

bloom

STORIES FOR PEOPLE
WHO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

SUMMER 2025





mary ann's story

"I have reclaimed my strength and my voice."

On the morning of December 18, 2022, I was jolted awake by my now ex-husband, only to find myself being brutally attacked.

I was hit in the head with a phone, my face busted, knocked to the ground, held down by the back of my neck, and told I was going to be killed if I said anything or moved.

I lay there, my mind racing with a single thought. I don't want to die. The man staring at me was not the man I had married. I knew I had to run.



I broke free and sprinted out the door. I ran up the driveway, down the road, and finally ducked behind a truck. My hands were shaking as I dialed 911.

"No one deserves to live in fear"

He was arrested that night, but less than two weeks later, he was released on bond with an ankle monitor. I was granted a temporary Emergency Protective

Order (EPO) until our court hearing on January 10, 2023.

On that day, the court issued a three-year no contact Domestic Violence Order (DVO).

The order meant nothing to him. He wasted no time violating it, calling and leaving 23 messages within five days. The ankle monitor offered no real protection—he had already decided he was coming for me.

As a survivor of domestic violence, I continue to endure the ongoing actions of my abuser every day. My ex-husband has violated the protective order against him more than 50 times, yet each offense has been classified as a misdemeanor.

When does it stop?

I reached out to James Tipton, my state representative, and left a voicemail about my situation. He called me the next day...

Mary Ann's phone call with Representative Tipton would make history. Her story continues in the next article.

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



"I share my story with the hope of bringing awareness, offering support to others in similar situations, and proving that healing and freedom are possible," says Mary Ann. **"No one deserves to live in fear, and no one is alone."**

HB38

MARY ANN'S STORY CONTINUES...



After their phone call, Mary Ann and Representative Tipton began drafting legislation to hold abusers accountable. Their work would become known as HB 38 during this year's Kentucky General Assembly.

She received another call from the congressman after the bill was filed. He asked Mary Ann to share her testimony with the House Standing Committee Judiciary.

Although nervous, Mary Ann remembers feeling supported from the moment she arrived at the Capitol Annex. She bravely shared her story and called for change.

"Today, I stand here with the hope that this bill will pass with essential provisions to escalate repeated domestic violence offenses to felony charges."

The committee voted to pass the bill to the House of Representatives, which unanimously voted to approve.



This moved the bill to the Senate Standing Committee Judiciary. Mary Ann testified for a second time, inspiring the committee to move the bill to the full Senate.

She returned to Frankfort a few weeks later to witness the Senate's vote and received a standing ovation from the crowd. Governor Beshear signed the legislation into law this March.



Per Kentucky Revised Statutes, the violation of an order of protection by a person convicted of two or more previous violations in five years is a Class D felony, if the third or subsequent violation uses or attempts to use physical force or threatens physical harm. The protected person can differ across violations.



new partnership **LETHALITY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

A nationally recognized Lethality Assessment Program is expanding to Kentucky, thanks to leadership by ZeroV, the state coalition of domestic violence programs, and Merryman House in Paducah.

This evidenced-based strategy developed by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence reduces intimate partner homicides and serious injuries.

Equal partnership between victim service providers and law enforcement is a cornerstone of the program.

Scott County Sheriff's Office and Frankfort City Police Department were eager to sign on.

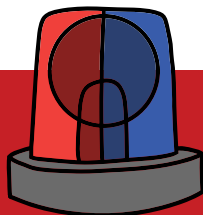
The program equips these law enforcement offices with 11 screening questions to help identify victims at the highest risk of being killed by an intimate partner. When high risk is indicated, officers immediately call the GreenHouse17 crisis hotline from the scene.

Survivors will speak directly with an advocate about safety planning and available services.



"This program is proven to save lives," says Darlene Thomas, our executive director.

"We're grateful for the partnership of law enforcement and sister organizations to bring the first Lethality Assessment Program to central Kentucky,"





growing opportunities

NEW SURVIVOR STIPEND MATCH

A new one-time grant from Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government's Office of Homelessness Prevention and Intervention (OHPI) will support nature-based healing and stability after surviving abuse.



Survivors living at the shelter experience the benefits of nature in many ways—from farm walks to nutritious meals. Adult survivors may choose to participate in a focused six-week project that provides a stipend for their contributions to the farm's day-to-day operations.

