



Executive Director Amanda Raisanen & Legal Advocate Karina Robeck attended Ridgewater College's Community Health Fair in Hutchinson this past March. The Alliance's booth was one of 35-45 exhibits featured at the annual event to bring awareness of the health resources in our community.



McLeod Alliance joined in the festivities at this year's Water Carnival with a kid's craft and informational booth during Community Day.



McLeod Alliance Staff and Board Host Music in the Park!

Staff and board members served pie and ice cream to fundraise money for victims and survivors of domestic violence!



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From the Director's Desk

My first year as Executive Director for the Alliance has flown by, and with it have come many experiences, changes, and gratitudes. As that first year comes to a close, I want to recognize the great work done by my predecessors, who worked tirelessly to build the McLeod Alliance into what it is today. I feel so honored to have continued on with that work and to walk in their footsteps to continue to make a difference in our community. Teamwork and collaboration have also been essential in this first year, and I am incredibly thankful to my great team of advocates, board members, community partners, and colleagues who have supported me in this transition as director! Lastly, I thank the community and our donors for their generosity, support, and kindness. I am so humbled by the work done this past year by this great team and am excited to embark on many more to come!



- Amanda Raisanen
Executive Director

Alliance Wish List

Tissues

Toilet Paper

Paper Towels

Feminine Hygiene Products (Tampons)

Kid's Bubble Bath

Trash Bags

Baby Wipes



Want to donate, but don't have time to go shop?

McLeod Alliance is excited to announce that we now have an Amazon Wish List. Scan the QR Code with your device's camera to access our list of needed items. You can browse items, add to cart, purchase, and have the item(s) delivered right to our office!

From the Board Chair

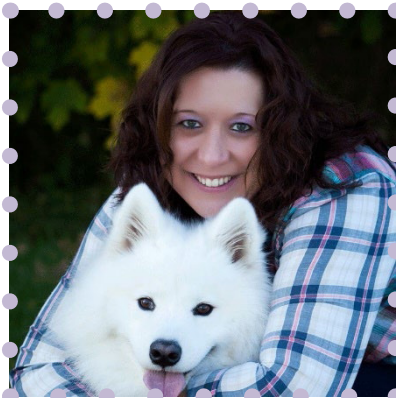
As I write this, we are wrapping up summer and headed into fall. We have had such a busy summer at the Alliance. We have experienced such generous donations this summer and we were the non-profit host for music in the park. We enjoyed a beautiful night of serving pie/ice cream and raising awareness! We THANK YOU, for all the support and for indulging in some pie.

I have been able to do more reading lately, which is how I found the articles on using support animals for support in court cases. This is such an exciting addition, and I am selfishly bummed my Nala is retired from therapy, she would have loved being in court. The addition of having a dog in court is such an exciting time since people tend to not want to leave a situation if they can't take their pet. The addition of a dog in court will make people feel safe enough to testify. I truly hope we see this expand it and becomes a regular fixture in the court room.

Before we know it, October will be here and that is a busy month for the Alliance as it is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Our staff and board will be out and about raising awareness throughout the month at various locations. Stop by to see us, lend some support, and don't forget to wear your purple!

We are forever grateful for your support of the Alliance.

- Sandi Sportelli
Board Chair



Hope Blooms Flower Farm stopped by with beautiful arrangements that we shared with clients and community partners.



McLeod Alliance receives proceeds from Temple Lodge #59's annual Breakfast Buffet Benefit. This event is a great example of how support and generosity makes our mission possible at the McLeod Alliance.

Victim/Survivor Shares Her Story in Observance of October 2023 Domestic Violence Awareness Month

I want to share my experience with McLeod Alliance, but first I'm going to share a bit about my life before the help of this program and the ladies. Before meeting my ex-husband, I had an awesome career with a pharmaceutical company. I had my own friends, money, and a great relationship with my kids. I was by all means very independent, and I was always reminded of that by my parents. I was 36 and single with two amazing kids, ages 18 and 5. I owned my own house and paid all of my bills on time; I even had excellent credit. Little did I know my life was about to change, and I was going to drag my kids into something they didn't deserve or choose.

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Calendar of Events

Fall

Page it Forward Book Drive Fundraiser (collection ongoing)
Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)
McLeod Alliance DVAM Outreach Activities (October)
Annual Fund Drive (November)
Office closed for Thanksgiving (November 23 & 24, 2023)

Winter

Holiday Craft & Vendor Festival (December 9, 2023)
Christmas Project (December)
Office closed for Christmas (December 22-26, 2023)
Office closed for New Years (January 1, 2024)
National Stalking Awareness Month (January)
Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (February)
Bowlathon (February, Date TBD)

Keep an eye on our social media for date announcements for events that are "Dates TBD" or further updates about upcoming events!

Facebook: McLeod Alliance
Instagram: @mcleodalliance



Staff Spotlight: Karina Robeck

My name is Karina, and I am the Legal Advocate at McLeod Alliance. I just celebrated four years with the organization this September. My role primarily focuses on assisting clients through various facets of the court system. Something that I enjoy about this work is that the opportunity for learning is never-ending. I believe that knowledge is power, and helping victims/survivors learn about their rights and navigate the court process can be very empowering.



