

“Stop blaming myself and place blame where blame is due.” “Feel like myself again.” “Learn how to have a healthy relationship.” “Forgive.” These are just some of the goals that children and adolescents make for themselves when they begin services at Mutual Ground.

By age 18, one in five children have experienced sexual violence and one in three have witnessed domestic violence.



When these issues are disclosed, children, teens, and families need a place to receive crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy. The Family Services Department at Mutual Ground is where the healing begins for many in Southern Kane and Kendall Counties.

For years the belief had been that children not physically harmed by violence will “bounce-back” with no services or attention given to them. We now know that trauma has a lasting impact on even the smallest of children when not addressed. This trauma may come in the form of physical injury or sexual abuse. Or it may be fear for their safety or the safety of others in the family, an attempt at violation without success that leaves the child scared and confused, insults and belittling that disrupt the parent-child attachment, or knowing that a parent is

being abused and feeling helpless.

Domestic and sexual violence can alter a child’s development and disrupt the outlook of their future, but interventions that focus on placing blame where it is due, educating children and teens about healthy relationship, and processing through fear and anger can change a young person’s ability to cope, leaving a lasting strength and resilience that point toward a bright future.

In Family Services, children, teens, and their families can elect individual, group, and/or family counseling, parenting classes, attachment support, and a variety of types of advocacy to begin the process of healing from the trauma associated with domestic and sexual violence.

## Our Impact in 2019

Our mission at Mutual Ground is to provide education, awareness, and life-changing services that empower individuals, families, and communities to end the cycle of domestic and sexual violence. 2019 was a busy year for the organization as we provided more than 16,000 hours of service to clients from more than 6 Illinois counties.

Thank you to all who have supported our services this past year. If you or someone you know wants more information about our services, please contact us at (630) 897-0080.

## Here are a few highlights of what Mutual Ground accomplished in the last fiscal year:

- Helped 1,461 adults and children with our life-changing services
- Provided 8,654 nights of shelter to 364 adults and children
- Assisted in the preparation and filing of 253 Orders of Protection
- Provided prevention education in area schools to 38,590 children
- Responded to 134 domestic and sexual violence hospital calls
- Responded to 7,278 crisis line calls

## 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 certification provides basic training for individuals to work directly with those affected by domestic or sexual violence.

Our next 60-Hour Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advocacy Training will begin on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 and end on Saturday, March 14, 2020 at the Oswego Police Department. 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.

Mutual Ground is an ICDVP and ICASA approved training site. The cost for this training is \$250 with a discounted rate for volunteers – if you are interested in volunteering, please complete a volunteer application on our website to receive the discount promo code.



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 [jtturner@mutualground.org](mailto:jtturner@mutualground.org).

## Volunteer Spotlight – Santa’s Workshop

The holidays can be a stressful time of year for anyone, but especially for our clients and their families. That is why we created Santa’s Workshop, a free event to help share the magic of the season.

Each December, we transform part of Mutual Ground into a holiday store, where our client families can shop and select free gifts for their loved ones and have them gift wrapped. They also enjoy a hot cocoa station, holiday crafts, music, and Santa visits upon arriving. This is made possible by the generous help of volunteers and donors. More than 200 volunteers helped run this year’s event, including 14 volunteer groups. These volunteers left with a sense of fulfillment that they had made a difference in the lives of many families this holiday season.

One young client had never given his mother a gift before this year’s Santa’s Workshop.

After picking out a special gift, he was so overcome with excitement that he just could not wait until Christmas to give it to her. She opened it that night.

Santa’s Workshop 2019 served a record number of 130 Mutual Ground and Breaking Free client families, providing holiday presents and spreading good cheer to more than 450 people. In just four days, 175 adults and 287 children received generous gifts to open during the holidays.

We received donations from more than 40 community groups and organizations; organized, sorted and stocked thousands of donated items; served hot cocoa and cookies; provided kids craft activities; gifted more than \$2,500 in gift cards; wrapped countless presents; and enjoyed some time with Santa. We are so thankful to all who supported Santa’s workshop!



## Giving Tuesday Thank You

This past December, Mutual Ground participated in Giving Tuesday, a statewide giving campaign. The goal of this campaign was to raise as much money as possible in a two week time period. We had a generous donor who agreed to match up to \$5,000 that was donated to Mutual Ground during this campaign. We are happy to announce that we

exceeded our goal and raised \$21,455!

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

## Be a GEM and Give Every Month!

At Mutual Ground all of our programs and services are free of charge because of our generous donors. Every donation counts to help us provide our life changing, and life-saving, services. Becoming a monthly donor is very special to us! It gives us a monthly revenue stream we can count on.

We are honored to partner with State Street Jewelers in Geneva – when you sign up to donate \$40 or more each month you receive a gorgeous pendant necklace or lapel pin especially designed with Mutual Ground’s representative branch



with three leaves signifying our prevention, intervention, and ongoing support services. But any amount helps!

Please consider becoming a Mutual Ground GEM and help us meet the needs of victims experiencing the trauma of domestic and sexual violence. Whether it is your neighbor, co-worker, mother, sister, brother, cousin, or even a friend of a friend, we will be here to help. Visit our website at [www.mutualground.org](http://www.mutualground.org) to sign up to become a GEM!

## Thank You to Our Santa’s Workshop Donors!

We had over 40 individuals and groups who donated thousands of dollars in gift items and over \$2,600 in gift cards for our Santa’s Workshop! This event could not be possible without the support of our incredible donors!

We served 130 Mutual Ground and Breaking Free client families, and provided Christmas gifts to over 450 people in four days, including 175 adults and 287 children.

Thank you so much to all these amazing groups for supporting us during the Holidays!

**DuPage Woodworkers Club**  
**Humanitarian Service Project**  
**The Wrapping Party**  
**Orangetheory Fitness Geneva**  
**Stonegate Neighborhood**  
**Outpatient therapy team at Central Dupage Hospital**  
**Macedonia Temple of God Church**  
**The Noble Group**  
**The Hartford**  
**Women of the Moose**  
**Northwestern Medicine**  
**Flowing Forth United Methodist Church**  
**New Harvest Church of God**  
**Holy Angels Catholic Church**  
**Friends of Mutual Ground**  
**Oxford Bank**  
**Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**  
**Readerlink LLC**  
**Kane County Democratic Women of Illinois**  
**ATMI Precast**  
**Martha’s Circle Bible Study Group at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Aurora, Illinois**  
**St. Mark’s Child Development Center**  
**PEO Chapter BT**  
**Hollywood Casino Aurora**  
**Bethany Lutheran Church Batavia IL**  
**Rejoice Lutheran Church**  
**Plano High School National Honor Society**  
**Plainfield Junior League**  
**Edward Hospital & Health Services**  
**Living Purpose Church**  
**Holy Angels/St. Anne’s Unit 1**  
**Molex**  
**DuPage AME Church**  
**Aurora Athletic Club**  
**Highpoint Church North Aurora**  
**Logan Street Baptist Church**  
**Quiet Dragons**  
**And more!**



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

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*Follow us on social media!*

[www.mutualground.org](http://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*

**60-Hour Domestic and Sexual  
Violence Certification**  
February 18th – March 14th  
Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays  
Oswego Police Department  
3355 Woolley Rd, Oswego, IL 60543

**Mutual Ground Main Event**  
Friday, March 13th  
6:00 PM - 11:00 PM  
Embassy Suites by Hilton  
1823 Abriter Ct, Naperville, IL

**Upcoming Events**

Where the Healing Begins

**MUTUAL  
GROUND**