

bloom

STORIES FOR PEOPLE
WHO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

SPRING 2024





I hope that my story will help just one person. What scares me the most is the unknown and the thought of this happening to somebody else. I want to share my story. The more we talk about our experiences and share our stories, the more we get to spread awareness. **Don't be afraid to ask for help. Reach out before it's too late.**

Shannon's story

"This was someone I let into my heart, my home, and around my son."

I met this guy who seemed like a southern gentleman, and he made me feel like the luckiest girl in the world. It truly seemed like a dream come true.

Until it all changed in the blink of an eye. One night, he was going through my messages on my phone without my consent.

When I asked what he was doing and why, his demeanor and tone changed. He turned into a completely different person.

He gets in my face and says, 'You need to delete all social media right now. You're not allowed to talk to anybody.'

I was in shock. I wasn't sure how to respond and said, 'You need to pack your stuff and leave.' I wanted to defuse the situation before it got any worse.

Over the next couple of days, we talked on and off. One moment the conversation would be, 'I'm so sorry, I'll change,' and the next he would say, 'You're a whore, you're a slut.'

It only got worse from there. It started with a property complaint, and two officers showed up.

I got a restraining order. That made him even more mad. He told me to watch out because he had connections that would come after me.

He was also texting my family members and reaching out to my friends on Facebook, saying none of this was his fault. He placed all the blame on me.

"He was trying to ruin my life, trying to pull me apart. It's made me stronger."

He got a hold of my child's father. They collaborated to file an emergency protective removal order, trying to take my son away from me.

We had to go to court multiple times, and everything got dismissed. The judge ordered my abuser to get help and mandated he take classes.

I still can't say I feel safe, but it does get better. My chapter ends with my advocates staying by my side and guiding me through all of this.

This is only part of Shannon's story, in her own words, shared with permission.



Photo by @emma-bauso on pexels.com

oh baby

SUPPORTING YOUNG SURVIVORS

Fleeing intimate partner abuse is always scary, especially with children or while pregnant.

Beyond the risk for increased violence, parenting survivors leave behind their home and necessities to care for their children. More than a hundred children of survivors live at the shelter each year.

Although every child responds differently to violence, research finds common age-specific responses that advocates can help parents navigate. Services

include healing play, school advocacy, and support groups for parents and kids. Advocates also help with birth plans for pregnant survivors and, if asked, are by their sides at the hospital when it's time.

The International "We Serve" Foundation has contributed almost \$20,000 to support the needs of parenting survivors and children. Funds have provided essential items including cribs, beds, car seats, and more.



Dr. Melappalayam Vijayaraghavan, founder of the International "We Serve" Foundation, passed away last year. Dr. Viji's legacy of kindness and generosity for survivors will be remembered.



pausome pets

SUPPORTING ANIMAL FAMILY

Imagine facing the difficult decision to escape abuse and leave your beloved animal behind. It can be an impossible choice.

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence estimates 40% of victims delay leaving an abusive partner because they're worried about the well-being of their pets.

Sweet dogs and cats with their humans are a familiar sight at our shelter, but the facility isn't a good fit for every pet. Our advocates are committed to safety

planning for animals and providing options for furry friends to thrive.

Partnerships with the Humane Society, Animal Care & Control, and regional veterinarians help with medical needs. Confidential fosters can often care for pets while the lives of their humans stabilize after surviving abuse.

Love for your animals should never be a barrier to fleeing abuse.



Kentucky laws were amended in 2022 to include the protection of pets. Coercion, control, or revenge against a pet to control a spouse or dating partner is considered **domestic violence**.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

safe visits & exchanges

Community gathered to celebrate the expansion of children's safe exchange and visitation to Boyle, Garrard, Lincoln, and Mercer counties.

Safe exchange and visitation services reduce risks for violence while encouraging healing and healthy parent-child connections.

Members of Grace Church have generously provided secure space for services to be delivered in the children's wing of their facility in Danville. A partnership with the Danville Police Department promotes additional safety during service operation hours.

"This is a time when children shouldn't be worried about conflict."