In the spirit of learning, something else I am excited about is our new office library. Book collection is underway, and we have received several titles thanks to the generosity of our community! We hope to continue building our library and will be accepting ongoing book donations from our Amazon Wish List as part of our Page it Forward Book Drive Fundraiser. Our “Shelf Love Library” will be stocked with books for clients that center on learning about domestic violence, life beyond abuse, trauma healing, self-help, and poetry.



If you would like to view our selection or donate, scan the QR code with your device’s camera to be taken to our wish list.

- Karina Robeck
Legal Advocate



Pictured above are members of the McLeod Alliance Board & Executive Director, along with Hutchinson Health Foundation Executive Director Rachael Gemuenden. The Alliance is grateful to be a grant recipient as the foundation works toward transforming health & well-being in the community.

Executive Director, Amanda accepts a grant award from the United Way of McLeod County. Staff and board are so grateful to be a funded community partner!



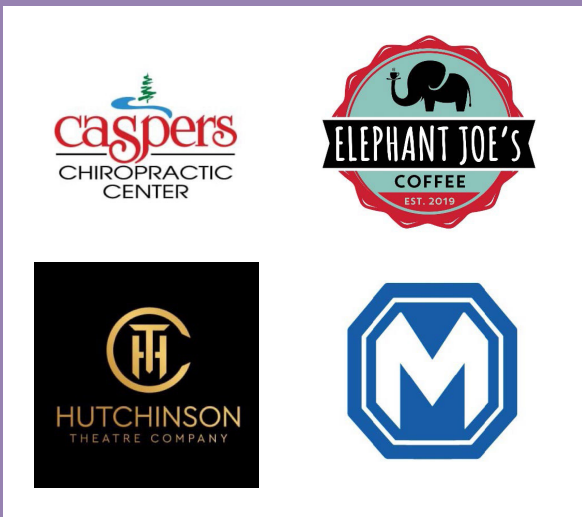
Bilingual Advocate Ofelia Vergara is a member of the Together We Are Glencoe Committee. The committee organized their event, Glencoe Unity Fest, for the first time in May. Attendees brought donations that were given directly to our clients.

Community Businesses Give Back

McLeod Alliance would like to extend our special thanks to Caspers Chiropractic Center, Millerbernd Manufacturing Company & Elephant Joe's Coffee, and Hutchinson Theatre Company for collaborating with their communities to raise funds and awareness for the Alliance. Businesses like yours that give back to the communities they serve are so important to our organization and make our mission a reality.



Thank you to Caspers Chiropractic Center for donating dollars from their "Give Back Movement" special promotion.



A Gracious Thank You to Our Donors (March-August)

- Amazon Smile
- American Legion #407
- Donald & Jennifer Anderson
- Anonymous
- Eugene Baasen
- Beverly Baumetz
- Blackbaud Giving Fund
- Caspers Chiropractic Center
- Edward Jones Investing
- Elephant Joe's Coffee
- Sherrie Evans
- Glencoe Lions
- Glencoe Regional Health Services
- Great River Energy
- John & Jean Hassinger
- Hutchinson Health Foundation
- Mary Inglis
- Laure & Lee Lemke
- Emmet & Marge McCormick
- McLeod County
- Millerbernd Manufacturing
- Minnesota Masonic Charities
- National Financial Services, LLC
- Network for Good
- Novation
- Paulus Pilgrim
- Mary Purcell
- River of Hope Lutheran Church
- Richard Schenheit
- St. Paul Lutheran Church
- Jeffrey Sterner Tech-Etch, Inc.
- Temple Lodge #59 AF & AM
- Thrivent
- Thursday Night Twilighters
- Todays Women of Hutchinson
- United Community Action
- United Way of McLeod County
- VFW Post 906, Hutchinson
- Vineyard Methodist Church
- Wendy Benusa
- Kyle Wendling
- Rich & Peggy Westlund

Get to Know the Board of Directors: Jordan Malone

Family?

My fiancé, Brady, and I have been together for almost 3 years and can't wait to get married in May of 2024. We currently reside in Spicer, Minnesota.

Employment?

I work at Jay Malone Motors, which is a car dealership that my father, Jay, started 18 years ago. We are truly a family-owned dealership with the majority of my family working there. It is so awesome to come to work every day and spend time with your family.

Hobbies?

Like many Minnesota residents, we love our lake time. We are lucky enough to live in a lake town and spend the majority of our free time with our noses in a book (murder mystery of course) out on the lake. Brady and I also always have the travel itch. We love seeing new cities and cultures – we are looking forward to adventuring around Italy, drinking wine, and eating pasta during our honeymoon.



Why serve on the board?

What a lot of people do not know is that I actually have my Masters in Criminal Justice with an emphasis in Victim Services. I previously worked in the field prior to me joining our family business. I have a strong passion for providing victims of relationship violence a voice when they can't use their own. I am so lucky to be able to be a part of such a great organization – the team at McLeod Alliance are truly so dedicated to all of the clients they work with. They are fulfilling a need within our community and anything I can do to help with that need, I will do.

