



# Safety Net News

Spring 2022

Published by the McLeod Alliance

## Alliance Celebrates Domestic Violence Month



**McLeod Alliance received a donation from the General Federation of Women's Club, Silver Lake Chapter. Pictured is a Club member along with McLeod Alliance advocacy coordinator and legal advocate, Glynis Vacek and Karina Robeck.**

**By Elli Gifferson  
McLeod Alliance Volunteer**

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), and this year's theme was "Every1KnowsSome1." To raise awareness and inspire conversation about the topic, McLeod Alliance and other agencies across the country partnered with the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). Specifically, McLeod Alliance's efforts included presentations to teens and their parents as well as other community groups. For instance, the Alliance partnered with the General Federation of Women's Club in Silver Lake to provide teen dating violence educational resources for distribution

throughout McLeod County. The group donated dollars and supplies for clients.

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Log onto our website at  
[www.mcleodalliance.org](http://www.mcleodalliance.org)  
for current news.

## From the Director's Desk:

### Happy New Year!

And what a year it has already been, 3 weeks into January! We are in the middle of moving our offices at the Alliance. Our address will remain the same, however, you can now physically find us across the hall in the same building. Thanks to all who have helped us with this monumental task. We are excited to begin helping clients in our new space!

The Christmas project was a success this year. Eleven families were able to have a great Christmas because of the generosity of our community members. We are extremely thankful!

We are about to wrap up our Annual Fund Drive. Donations were down a bit this year, however, we are again amazed at the support given to our small agency. Our client numbers continue to climb. The complexity of their needs continues to rise. We are happy to be here for all, however, we cannot do it without our supporters! Please consider making a donation.

You will notice, finally, we have decided to adapt our newsletter to twice annually. This will allow our volunteer more time to gather information and send out a new updated format. The Alliance is so excited to start this new collaboration. Special thanks to Jane Otto, who has been awesome at taking over our newsletter for so many years in the past.

We want to wish you all a happy, safe, and healthy New Year!



**Rhonda Buerkle**

*Rhonda Buerkle*  
*Executive Director*

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## From the Board Chair:

### Reflecting on the Year

Greetings, first and foremost, thank you for all the support you provide to our organization throughout the year and through the Annual Fund Drive. Without the help of all of you, we cannot do what we do!

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**Sandi Sportelli**

# Making Connections

## Continued from page 2

As a new year starts, one seems to take time to reflect on the past year and set some goals for the future. 2021 brought us a rise in clients, costs increasing and finding alternative ways to reach our clients. Our staff did it all with grace and agility.

2022 will bring us a chance to start fresh, in our new space and continuing to offer support to our many clients. We are fortunate to have a new office space to call home.

Each year I pick 4 words for the year and one of them is Connection. Connection is a relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else. I am fortunate to have a beautiful Samoyed named Nala Jean that over the past 10 years has taught me that the connections do not always need to be with people. She stops to smell flowers, watches butterflies and will stop dead in her tracks for windchimes. She has taught me to be a better person, to give of myself to people and organizations with time or financially. Nala Jean is named after my own mom, who also taught me that my strongest connection will always be family. Now, family to me isn't who you are born with. I think family is that connection you make with someone, but that is another topic for another time.

My wish for all of you in 2022 is to make a connection, whether that is with our alliance, a stranger, or even a new furry friend. If that means you start a new task, new hobby, donate some time to an organization or just be like Nala Jean and just stop and smell the flowers.

Please offer some grace to everyone you meet. We could all use that in these trying times.

Thank you for continuing to support McLeod Alliance!

*Sandi Sportelli*  
*Board Chair*

## ALLIANCE WISH LIST



The community donates many needed items to the Alliance for which they are forever grateful. Presently, we particularly need:

- |                |                    |                |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| ✓ Tissues      | ✓ Hair Conditioner | ✓ Trash Bags   |
| ✓ Laundry Soap | ✓ Toilet Paper     | ✓ Clorox Wipes |

## Meet Our Newest Member...

### Kristen Matthews

**Family?** Kristen is originally from Chaska, MN, and is the oldest of two children in her family. She married her husband in November of 2021, and they currently reside in Hutchinson.

**Employment?** Kristen attended Gustavus Adolphus College and graduated in 2018 with a degree in Elementary Education. Her passion has always been with people and advocating for those who are disadvantaged. She currently serves as the Director of Youth and Family Ministries at Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson.

**Hobbies?** She loves music, singing, and playing guitar and piano. Kristen also enjoys being outdoors and exploring, as well as cooking with her husband and watching movies.

**Why serve on the Board?** She wants to help others in our community and sees the Alliance as one of the most powerful forces to help those in need. During a mission trip she led in 2020 and through the Hutchinson Leadership Institute, Kristen learned about the amazing work of the Alliance. Since then, she has always felt compelled to do something.

**Changes in perspective?** Kristen was not previously aware of how much funding is required to help people in our community. She is continually astonished by the willingness of people to give their time, money, and resources to this amazing non-profit.

**Hopes for the Alliance?** She aspires to bring energy to young people as she couples serving on the board with her youth ministry position. Kristen really wants teenagers to be aware that something like this exists in town, and she hopes to inspire them to get involved.

**Thoughts for the public?** The Alliance staff works very hard, tirelessly and selflessly helping others in our community. Their passion really drives them.

