

April 1: Sexual Assault Awareness Month Open House

Art Show/ Open Microphone
6:30-7:30 pm, SafeHouse Center

April 2: National Day to End Sexual Violence

Ann Arbor Take Back the Night
7:00 pm, U of M Diag

April 3, 10, 17, 24: Teal T-Shirt Fridays

April 7: Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center Video Premiere and Panel discussion, "A Common Voice"

1:00-2:30 pm, Rackham Graduate School
Ampitheater, 4th Floor

April 8: Sexual Assault Awareness Month National Day of Action

April 15: EMU Take Back the Night

6:30 pm, Student Center, Room 300

April 21: Brown Bag Lunch

Stalking: Information and Discussion
12:00 pm, SafeHouse Center

April 22: Denim Day

April 25: Ringing of the Bells

11:30 am-12:30 pm, Kerrytown

April 26-May 2: National Crime Victims' Rights Week



Spring 2009 vol. 6 no. 1

SAFEHOUSE
CENTER

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Building communities
free of domestic violence
and sexual assault

"...Sexual assault continues to represent the most rapidly growing violent crime in America, claiming a victim every 45 seconds. Because many of these attacks occurring daily go unreported and unrecognized, sexual assault can be considered a "silent-violent epidemic" in the United States today."

- The American Medical Association-

Dear Community,

Dear Community,

Every day I have the privilege of participating in HOPE. Survivors come to SafeHouse Center because they believe there is something we can do to relieve their grief over an assault, help them explore options, and be a part of their path toward walking out of the trauma and terror of sexual assault and domestic violence. We provide these services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without exception. For all the staff and volunteers at SafeHouse Center, it's an awesome responsibility. We hope that you will join with us in recognizing Sexual Assault Awareness Month this April.

On a national level, sexual assaults are vastly under reported. According to the Bureau of Justice, approximately 60% of all rapes go unreported. There is a strong reluctance to report because our culture frames rape as the victim's fault. Fear is also one of the reasons sexual assaults are not reported - the fear of repercussion, the fear of not being believed, and the fear that rapists will not be held accountable for their actions and will be free to assault again.

Since leadership at Washtenaw County Government asked SafeHouse Center to support survivors of sexual assault in 2003, we have served 1,000 women and men from our community who have experienced sexual assault. Looking toward the future, we do not expect the

need in our community to abate. In fact, we expect the need for services to grow and this growth will continue unless an investment is made in our young people to promote a culture that supports healthy relationships, holds sexual predators of all types accountable, and does not condone sexist behavior. We look forward to growing hope for all survivors. We look forward to the time where we can provide not only services but also the level of prevention education that our community needs. This can only happen with our community's continued support.

Here is what you can do:

Call 911 if you suspect domestic violence or have any knowledge of a sexual assault. Don't rationalize not being involved. If you suspect that someone you know is being abused or is suffering from the consequences of being beaten or raped, encourage them to contact SafeHouse Center at 734-995-5444.

Support SafeHouse Center through donations and by volunteering your time. Call us today at 995-5444 or visit us on the web at www.safehousecenter.org.

We appreciate your support.

Yours in hope,

Barbara A Niess

Barbara Niess
Executive Director
734-973-0242 ext.203
barbaran@safehousecenter.org



Sexual assault is the most offensive and inexcusable crime that can affect you, your neighbor, your sibling, your co-worker, or even your best friend. We know that in the United States 1.3 women are raped every minute. That means there are: 78 rapes each hour, 1,872 rapes each day, 56,160 rapes each month and 683,280 rapes each year. (US DOJ Dept. on Violence Against Women Research and Statistics Publications, Feb. 2003)

We believe that sexual assault is never the fault of the survivor. The more we know about sexual assault, the more we realize how many of our attitudes about these horrendous crimes are based on myths rather than fact. These myths are believed by men and women from all segments of society, regardless of class or race. The prevalence of these myths serve to minimize the seriousness of sexual assault by shifting the blame away from those who commit the crime and on to the survivors.

SafeHouse sees too many sexual assaults each year.

