

The VOICE



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.

Winter 2017

5647 State Street
Suite A
Saginaw, MI 48603

Administrative Offices:
(989) 399-0007

Safety & Resource
Center:
(989) 755-0413

24/7 Helpline:
(989) 755-0411

OUR MISSION:

Empower survivors and
create a culture of
safety and respect in
our community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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HOLIDAY GIVING THANKS

Thanks to you, Christmas morning at URR was filled with the smiles, laughter, and happy tears of families you've never met, but had the heart to love. This year, through your generosity, 88 adults and 177 children were sponsored with gifts and monetary donations that brightened their day and impacted their lives. You became part of their extended family, and helped remind us that we are all connected. We're honored to share with you their words of gratitude:

"I'm thankful that there are kind-hearted people in this world. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for making this a merry Christmas for my family's new start."

"There really are angels among us."

"We feel so blessed to know that there are still those who care about others. We're so thankful that God put us in your hearts."

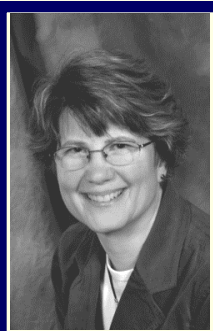
"As I'm sitting here writing this, I am still in tears. All I ever want in this world is to see my children happy. Because of you and your kind heart, my children were able to wake up on Christmas morning and truly experience that happiness. The smiles on their faces, and the excitement they felt, brought a tremendous amount of joy to my heart. Words cannot say enough."

Thank you for bringing the magic of the holiday season to these Saginaw County families. We wish you a happy and prosperous new year!

Thank you



A Note From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

In my over 20 years with URR, I have seen countless survivors access programs and services that have changed their lives. It is inspiring to be in the presence of their strength, and I am humbled by the obstacles they overcome every single day. Their successes would not be possible without the continued

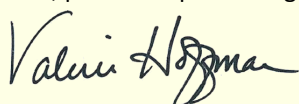
support we receive from our community, state, and federal funders, including grants from the Office of Violence Against Women (OVW), made available through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Here is just one example of the impact those grants make on local lives:

Ten months ago, Keneesha entered our emergency shelter. Homeless since leaving her abusive boyfriend, Keneesha was pregnant, and only one week from her due date. She had no family in the area except for her three year old son and his tattered, stuffed monkey named Boots. In emergency shelter, Keneesha was provided transportation to her final doctor's appointments, while her son and Boots were kept safe and happy in our on-site daycare. Following a stable delivery, Keneesha, her son, and new Baby Kira, were accepted into our transitional housing program to finally build a home of their own. Kira and her brother now spend court-ordered time with their father in URR's SafePlace program which provides monitored visitation, and offers books, games, and activities for children and their non-custodial parent. Keneesha is now working to become a CNA, as she "hopes to one day give back to the community that helped her so much."

Without the funding provided by OVW's VAWA grants, Keneesha's story could have been very different. At any given time, VAWA funding allows 6 families to remain safe and stable in transitional housing. It provides free, licensed daycare for up to 20 children at a time, while their parents receive supportive services. And it gives 20 families time to play and connect in a safe environment through our SafePlace program.

It is because of grants like VAWA, and because of **YOUR** unwavering belief in the importance of our work, that so many Saginaw County lives have been transformed.

Please, please keep believing.



UPCOMING EVENTS



MARCH 23

8:00 am—3:00 pm
Hopevale Church
4873 N. Center Rd.
Cost: \$10 per person

Internationally recognized group, A Call to Men, will mobilize Saginaw County men with invaluable information and resources to prevent violence. Keynote and breakout topics include Working with Athletes: Developing Young Men of Character, Engaging Men to End Gender Based Violence on College Campuses, Addressing the Intersections of Oppression in Prevention, and Breaking Out of the 'Man Box'. To register or learn more contact Allie Martinez at 399-0007 ext. 106 or amartinez@undergroundrailroadinc.org



APRIL 6

Registration: 5 pm
Walk: 6 pm
SVSU
Cost: TBD

The Saginaw County Sexual Violence Prevention Team hosts Walk A Mile in Her Shoes, a playful event that asks men to walk in high heels to raise awareness about gender violence. The event is open to men, women and children. Registered walkers receive a t-shirt, goodie bag, and chance to win awesome prizes. To register in advance or for more information, contact Allie Martinez at 399-0007 ext. 106 or at amartinez@undergroundrailroadinc.org



MAY 11

Doors Open: 11:15 am
Program: 11:45 am
Horizons Conference Center
6200 State St.

Our 7th Annual Advocates for Change Luncheon features a moving, first-person story from a survivor, and shows how your support can help end violence against women in our community. While the luncheon is complimentary, we hope you are inspired to financially help create change for Saginaw County survivors. RSVP in advance to your table host or contact Karen Sova, event coordinator, at 399-0007 ext. 100 or ktesch@undergroundrailroadinc.org

MEN

TAKING ACTION

WE CAN DO BETTER. WE CAN DO MORE.
MEN CAN PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. MEN ARE PART OF A SOLUTION; THAT MEANS BEING PREPARED TO INTERRUPT, STAND UP TO, AND PREVENT VIOLENCE IN THE SPACES WE WORK, LIVE, HANG OUT, AND STUDY IN.

gendered
against violence



what can men do?



LISTEN TO THE WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE AND COMMUNITY.

Really listen. What do they need? What are they missing? What needs doing? Where are the struggles and where are people thriving?



STAND UP AGAINST SEXISM.