"The stipend was amazing for me," shares Eboni, a past stipend project participant. "I was able to save \$200, get clothes for my son and me, fix my car, and even buy a washer and dryer for our new apartment."

Funding from OHPI will provide a dollar-for-dollar match on the value of stipends earned by survivors. Matching funds can be applied to self-identified barriers to economic stability. Examples include expenses like car repairs, rental fees, job uniforms, medical care, and savings accounts.



"Nearly every person we serve has also suffered financial abuse," shares Diane Fleet, associate director. "Survivors often face a long list of expenses that can delay and, too often, hinder progress made toward economic stability. Removing just a few of those barriers can make all the difference."

"For future participants receiving more, it'll just double their chances for success," adds Eboni.



You can support survivors participating in the farm stipend program by attending a **U-Pick Day on the farm in August or September!** Follow the QR link or visit GreenHouse17.org/summer-flowers to reserve your bucket for some flower picking fun.







VOLUNTEERS MATTER *time & talent*



Michael Watts was first introduced to our organization when his wife discovered the farm while looking for flowers for their church's garden exchange.

He soon began donating to the mission and volunteering to help with big community events like Shop & Share.

"I have three sisters, and women in many contexts are regarded as second class. That's a great unfairness," Michael says. "I volunteer to help lift up the women that come here."



After retiring, Michael found more time to lend his hands on the farm, where his efforts have made a lasting impact. Recently he has been clearing a path and circle seating space in a wooded area on the property for residents.

"To me, taking a walk through the woods is a very calming and spiritual experience."



Are you looking for a volunteer match for your interests? Our current opportunities, onsite and remote, are listed on our website. Follow the QR link or visit GreenHouse17.org/volunteer-home.



ARLINGTON ELEMENTARY *Sew Sweet*

Fourth and fifth graders at Arlington Elementary lovingly sewed more than 70 teddy bears for children living at our emergency shelter.

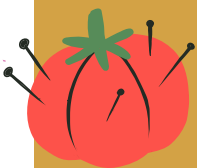
"Our students learned to hand sew, cut a pattern, stuff their bear, and were so proud of themselves with their finished product," explains Kristen Blaker, Art Teacher and Sustainability Coordinator.

The project was supported with a grant from CHI St. Joseph Health to promote art and kind-

ness at school. Members of our staff attended a special pep rally to accept the donation.

Each bear is as unique as the student who made it, and every bear was made with love, from the heart of one child to another. 

"The students created a handwritten note to put in their heart pocket on the bear," shares Ms. Blaker. "Some of these were tear-jerkers, as we have students who know hardships firsthand."



Each year more than 100 dependent children live with their survivor parent at our emergency shelter. We are committed to safety, healing, and stability for young lives, from **newborns to teenagers**.

COMMUNITY CARE

nurturing lines



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 everyone who made a gift during KY Gives Day. Your gifts help grow hope, safety, strength, and healing for survivors. Special thanks to the Suburban Woman's Club and an anonymous donor for matching funds.

Troupe Dagaz led Shimmy Mobs in Lexington and ended with a Shimmy Show at Old North Bar to raise awareness and funds for the mission.



Thank you to our friends at Sol Fitness for hosting classes to raise awareness and funds for survivors.

Alpha Chi Omega at UK hosted their Derby for Domestic Violence Awareness Gala to honor another year of partnership in the mission and raise funds to support survivors.

Thank you to our Summer Flower CSA pick up partners – Third Street Stuff, Vine & Branch Wine, and Origin Hotel.

Staff attended the Domestic & Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition Annual Appreciation and Awards where Darlene and a previous featured Bloom survivor, Tania, were honored.



Thank you to the National Network to End Domestic Violence for featuring Handmade by Survivors products at their recent Economic Justice Summit in Philadelphia.

Community Service Learning students from the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy completed their two-year service project at the emergency shelter.

The University of Kentucky American Association of Women Dentists hosted Strut Your Smile and raised over \$10,000 for the dental fund for survivors.



Do you have a great idea to support survivors?

Let's chat! Reach out to Hallie at 859-519-1911 or hlintner@greenhouse17.org.



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U-Pick Days on the farm are scheduled in August and September! Reserve your bucket for some flower picking fun. Visit GreenHouse17.org/summer-flowers to reserve your bucket.

Green House17

Nurturing lives

harmed by intimate partner abuse.



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24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE

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