SafeHouse Center provides services to all survivors of sexual assault, ages 14 and older. We provide personal, confidential, and free counseling and our services are tailored to the needs of each individual. Some survivors choose to speak with a counselor only once while others chose to work with a counselor for up to six months. These sessions focus on safety and concrete needs and offer the chance to start the healing process. Our counselors focus on the effects of violence and the common responses to assault. We also offer a weekly drop-in sexual assault support group where survivors can come when they'd like in order to receive support from others who have experienced similar events.

In addition to counseling, SafeHouse Center offers additional support services to survivors of sexual assault. Many survivors initially come into contact with SafeHouse Center through our Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). SART staff and volunteers respond to calls from the hospital immediately after a sexual assault is reported. The role of the SART advocate is to listen, support and advocate for the survivor and to assist in practical ways such as introducing the sexual assault nurse examiner, explaining the legal process, and discussing next steps. For survivors who choose to use the legal system, survivors may have a legal advocate from SafeHouse accompany them to court, explain the court process and be a support for them through the length of the trial.

We are fortunate to have many partners within the community who are similarly concerned about these issues. We have collaborated with the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Concordia University and Washtenaw Community College by co-presenting workshops and sponsoring joint events. We also work every day with law enforcement, courts, judges, and the sexual assault nurse examiners at the hospitals.

During the month of April, SafeHouse Center will join with the National Sexual Violence Resource Center and thousands of advocates and survivors throughout the country in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This is an opportunity for our community to focus on the problem of sexual violence and to commit ourselves to those actions we can take as individuals and as a community to end sexual violence. We hope that you will join us.

I am a survivor of incest, molestation, rape and domestic violence. Between the ages of 7 to 9 years of age I was sexually molested. At age 15 I was raped in an alley at gunpoint. I lost my virginity to a stranger with a stocking cap on his head and a gun pressed to my head. From age 26 to age 40 I was physically, emotionally and financially abused by my ex-husband.

In the year of 2002 I came to SafeHouse Center for help. That is when I got my breakthrough. I received counseling, help with transportation, bus tokens, clothes vouchers, diapers, food, legal help, shelter, financial help, Christmas presents and most importantly, peace of mind. It took several years for me to finally break free but today I am still here and I am free.

I really believe that if it wasn't for the help of SafeHouse Center I would not be alive today.

Thank you so much- **A Survivor**

“ 4% of rape victims do not know their assailant. He had raped before and had been out of prison for only 3 months.

He had not been a model prisoner so he had been incarcerated for the maximum sentence – 23 years. Twenty-four years earlier he had lived just a few doors down from me. This night he was high on cocaine and was looking for an open door in order to rape again. He found the open door, it was mine. Living in a small rural town on a breezy July 2003 summer night in Michigan, I chose to only close my backyard screen door to the patio of my apartment, which sat back away from the road, with the woods to look out at. I awoke to a man standing over my bed around 2:30 a.m., telling me to be quiet and to lie down. Confused, yet certain it was someone I knew, I asked what he was doing there. I then sat up and looked him square in the face. I knew then something was terribly wrong. I didn't know him. I asked him, “Who are you?” He repeated his demands. I started to identify his appearance, his clothing, his skin. It's all I could think to do.

Repeatedly I begged him not to hurt me. After he told me not to look at him he put a towel over my face. Seeing me look from under the towel he pulled a knife, placing it next to the side of my head and continued to rape me. I wiped his semen on my hip, in the hopes that it could be used for DNA evidence. He took me into the bathroom and told me to get into the shower, demanding I not get out. He took my bedding, purse and cell phone, and fled. Time passed, and I got out of the shower and sought help from my neighbors. At the hospital, at my insistence, they retrieved the DNA evidence from my hip with gauze and saline, which was later used to convict him. I provided details for the police to create a picture which helped identify the man. He was found in California three weeks later. He was sentenced to 90 years the following April.

Unfortunately when the rape occurred, the Rape Crisis Center had recently lost their funding and was not there to support me at the rural hospital. Calls were made, but all I heard were recordings. I was supported by the police department as well as family and friends, until the preliminary trial began three months later. At the preliminary trial in October, I met a member from SafeHouse. SafeHouse had started filling the role of the Rape Crisis Center. From that point on, SafeHouse was there, offering support during the grueling court procedures. Several members came from SafeHouse to attend each court proceeding and the trial in April 2004, and gradually they gained my confidence.

