



Safety Net News

July, August, September 2020

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2021 Bowlathon ~

Annual fundraiser
would have been
Alliance's 25th

By Jane Otto
McLeod Alliance Volunteer

Covid-19 has put an asterisk next to the 2021 McLeod Alliance Bowlathon.

For the past 24 years, area bowlers and businesses have generously supported the event. The fundraiser has generated anywhere from \$9,000 to \$12,000 annually for the agency.

It was a difficult decision not to have the bowlathon this February, Executive Director Rhonda Buerkle said.

"We will greatly miss the income from this fundraiser," she said, but added that people can consider making a direct donation to the Alliance.

Along with area businesses' donations and sponsorships, about 100 bowlers participated annually.



Many of those have done so for many years.

Advocate Glynis Vacek, who has been involved in more than 20 bowlathons, said, "We will miss all those familiar faces, but now community safety overrides the event."

Not only does the annual event raise money, it raises awareness.

"It's a big awareness event," Vacek said, but added that the Alliance staff is still here to support and aid victims and their families.

"Though there is no bowlathon this year," she said, "It's not going to change the work that we do."



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2019 homicide report

Violence Free Minnesota recently released its 2019 Intimate Partner Homicide Victims report. The agency has done this for more than 30 years.

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Log onto our Web site at
www.mcleodalliance.org
for current news.

From the Director's desk: Alliance to face financially hard year ahead

Greetings all!
Recently I was asked to speak at a meeting about the impact Covid-19 has had on our organization. I'd like to say it has not affected McLeod Alliance.

Like all businesses, however, we have most certainly changed. Spring quarter can only be described as eerily quiet for all domestic violence agencies across Minnesota. We grieved as we knew victims may be quarantined at home with their abusers. We worried as tensions rose across the state.

Most importantly, we adapted to serve clients. While we also accept in person visits, the majority of our advocacy is now done via phone or internet. We still provide the same level of care for victims and their families, and our door is always open for those in need of help.



Rhonda Buerkle

Fiscal year 2020 numbers have been tabulated, and the last quarter shows we are back to (thankfully) serving many victims in this community.

The biggest change is financial. This year did not show a huge loss in donations, however, in the coming year we are unable to hold our annual fundraiser. We are so sad for everyone to miss Bowlathon in February! Rest assured we will bring it back in 2022.

We would be so grateful, in the meantime, if you would be willing to make a donation to help us through the coming year. Please send an email to mavdv@hutchtel.net or call if you want to be placed on the Annual Fund Drive mailing list.

Thank you. We are so grateful for the support of each and every one of you.

Rhonda Buerkle
Executive Director

From the Board Chair: An alternative bowlathon challenge

What a year it has been? If you are like me, you are counting down the days for the year 2020 to end, but will 2021 be any better? I cannot predict the future, but I look forward to moving on with a new normal. A day when we can hug a loved one without fear and can gather to celebrate the many positive things life has to offer. I look forward to the fun things in life.

One of the things I will miss most next year is our bowlathon. This was a fun, interactive way to get our supporters together to help raise awareness and funds to help combat domestic violence. Without this, we are going to need the financial support of our donors through our annual fund drive this holiday season.

If you bowled, consider donating that \$40 to our organization in a different way. February is a very down time in Minnesota. We are sick of snow and begging winter to end. Do something fun to show your support since we can't bowl together.

I guess this is my challenge to you. If you miss bowling with your group, come up with another way to raise funds together. Challenge each other to lose weight and donate the groups total loss to the Alliance. Do a walking challenge and donate the mileage to the Alliance. Our supporters are some of the most creative



Susan Noyes

people I know, so I would love to see the things you come up with to have fun and support our cause. If you do, please share pictures so we can showcase your group in a future newsletter. Now that I have challenged you to be creative to help us raise funds, let me challenge you in another way. Talk about the Alliance. Share the newsletter you receive with co-workers, family, etc. Encourage people you know to become active in our organization or one of the many others in the county.

A couple things this pandemic has given me is more time with family and to think about what is important to me. Sports, movies and other entertainment just are no longer that important. People are.

If you feel the same, there are many organizations, including our own, looking for volunteers to help. If it is just learning about the services offered and sharing that knowledge with others around you, then they are aware that these services are available in our county.