**Fun fact?** Pineapple 100% belongs on pizza!



## We have moved!

McLeod Alliance has found a new home! Don't worry, we're not too far. We're just across the hall in the same building. We thank everyone for their patience during our move, but now we're all settled in and looking forward to serving you in our new space!



## Every1KnowsSome1



The purple balloon arch marked the beginning point of the domestic violence awareness walk, with participants pictured in the distance.



McLeod Alliance advocate, Karina Robeck, is pictured staffing an informational booth at Masonic West River Park for the first ever “Stop the Violence” awareness walk. Advocacy Coordinator, Glynis Vacek, spoke briefly at this event.



Friends of McLeod Alliance held a silent auction and sold t-shirts to raise funds for the organization.

Continued from the front page...

## Stop the Violence

The Hutchinson Leadership Institute also visited the Alliance and learned how they can be a part of the “Every1KnowsSomeone1” campaign. Essentially, the Alliance staff shared ways for community members to aid in ending domestic violence. Additionally in October, friends of McLeod Alliance hosted their first ever “Stop the Violence” awareness walk at Masonic West River Park in Hutchinson. There, they held a silent auction to promote the agency and to raise funds. It was so well received that they hope to make this an annual awareness event!

## Congratulations Glynis!

The McLeod Alliance Board & Staff came together for their annual Board Retreat in October. This year, they were honored to celebrate Advocacy Coordinator, Glynis Vacek’s, twenty years of service at the McLeod Alliance.



Pictured left, Glynis and the McLeod Alliance Board.  
Pictured right, Glynis and the McLeod Alliance Staff.



**Like us on Facebook**

*Find McLeod Alliance and become a fan!*



## Christmas Project 2021 And Holiday Festival



Christmas Project 2021 would not have been possible without the support and generosity of our community sponsors. Pictured are Emma and Jacob Brueggemeier dropping off gifts for one of our families.



Bilingual Advocate, Ofelia Vergara, is pictured staffing an informational booth at this year's Holiday Craft & Vendor Festival in Glencoe. The event was a success and many families stopped by to decorate cookies at the booth.



McLeod Alliance staff sincerely thanks our Christmas Project sponsors for their amazing heart and spirit! Wishing all a happy holiday from us to you!

## Thank You for Your Generous Local Contributions!

October-December 2021

### Monetary

St. Boniface Church  
Plato Lions  
Michael Long  
American Legion # 407  
Degree of Honor Silver Lake  
Front Stream  
Jon Krogh  
Mike Plamann  
GFWC of Silver Lake  
McLeod County V.A.  
Alan & Brenda Birkholz  
Walmart of Hutchinson  
Network for Good  
United Way of McLeod  
County

### In-Kind

Shannon  
Novation Credit Union  
Mary Krueger  
Madison  
Sally Beauty-Laurel  
Mavis Schwanke  
The Cutting Edge  
Bruce Eckhart  
New Century Academy-  
Kelsey Dolge  
Coborn's

*"We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all Christmas Project 2021 Sponsors. The Christmas Project this year served 11 families; this took place thanks to all the great people in the community with a giving heart. We also want to thank multiple businesses, thanks for all your support and for giving joy to families in need."*

*-Ofelia Vergara,  
Bilingual Advocate and Volunteer Coordinator*

*Thank you to all the groups and individuals who have generously donated to us. Your gift truly makes a difference in the lives of those affected by domestic violence! We apologize, however, if we have accidentally omitted your name. Please let us know and we will publish it in our next newsletter. Please also note that the Annual Fund Drive list will be published in our next newsletter as well.*



Thank You!



The staff at SouthPoint Financial Credit Union made inspiring handwritten cards for clients of the Alliance.



Community member Mary Krueger donated some beautiful tie-blankets just in time for the holidays.



The Glencoe Coborn's donated toilet paper to the Alliance. Pictured is Yodee, the Store Director.

## Special Thanks

In addition to the aforementioned parties to the left, the Alliance staff would like to extend a great thanks to the Hutchinson Area Foundation, the I.J. Burich Family Foundation, and United Way for their generous donations.

## Calendar of Events

- **March 2022**
  - 03/15/2022 Board Meeting-Online
  - 03/22/2022 Ridgewater College Community Health Fair
  - 03/24/2022 McLeod for Tomorrow
- **April 2022**
  - 04/09/2022 Women's Expo-Winsted
  - 04/19/2022 Board Meeting-Alliance Office
  - 04/28/2022 McLeod for Tomorrow
- **May 2022**
  - 05/01/2022 Mason's Pancake Breakfast-Elk's Club
  - 05/17/2022 Board Meeting-Alliance Office
  - 05/26/2022 McLeod for Tomorrow
  - 05/27/2022 Office closes at 3:30 pm
  - 05/30/2022 Office closed for Memorial Day
- **June 2022**
  - 06/21/2022 Board Meeting-Alliance Office



**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

**Board of Directors**

Sandi Sportelli, Chair  
Susan Noyes, Vice Chair  
Joy May, Treasurer  
Terri Healy, Secretary  
Andrew Broll  
Rachel Stearns  
Tom Gifferson  
Tori Kidd  
Kristen Matthews  
Jason Strachota  
Kaylin Kealy  
Tim Langenfeld  
Lori Krenik

Please invest in your local  
United Way . . .



**United Way of McLeod County**

**United Way**  
Helps Here

**Telephone:** 320-234-7933  
**Out of Area:** 800-934-0851

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