I befriended one of the counselors and often visited SafeHouse for counseling to search out the answers often plagued by victims. I attended a survivor's support group provided by SafeHouse, searching to meet other victims and learn of their survival. I gained some confidence, and with the continued support of SafeHouse, I was able to weather the experience of the rape throughout the trial. SafeHouse was there for me and my family and friends, providing support and direction with each court process. The connection to SafeHouse remains to this day as I share my survivor experience with those who take training classes as volunteers for SafeHouse, to understand who a survivor is. ”

“ Volunteering with the SART program has been a life changing opportunity. My experiences have been meaningful and powerful, and have deeply changed my consciousness and awareness of sexualized violence. Volunteering has offered one outlet for promoting positive change for survivors. It is my hope that by providing quality, compassionate, empowering service, we can communicate to survivors that healing is possible, support is abundant, and the assault is not their fault. They do not deserve shame or blame. Also, with this awareness, I hope we can create a world free of this violence. ”



Dear Friends,

During the past year, nearly 5,000 survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault contacted SafeHouse Center by phone or mustered up the courage to walk through our doors. We were there for them 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

For over 30 years, SafeHouse Center has offered shelter and comprehensive services to survivors in our community. I am sure that you would agree that this legacy of service to our community is something that we can be proud of and one that should continue.

Each day at SafeHouse we save lives and accomplish extraordinary things.

We answer our phones with trained counselors and are available to meet survivors whenever and wherever they need us. We provide a safe haven for families fleeing violence and help them maintain some sense of normalcy in a secure and supportive environment. We help survivors navigate the court system as batterers and rapists are brought to justice.

We provide compassionate understanding along with a place to stay, pajamas, a toothbrush and much, much more to adult and child survivors who reach the shelter with nothing but the clothes on their backs. We make sure that child survivors are transported to school daily and have a secure, well-equipped place to play while their parents plan the next steps for their new lives. We give an emotional boost to survivors as they try to build productive and hopeful lives out of the ashes of fear and despair. We need your support to make sure that these services continue to be available to survivors.

Simply put, your gift matters and it matters a lot. Your gift will enable our staff to stay on-call at all times for survivors. Your gift will allow us to respond to the downstream effects of domestic violence and sexual assault long after survivors have found physical safety. Your gift will provide much needed support to our Teen Voice program which has teens talking to each other about dating violence and sexual assault.

Your gift will truly make a difference, so please join with me in making a generous contribution to SafeHouse Center today. An envelope is included in the Newsletter for your convenience.

Best regards,
Hillary Murt
Chair, Board of Directors

Through the generosity of our donors, we are able to continue the critical support we provide every day to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and to their children.

The following pages acknowledge those who gave in 2008.

Thank you!

Your gift will truly make a difference.

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Rebecca Steele
Stonebridge Golf Club
Stop 'n Lock Self Storage
Paula R. and David Strenski
Linda Strootman
Marlena Studer
Miche Suboski
Ching W. Sung
Kathy and William E. Sutherland
Jennifer Sutton-Jalet and Samuel Jalet
Gloria Sweller
Birgit Swanson
Sweet Gem Confection
Jagmohan Takhar
Keely Tamer
Tracy Tamer
Andres Tamez
Tanglewood Golf Course
Sue Tarle
MaryJo Tate
Temple Beth Emeth Religious School

Temple Beth Emeth Synagogue
David Tessier
Kathleen R. Thomson
Christina Tikkanen
D. Tilbury
Tim Horton's
Todd's Services, Inc.
Toyota Motor Engineering and
Manufacturing North America,
Vehicle Performance Development
Transforming Life Ministries
John and Penelope Tropman
Janice Tucker
Paul Tucker, Jr. and Evelyn Tucker
Jackie Turner
Elene Tzetzos
U-Haul State Street Center
United Way of Washtenaw County
University Musical Society
University of Michigan Credit Union
University of Michigan Digital
Media Commons
University of Michigan Golf Course
University of Michigan Health System
University of Michigan Medical School
Susan Van Strien
Marge Verduchi
Cathy Vergison
Ann Vitale
Phil Visides
Janet Wadsworth
Wagner Design
Lindsay Waite
Lori Walters
Deirdre Warren
Leigh Washabaugh
Michelle and Joseph Washburn
Washtenaw County Medical
Society Alliance
Washtenaw County
Sheriff's Department
Claudia Wasit
Pam Watson
Weber's Inn
Webster United Church of Christ
D. Webster
Jerry Weidenbach
Nancy L. Welch
Rose Welchans
Mark and Judy Wenzel
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Carol Weurding
Debie White
Shirley White-Black
Whole Foods Market
Wiard's Orchard, Inc.
Kelly Wichman
R Sam Wickizer
Mary Ann Wild
Bethany Willisten
Jim Williston
Denise Wilson
Jude Wilson and Mark Hassett
Wolverine Rental and Supply
Women For Hope