Please stay safe and healthy while enjoying a very warm and blessed holiday season.

Susan Noyes
Board Chair

Delivering a little sunshine



LeAnne Schmitt Lund, center, arrived with her helpers to brighten the day for the Alliance staff in late July. Lund, owner and operator of Hope Blooms Flower Farm, Grove City, took time from her day to arrange flowers and present them.



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Homicide report provides more than names

The following information is from Violence Free Minnesota

On October 1, Governor Walz issued a proclamation declaring October Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The same morning Violence Free Minnesota (VFM), the statewide coalition of over 90 programs working to address relationship abuse, released the 2019 Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota.

The report provides an overview of Minnesota's 21 victims of intimate partner homicide in 2019 alongside recommendations for community responses to end domestic violence.

"Every victim has a story beyond the story of their murder. It is the story of where they found joy and meaning in their life," said VFM communications director Becky Smith. "We publish this report to remember the victims and choose to use whatever power we have to change our state, our communities, and our relationships to create a violence free Minnesota."

The report states that of the 21 known victims, 16 women were killed by a current or former intimate partner. Five family members and bystanders are included as they were murdered in domestic violence related situations. Of those, three were family members attempting to intervene and two were children shot alongside their mother in their front yard.

At least 23 minor children are now left without a parent due to intimate partner violence. Thus far in 2020, at least 22 people are known to have been killed due to domestic violence in Minnesota.

"We know that these deaths are not solely the result of individual acts of violence, but a culmination of collective and widespread

Where to find it

The HomicideReport: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota is the only document of its kind in Minnesota. A copy of the report can be found at www.vfmn.org.

Not only does the report list all the victims, their stories, and memories from those who knew them, it gives recommendations on how we can possibly prevent these violent escalations.



failures across multiple systems," said Smith. "If systems, such as housing, healthcare, and education, were to incorporate the recommendations within the 2019 Homicide Report, we know victims and our communities will be safer."

At a virtual press briefing in October, Pheng Thao, 2018 Bush Fellow, founder of ManForward, and co-director of Transforming Generations, addressed the audience pressing the need for culturally responsive programming to change abusive behaviors. VFM recommended the state legislature invest in Domestic Abuse Transformation Programming (DATP) to transform behavior, prevent future violence, and increase safety.

A history behind the data

In 1989, Julie "Tilly" Tilley worked for the statewide coalition of domestic violence programs - then known as the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women. She began keeping a list of all the women and children who were killed in Minnesota.

This list grew into the nation's first-known state report on domestic violence homicides. It

was titled the Femicide Report to highlight that women are the majority of domestic violence victims. Over the years, the annual report - like the movement to end gender-based violence - evolved.

In 2006, the coalition began analyzing media reports on the homicides, searching for points of intervention and what are known as "lethality factors" in order to inform advocates, law enforcement, and policy makers as to how we might prevent these deaths in the future.

In 2010, coalition employee Safia Khan further expanded the report to include specific recommendations based on research pulled from court records, police reports, and death certificates.

We know that domestic violence advocates must navigate systems, policies, and the general public who rarely distinguish femicide as a separate category of homicide. Additionally, we know that domestic violence homicide claims the lives of people of all ages and genders.

VFM relies on public information and news accounts for data collection. The murders of people of color, Native women and two-spirit people, those living in poverty, rural victims and children, members of the LGBTQ community - particularly transgender women of color, people who engage in sex work, and women and children used in prostitution and sex trafficking may be underrepresented in our report as they often go unreported in mainstream media.

If you have any questions, concerns, or information regarding the Intimate Partner Homicide Report, please contact Becky Smith at bsmith@vfmn.org or 651-646-6177 ext. 115.

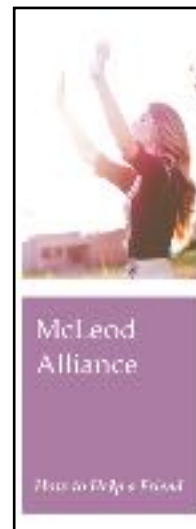


Spreading awareness via personal care

The McLeod Alliance Salon Project was held throughout September. Thirteen salons in McLeod County and one salon outside the county participated. Each of those businesses received brochures, pens, and chapsticks, pictured above, for them to distribute to their clients.