Hopes for the Alliance?

I hope they continue to grow as an organization so they can continue to help support and promote the elimination of relationship violence through education, empowerment, protection, and advocacy to more victims.

Thoughts for the public?

I know it is easy to think that relationship violence doesn't occur in our small towns but it does. Be aware of resources in your community and lend a helping hand. If you are thinking of an organization to volunteer with or donate to – think of McLeod Alliance.

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I remember meeting the man who is now my ex-husband. He was so funny and helpful around the house, and as a single mother, I really appreciated it. He would constantly remind me of how much I carried on my plate and would slowly remind me of how my kids' father didn't see just how much I did for them while my kids could hear him. In the course of 3 months, I had a new number and had no contact with my children's dad, and sadly, neither did my kids!

I ignored (found excuses for) every red flag and married this man! After the 3 months passed, he began to aggressively push me as I walked away from our arguments, but then convinced me that he didn't mean to push me "that hard". The pushes became slaps, and the slaps became chokes. I had no one to talk to, and neither did my kids, all because I would beg them not to tell grandma and grandpa because... what's the point, right? He'll apologize in a couple of days and we'll be okay, I thought! I couldn't stand the thought of my parents not liking him if they knew the truth. These were regular marriage problems that people don't talk about, I thought.

I had completely forgotten the woman I was at the beginning of my story! This man had consciously or unconsciously made me forget my worth, and worst of all, he had made me think I relied on him financially to pay my bills! Yes, that's right—the same exact bills that were always on time that I was so proudly speaking of at the beginning of my story! This man had abused me, not only physically but also financially. He had drained every cent out of my account and my credit cards! I was emotionally tired and broken! And so were my kids, seeing their mom in pieces!

I was embarrassed to see my neighbors after they would call the police when they would see him dragging me by the hair! I thought I was the joke of the block; after all, I had bought my house in 2014, and my neighbors had never seen a police car at my house until 2020, when he came into my life. One day after we had such an amazing day celebrating my daughter's birthday with family, he took my daughter to my parents' house, came back, and accused me of smiling at a neighbor. He dragged me by the hair, trying to take me outside so that I could "go with him," meaning my neighbor. He punched me in the face and shoved his hand down my mouth! I could feel his fingernails scratching my throat! He told me he was going to stop my breathing and proceeded to choke me. I remember waking up and my mom being there because he called her scared, thinking he had "really hurt" me this time! When the paramedics arrived, so did the police. I remember it was a woman officer this time! She was so nice and understanding. She looked me in the eyes and gave me a card and a pamphlet. It read

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“McLeod Alliance.” I wish I could tell you that this is where my life changed again for the better, but it didn’t!

The state put a DANCO order on him, and he was to have no contact with me. But I couldn’t stand the thought of him being in jail, and I did what any woman who is unconsciously brainwashed would do! I wrote the judge a touching letter and begged for the DANCO to be dropped!

The day he got released, he packed his things and left! However, because we were still married and there was no DANCO in place, he would still come to my house and help himself to my things, and there was nothing I or the police could do about it! He was using my credit cards without me knowing and things were disappearing fast from my garage. I had to use the last of my money on changing the locks and garage door openers because these are things I do not know how to do. It was a big hit to my pocket!

I was feeling desperate, hopeless, and helpless! I could not concentrate at work, and I didn’t know what I could do or where to go! I started to think I deserved every beating and everything that was happening to me! One day, after my neighbors saw him taking things from outside my house, I looked for the McLeod Alliance pamphlet the officer gave me and gave that number a call. It was after hours, but I still spoke to someone who encouraged me to go in person the next day. OK, now this is where my life took a turn for the better! I was so embarrassed to tell them my story and that I had begged the judge to drop the DANCO, but they were so understanding and helpful! I remember feeling safe and having a calmness that I can’t explain while I was there! By the end of the day, I had the approval of the same judge for an Order for Protection. I could be at peace knowing that he would think twice before coming to take anything else. He, of course, fought the Order for Protection, and I again felt discouraged. But these ladies never left me on my own, and they were my support through all of this process! They got to experience firsthand how he was and how difficult he would make things for me. They prepared me for my court hearings and even sat with me during them. Little by little, I started being myself again! Thanks to this program and the ladies that run it, I am now divorced, have my amazing career, and most importantly, my daughter and I feel safe in our own home that I proudly pay for! I always keep in touch with the people of McLeod Alliance to remind them that I will forever be grateful for everything they did for us! I know there are a lot of women like me who look composed at work and in front of their families but are going through something similar, and I encourage you to get help! Please reach out to your local center for domestic violence. You deserve to be heard and safe! Sometimes our abusers see us as one helpless victim, but there is help; you just have to speak up!

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Receiving duplicates? Incorrect addresses? New person in position?

We'd like to know. Please contact the Alliance by mail, e-mail, or phone, and we'll take care of the problem. Thanks!

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