Scott and Andrea Workman
Eve Wright
YMCA of Ann Arbor
Karen Yamada and Gary Dolce
Kristin N. York
Chad Young
Kelly Young
Laura Young
Youth Volunteer Club -
Clague Middle School
Ypsilanti Police Department
Ypsilanti Studio, Julia Collins
Ypsilanti Township Senior Center
Richard and Monica Zillich
Zingerman's Bakehouse
Erika Zurawski

“Sexual assault is an epidemic growing at an alarming rate and traumatizing the women and children of our nation. This crime is shrouded in silence, caused by social myths and biases that incriminate victims rather than offenders. These myths push victims into the shadows, afraid to step forward and seek help from their physicians.”

—Lonnie Bristow, MD, AMA President



“ I have been volunteering with SafeHouse Center for the past year

on the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). When I am on call for SART, I meet with a survivor of sexual assault at the hospital immediately following the assault. My role is to be an advocate for the survivor; I walk her through the process of the medical examination, support her in dealing with the hospital staff and the police, and provide her with information on resources in the community to help her through her healing process. As an advocate, the survivor's well being is my sole concern. I have had the privilege of being there for several women whose backgrounds were very different from my own, and who viewed the world through a different lens. When I meet a survivor and connect with her under these circumstances, we set our differences aside and bond through the common experience of human emotion. In doing this work, I get a sense of oneness of the human spirit that I feel is missing from our society. It is this sense of oneness, I believe, that enables social justice. ”

“ When I first started participating on the Sexual Assault Response Team, I was nervous, I was out of my comfort zone,

and I couldn't imagine what I could say that would be of help at that terrifying and vulnerable point in someone's life. However, I soon understood the importance of my role and I immediately forgot my selfish distress. After spending time talking and listening to survivors, I've come to realize that I am the first person, and possibly the only person, they will ever encounter who will offer the support and empathy that is so crucial to their healing. It's not my favorite thing to be woken up in the middle of the night and to drive out to the hospital ER, but it is absolutely worth it because I know that I may be able to offer comfort to someone after they've just survived one of the most intimate and heinous crimes. I am there to share with them that this is not their fault. ”

“People aged 16-24 are raped and assaulted at higher rates than any other age group.”

–National Crime Victimization Survey,
Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002



SafeHouse Center Service Statistics FY 2008

| Non-Residential Services | <i>numbers served</i> |
|---|-----------------------|
| Domestic Violence Advocacy and Counseling | 217 |
| Domestic Violence Support Group | 189 |
| Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy | 1085 |
| Domestic Violence Response Team | 573 |
| Sexual Assault Advocacy and Counseling | 126 |
| Sexual Assault Legal Advocacy | 51 |
| Sexual Assault Response Team | 75 |
| Sexual Assault Support Group | 87 |
| Crisis Calls | 2044 |
| TOTAL UNDUPLICATED | 4447 |
| Residential Services | |
| Adults | 121 |
| Children | 154 |
| Total Unduplicated | 275 |
| Adult nights | 2883 |
| Children nights | 4761 |
| Total | 7644 |
| Age (of those whose age is known) | <i>percent</i> |
| 0-12 | 5% |
| 13-17 | 3% |
| 18-24 | 23% |
| 25-34 | 39% |
| 35-44 | 22% |
| 45-54 | 6% |
| 55-64 | 1% |
| Over 65 | 1% |

SafeHouse Center’s Teen Voice is a group of teen volunteers (13-18 years old) dedicated to ending dating violence and sexual assault by providing educational events and presentations. Teen Voice works on a peer-to-peer education model that believes that the best way to reach and educate teens is to have the information presented by their teen peers.