Brochures available

If you, your business, or school would like some of the Alliance flyers, "How to Help a Friend," please call the office at 320-234-7933 or email besafe@hutchtel.net. The brochure offers guidance as to helping others in abusive relationships. The brochure is also available in Spanish.



Alliance presents 2020 fiscal year facts

The following are some of the Alliance's statistics for the fiscal year of October 2019 to September 2020. During that time, the Alliance served 282 domestic violence victims. Of those victims, 220 were new clients and 13 were men.

Advocates provided legal advocacy to clients 330 times, attended civil court 17 times, and criminal court hearings 14 times. They assisted clients with 36 Orders for Protection or Harassment Restraining Orders.

There were 688 crisis and support calls, along with 521 referrals for services from other community organizations.

Alliance staff gave nine school, community, and professional training presentations to increase public awareness of family violence. Sadly, 1.8 million children witness domestic violence each year in this country.

Our wish list

The community donates many needed items to the Alliance for which we are forever grateful.

Presently, our clients particularly need:

- ✓ Toilet paper
- ✓ Tissues
- ✓ Kitchen-size trash bags
- ✓ Dixie cups
- ✓ Napkins

Cash donations are always appreciated. We can then use the money toward specific items that we may need later.

Thank you for your generosity!

News briefs

Alliance seeks new board members

Executive Director Rhonda Buerkle said the Alliance is presently seeking new board members. Board members meet monthly to provide programming support and ideas, review agency finances, support and evaluate the director, and research fundraising ideas among other duties.

If anyone is interested or for more information, contact Rhonda at 320-234-7933 or mavdv@hutchtel.net.

Alliance office is open

Please remember that the Alliance office is open 8 a.m. –

4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The staff asks that you call, if possible, prior to coming as many issues can be addressed over the phone. Proper hygiene procedures are also followed.

Weekly Hispanic support group

Every Wednesday Bilingual Advocate Ofelia Vergara leads a Spanish-speaking support group for survivors. The meetings are about 90 minutes long. The group adheres to social distancing guidelines.

For more information, call Ofelia at 320-234-7933.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020

In-Kind

Flowers-Hope Blooms Flower Farm
Books-Former Client
Quilts-St. John's Quilters Stewart

Monetary

Gary Schott
Vicki Powers
Front Stream
Carol Ault

Hutch Health Auxiliary
Edward Jones Financial
McLeod County VA Program
United Way of McLeod County
Gavin, Donley, & Ostlund
Scott Ziegler
Ann Schumann
Gloria Ruzicka
Tom & Lori Kennedy...In honor of
Margie Schiffler

Constance Sterner
Marlys Anderson
Tim Purcell
Mary Neff
Blackbaud Giving Fund
Hometown Realty
Jim McKay
Deborah Goranowski
Linda Merkel...In honor of all DV
Victims



Thank you to all the groups and individuals who have generously provided in-kind donations to our organization. Your gift truly makes a difference in the lives of those affected by domestic violence!



Another kind act

The Novation Credit Union members, from left to right, Todd Brandel, Tammy Kirchhoff, Kerri Symons, Tracy Juhl, and Niki Pokornowski presented health and beauty supplies recently to the agency. The Novation team kindly collected and bought these items for our clients to use.

Calendar of Events

November

Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

November 17: 5:15 p.m. McLeod Alliance Board digital meeting

December

Stress-free Family Holidays Month

December 15: 5:15 p.m. McLeod Alliance Board digital meeting

January

Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month

January 19: 5:15 p.m. McLeod Alliance Board digital meeting

Ongoing

Hispanic Support Group meets weekly on Wednesdays, while Support Group meets Thursdays. Masks and social distancing are required. For more information, call the Alliance office at (320) 234-7933.



McLeod Alliance, Inc.
P.O. Box 393
Hutchinson, MN 55350

Receiving duplicates? Incorrect addresses? New person in position?

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

McLeod Alliance, Inc. Staff

Executive Director
Rhonda Buerkle

Advocacy Coordinator
Glynis Vacek

Bilingual Advocacy Program
Ofelia Vergara

Legal Advocate
Karina Robeck

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Please invest in your local
United Way . . .



United Way
Helps Here

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