"Our goal is for visitations and exchanges to be predictable, reliable, and positive for children and youth," says Darlene Thomas, executive director. "Safety and confidentiality are critically important for best practice."

Remarks from Grace Church Lead Pastor Shane Terrell, Danville Mayor J.H. Atkins, The Honorable Bruce Petrie, and The Honorable Trille Bottom offered evidence for the need and support of the services.

"When we come together as a community, it speaks volumes to survivors and their children," says Darlene. "It tells survivors and their children that they have value, they have worth, they deserve safety."

Expansion of services was made possible through the support of Grace Church, Heart of Kentucky United Way, the Hudson-Ellis Fund at Blue Grass Community Foundation, The City of Danville, Boyle County Fiscal Court, Mercer County Fiscal Court and other state and federal funding.



Up to 30 weekly visits and exchanges can be facilitated from the new Danville service location. Children's safe exchange and visitation services are also offered in Lexington and Georgetown. Visit the "Get Help" menu at GreenHouse17.org for more information.



U-PICK DAYS ON THE FARM

flower power

There's something magical about being among the beautiful flowers in the fields on our farm. This year we're excited to host more opportunities to share the experience with you.

U-pick days are planned on the first Fridays and Saturdays in July, August, September, and October.

You can come to pick one time or purchase a season pass for the summer. Season pass members can attend up to four u-picks at a discounted cost.

Bring a friend to share a bucket and introduce them to our mission. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are welcome in the fields, too. U-pick days are rain or shine, unless the weather becomes dangerous.

"We're always looking at our farm programming to find ways for more survivors to participate,"

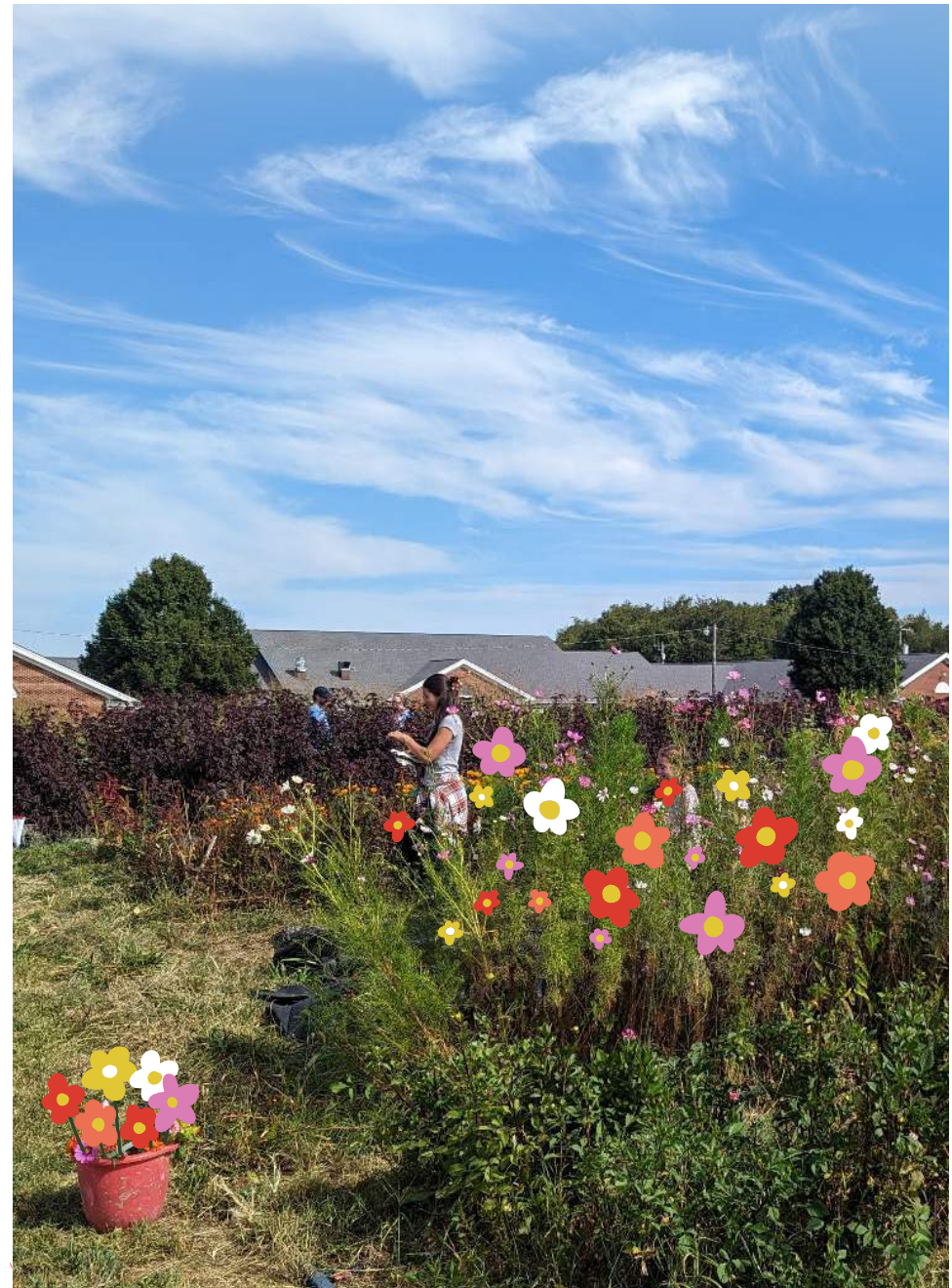
says Diane Fleet, associate director. "It will take a lot of extra hands to keep the u-pick fields healthy and full through the summer months."