Teen Voice volunteers provide information to the Washtenaw County community on teen dating violence and sexual assault. Their presence is growing - in 2009 Teen Voice has reached 380 people, already surpassing 2008’s outreach numbers. A large number of presentations are in the schools of Washtenaw County, including Ann Arbor, Saline and Milan.

Teen Voice has held special events in the community as well. Last March, Teen Voice hosted Rock Out Against Rape (R.O.A.R), a 5 band benefit concert at the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor to raise funds and to raise awareness about dating violence and sexual assault and how young people can develop healthy relationships. Teen Voice also does tabling events at community events, like Noise Permit—an annual music and poetry event in Frog Island in Ypsilanti and Take Back the Night in Ann Arbor.

Teen Voice is available to come speak to your class, group, or agency!

Contact Us...

We are here for the community. We are happy to answer your questions, provide information, or talk to you about ways you can help.

If you want to...

- Talk to a counselor about domestic violence or sexual assault:
call our 24 Hour Helpline: 734-995-5444
- Learn more about SafeHouse Center:
visit our website: www.safehousecenter.org
- Volunteer, apply for an internship, or receive information about training dates:
contact Kathy Winterhalter: 734-973-0242 x 252 or kathyw@safehousecenter.org
- Find out about making a donation or becoming involved in fund raising opportunities:
contact Julaine LeDuc: 734-973-0242 x 273 or julainel@safehousecenter.org
- Donate gift cards or other items, organize a fund raising event, benefit or cell phone drive:
contact Gwyn Hulswit: 734-973-0242 x 277 or gwynh@safehousecenter.org
- Get a speaker for a class or event:
contact Kathy Winterhalter: 734-973-0242 x 252 or kathyw@safehousecenter.org



SUPPORT GROUPS (child care available)

Drop-In: Domestic Violence Survivors:

Thursdays 6:30-8:00 pm

at First United Methodist Church in Ann Arbor

Drop-In: Sexual Assault Survivors:

Mondays 5:30-7:00 pm

at SafeHouse Center

Spanish Speaking Survivors:

Wednesdays 6:00-7:30 pm

at SafeHouse Center

For more information about any of the support groups, call the 24-hour HelpLine at 734-995-5444

Rape is highly reprehensible, both in a moral sense integrity and autonomy of the female victim and for intimate relations are to be established."



SafeHouse Center Wish List

SafeHouse Center provides support to survivors all year long. You can make a difference in the life of a survivor of sexual assault or domestic violence with your financial support or by donating the following new items. To learn more about this giving opportunity, please contact Gwyn at 973-0242 ext. 277 or gwynh@safehousecenter.org

- * Gift Cards (Meijer, Target, Kroger, Kmart and WalMart)
- * Phone Cards
- * Gas Cards
- * Towels, sheets and pillows
- * Dishes, glasses, pots and pans, silverware
- * Microwaves
- * DVD Players
- *New underwear for women and children up to teens

SafeHouse Center also has a wish list on amazon.com where you can purchase specific items needed by SafeHouse. SafeHouse Center is set up as an amazon.com affiliate; just follow the Amazon link at www.safehouse-center.org to visit amazon.com; a portion of all of your purchases is donated to SafeHouse Center at no cost to you.

**and in its almost total contempt for the personal
the latter's privilege of choosing those with whom**

*–Byron R. White,
Associate Justice of The United States Supreme Court*

SafeHouse Center Board of Directors

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SafeHouse Center is a 501(c)(3)
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SafeHouse Center
4100 Clark Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

www.safehousecenter.org
24-hour helpline: 734-995-5444
Business: 734-973-0242
FAX: 734-973-7817
info@safehousecenter.org

Our Newsletter is designed and prepared
for printing by volunteer Jude Wilson of
littleBeast books in Ann Arbor.

Jude can be reached at:

734-604-1627 jwilson@presslorentz.com

CALL 734-995-5444 IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, IS A SURVIVOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT



4100 Clark Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Business Line: 734-973-0242

www.safehousecenter.org



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April is
**Sexual Assault
Awareness Month**

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual abuse or domestic violence,
Call our 24 hour HelpLine: 734 995 5444