Stand up against rape culture. Find your voice. Find out how to amplify the voices of women and survivors. Ask yourself if you are making a safer space for women in your life to find support. What are you reinforcing or silently supporting?



LEARN ABOUT THE STRUGGLES THAT HAVE COME BEFORE YOU.

Learn more about power and privilege. Talk to other anti-sexist men about how they confront male privilege.



PREPARE TO MAKE MISTAKES.

Prepare to apologize. Prepare to listen and learn again, and again. Be aware of how much space you take up in the conversation.



LOOK INTO YOUR OWN LIFE.

Where do you have power? How have you used this power in the past? Manhood does not equal domination. Use the position you have to help make space for others to empower themselves. Inspire other men to consider consequences and embrace role modelling.



CREATE THE WORLD WE WANT.

Create a space for men to talk, heal from sexism and take action. Encourage men to strive towards being difference-makers, embracing the power we have and the actions we can take. We are creating our world, in both the BIG actions, and also how we treat each other day to day.

WE CAN DO BETTER. TOGETHER, WE CAN WORK TOWARDS A CHANGE THAT AFFECTS US ALL!



Donor Spotlight

Dave Nall

While our family has not been directly impacted by domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault, hearing survivor stories has developed a soft spot in our hearts for Underground Railroad. In addition to financially supporting the mission, my wife and I have volunteered at URR for many years through Hopevale Church. Our Community Group at Hopevale has completed a number of service projects with URR, including refinishing tables, hosting a Christmas party for the residents of the shelter, and sponsoring families for the holiday giving program. On October 1, 2016, I joined the Board of Directors for Underground Railroad. This connection has allowed me to help develop donor support for this worthy organization and the lifeline it provides to so many in our community. I am also a member of the planning committee for A Call to Men Saginaw. As a father of three, my heart goes out to the families helped by URR, and I look forward to getting other men involved in the mission. While it is very unfortunate that the organization needs to exist, the community derives a great deal of benefit from the work that it performs. Underground Railroad staff does vital work, and they do it with great skill and integrity.



Spring is coming

Spring cleaning leads to spring organizing,
spring organizing leads to
spring decluttering,
and spring decluttering leads to
... giant piles of stuff!

If you're getting rid of unwanted stuff this
year, consider donating it to
Underground Railroad Resale!

All proceeds stay local to fund services for
Saginaw County survivors of abuse.

5647 State Street, Saginaw, 48603
(989) 249-1924

Store Hours:
Monday-Saturday
10am - 7pm

Donation Hours:
Monday-Saturday
10 am - 5pm





Girls on the Run Saginaw Bay is an affiliated program of URR

Runner Highlight

Angelica

My favorite thing about GOTR was meeting new people and new friends from other schools. It was good to know that there was no pressure to be the best - just have fun and work at your own speed. When I finished the 5k for the first time I felt amazing. I was so little and didn't think I could do it. I was surprised when I did! So every year after that I told myself that, if I could do it at that young age, I could do it as I got older. Over the 4 seasons I have grown by becoming more confident in things I didn't know I can do. I felt important and part of something special. I was with other girls who were all doing the same thing. I also became a little less shy. I would tell a young girl that never participated in GOTR to just do her best, have fun, make new friends. You don't have to be an athlete to join because I wasn't. You don't have to be the fastest or the winner because everybody is a winner in this.

SAFETY • EMPOWERMENT • CHANGE

Parent Highlight

Annabelle

I liked keeping Angelica involved in GOTR because it made me happy to see her happy. She felt like she was part of a team. She liked knowing that she fit in with her peers and they were all reaching for the same goal. Her teammates became her friends. She grew so independent and confident. When she first started, she didn't like running, walking, or any physical activity, but once she got out there she surprised me and herself. At her last 5k, I noticed that she stayed behind to walk with a younger student. It showed how much she cared and understood the other girls. I was excited about GOTR every year. It almost made me feel like a kid again myself. We could practice together, and it was quality time with my daughter. We talked while we walked and then set goals to run certain distances. It made me proud to see the pride she had in herself.



Each year, GOTR Teams are empowered to use their unique gifts to positively impact those around them by completing a community service project. Here are some highlights from this season!



The Weiss Elementary GOTR Team made no-sew fleece blankets for families in need in the community!



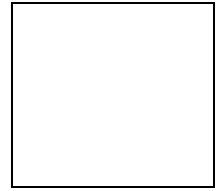
The Hemmeter Elementary GOTR Team hosted a bake sale with proceeds benefitting URR's pet shelter program!



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5647 State Street, Ste. A
Saginaw, MI 48603
Business Phone: 399-0007
Fax: 399-0010

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



www.facebook.com/UndergroundRR



www.twitter.com/URRSaginaw



www.undergroundrailroadinc.org



what is YOUR LEGACY?



Leave a Legacy Gift and support Underground Railroad's impactful mission of safety, empowerment, and change. Your Legacy Gift will reflect your lasting compassion for the next generation. Planned gifts offer you an important opportunity to provide meaningful support for URR's work.

There are many simple ways to make a Legacy Gift to URR including:

Gift Type #1: Make a gift to Underground Railroad in your will or trust

Gift Type #2: Make a meaningful gift and, in exchange, receive guaranteed lifetime income from URR

If you have already arranged for a Legacy Gift to Underground Railroad, thank you. Please let us know so we can thank you for your support.

If you are considering leaving a Legacy Gift to Underground Railroad and have questions or need more information, please contact Valerie Hoffman, President/CEO of Underground Railroad, at 399-0007 or at vhoffman@undergroundrailroadinc.org