Survivors receive a weekly stipend to help grow and care for the flowers in the fields.

The variety and colors of the flowers will change with the season. The most prolific flowers on the farm include Ageratum, Celosia, Cosmos, Gomphrena, Rudbeckia, Sunflowers, and Zinnia.

"Opening the farm to the community is meaningful for everyone," shares Diane. "You'll get a bucket of beautiful blooms and make a lasting impact."

A survivor recalls looking out into the fields during last year's u-pick event and thinking, "All of these people care about us—me and my children."



Bright skies and bountiful blooms! Join us in the fields for some flower picking fun while reminding survivors our community cares. Visit GreenHouse17.org for details and registration.



COMMUNITY CARE

nurturing lives



Although the work to end intimate partner abuse always will be difficult, safer tomorrows are possible in a community that cares about survivors.

Thank you to our friends at Alltech and the Pearse Lyons ACE Foundation for choosing our mission as the benefiting charity of the Make a Difference Golf Scramble at the Connemara Golf Course in Nicholasville.

This is what a compassionate community looks like! Thank you to everyone who volunteered and made a donation during this year's Shop & Share event.

Stephanie Blevins stopped by the shelter with a big check from the Heart of Kentucky United Way to celebrate our partnership in Boyle, Garrard, Lincoln, and Mercer counties.

Blue Grass Community Foundation, Smiley Pete, and every person who made a gift during the GoodGiving Challenge fostered healing for survivors to dream again.

Lots of thanks to our friends with Alpha Chi Omega at the University of Kentucky for another amazing Paint Wars to support survivors.

Ned Bellau, his band Canvas, and dozens of local musicians came together to support survivors with Rock Relief at The Cellar in Lexington.

First Presbyterian Church of Lexington donated Thanksgiving turkeys and dinner bags with all the fixings for survivors receiving services in the community.

Our community went above and beyond during the Holiday Gift Drive! Every gift donated helped create holiday joy and hope for the year ahead.

Thank you to Kentucky American Water for a generous gift through the American Water Charitable Foundation to support survivors.

We're incredibly thankful to each and every volunteer who helped us in 2023. With 482 volunteer visits, they contributed 1,300 service hours.

Do you have a great idea to support survivors?
Let's chat! Reach out to contact@greenhouse17.org
or 859-519-1911.



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Congratulations! Bluegrass Families First honors
Darlene Thomas with the 2024 Jean Sabharwal Award
in recognition of her passionate advocacy for Lexington's
children and families.

Green  House17

Nurturing lives

harmed by intimate partner abuse.



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