

bloom

STORIES FOR PEOPLE
WHO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

SUMMER 2026





It's been therapeutic to share my story. It was something I didn't know I needed, and it feels really good. I'm remarried and had a baby. I'm a dental assistant, and I work with kids. I own my own home in the country and have chickens and pigs. I still go to the support group sometimes because I feel like I could help somebody else.

sara's story



"Document everything. That helped to prove what was really going on."

We were together for six years. He was a charmer at first. The abuse started slow. It started early and gradually got worse and worse, as they usually do.

There was a lot of physical, mental, and sexual abuse. You name it, we had it. He had knocked my front two teeth in over me not wanting to have sex. That is when I left and didn't go back.

I went to the police department to get a new EPO. That's where I met Kris, my Green-House17 advocate, and started going to her support group.

Then the stalking started.

He was tracking my car. He was showing up everywhere. I'd have to come home from work because he was sitting outside my house, trying to talk to my kid when he got off the bus.

When I asked for an extra patrol one night, Detective Joey Valdez came to my house. We went over all the different phone calls and text messages and started to build a case.

There was a lot of court. A lot of DVO violations. It got to the point we stopped counting his violations after it was 30 something.

I can't tell you how many times I'd have to walk through my house with all the lights off so that I could look outside. He's in jail now, but I still think about it if my dogs are barking in the middle of the night.

You're at rock bottom.

Getting back on your feet is the hardest part. He isolated me. I was a stay-at-home mom for a long time and didn't have access to money. I had to move in with my mom. My kids didn't have their own beds.

Those are the hardest times because you have to let go of the life that you had.

Focus on the future. The support group was really helpful. That was my first time reaching out for help, and the first time it felt like I wasn't doing it by myself. There was no way I could have done it without the resources.

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

PROTECTION & JUSTICE RECENT LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Kentucky legislative session concluded in April, and Governor Beshear signed three bills related to our mission into law.

The new legislation, taking effect July 1, strengthens protections for survivors of intimate partner abuse in Kentucky.

Legislation introduced by Representative Steven Rudy makes stalking a felony offense and expands the definition to include social media.

“Social media is part of our daily lives, and it’s critically important that our laws protecting victims reflect these changes,” says Darlene Thomas, our executive director.

A 10-year protective order for victims whose abuser is convicted of first- or second-degree felony assault also becomes law.

Introduced by Representative Stephanie Dietz, this legislation also improves how data is collected for Kentucky’s Annual Domestic Violence Data Report.

“Felony assault convictions typically include prison sentences because these are crimes of severe physical harm, often with a weapon. Survivors deserve continued protection when the abuser is released.”

Legislation sponsored by Senator Julie Raque Adams, amended to include legislation introduced by Representative Jason Nemes, requires privately paid parental coordinators and visitation supervisors to complete training in the dynamics of domestic violence.

“We must ensure those providing services for survivors and their children can identify signs of coercive control and risks for escalated violence,” Darlene says.

Although several bills introduced this year did not make it out of committee review, this process began important conversations about the needs of survivors.



Photo by Brian Jackson. <http://www.istockphoto.com>



The attention and service elected officials give to our mission—and the legislative advocacy of ZeroV, Kentucky’s statewide voice against intimate partner abuse—matters for the safety of survivors and our community. **Follow the QR link for more details at ZeroV Policy Center.**



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Access to nutritious food plays an important role in safety, stability, and long-term wellness after abuse.

Survivors of intimate partner abuse face higher risks of food insecurity when fleeing abuse, making access to nutritious meals essential.

Daily meal services, cooking workshops, a healthy eating support group, and gardening help residents build confidence and skills around food

“It has given me a greater appreciation for the food we eat – planting, watching it grow, and then harvesting and eating it,” shares a shelter resident.

Nutritional intake assessments by our food and nutrition advocate, Finley Yuttayong, take place soon after coming to the emergency shelter.

“Sometimes I learn that they simply love to cook and would feel more at home helping me

feed the house, and sometimes they’ve had years of severe food trauma and need more support with that,” explains Finley.

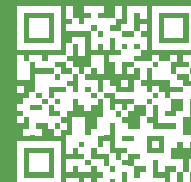
Food is also a source of connection. Recently, residents and staff have been coming together under the farm pavilion to bake homemade pizzas, made possible by a cob oven that was built with the help of residents and volunteers.

After attending training on building cob ovens at the Mud Dauber School of Natural Building last year, Ryan Koch, our nature-based healing advocate, brought the vision to the farm.

“We wanted to create more opportunities for people to be outside and enjoy what’s going on in nature,” Ryan shares. “It’s been a joy.”



From gardening to special projects like the cob oven, volunteers help make healing in nature possible for survivors. Current opportunities are listed on our website. **Follow the QR link to sign up at GreenHouse17.org/volunteer-home.**





PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT EXPANDED CRISIS INTERVENTION

A new federal grant of \$498,000 over three years from the Office for Victims of Crime will sustain our 24-hour phone-based crisis hotline and expand services to include secure text and chat.

Our Certified Domestic Violence Advocates answer at least 4,000 phone calls to our hotline each year, and survivors are reaching out by text and chat more than ever before.

For many, text and chat are easier ways to communicate. Voice calls are not always practical in crisis, and mobile plans are expensive.

When minutes run out, survivors cannot call for support.

“It’s important that our services evolve to meet survivors’ needs,” explains Diane Fleet, our associate director. “The challenge has been how we can provide digital crisis intervention while protecting privacy, confidentiality, and safety.”

This new grant will support the technology and training for secure digital crisis interventions, informed by best practices of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.



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Photo courtesy of Tops in Lex

MODELING THE MISSION FASHION TAKES FLIGHT

A longtime charitable event organized by students at Lexington Catholic High School was paused during the pandemic. This spring, a motivated group of students brought it back with a new vision to support survivors.

Emme Peterson, Grace Tibe, and Molly Johnson visited our emergency shelter this spring to learn more about our mission and share their plan.

An airplane hangar would become the fashion runway. Local boutiques would lend clothing, and students would model.

In the weeks that followed, they prepared the event for takeoff. Boutique partners signed on, and in-kind support from Triton Airways and Lundy’s Special Events was secured.

Students modeled curated looks from local shops, walking the runway to music mixed by a fellow student. Family and friends purchased tickets to gather and cheer them on.

Together, they raised more than \$5,000 to support the mission.



Follow the link from the QR code to view more photos from the event at Tops in Lex. How could your friends and networks come together to support survivors? We welcome the chance to partner and support your efforts.

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.

(top left to right) Thank you to Alpha Chi Omega at UK for hosting the "Roaring for a Change" Domestic Violence Awareness Gala to benefit our mission. 

Troupe Dagaz and friends raised awareness and support for survivors with shimmy mobs throughout Lexington and a Shimmy Show and silent auction at 21c Museum Hotel.

Thank you to everyone who made a gift during KY Gives Day. Your gifts remind survivors that there is a community that cares for them and their safety.

The Rotary Club of Lexington  honored Darlene with their Humanitarian Award and a generous \$1,000 donation to the mission.

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



Arrangements of flowers from the farm adorned the tables at the recent United Way of the Bluegrass Women United Summit.

Staff participated in Wake Up Lex and Denim Day, raising awareness during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Ruth Galey donated the most beautiful handmade quilts for survivors and their children. 

The Mu Epsilon Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority donated essential items to the emergency shelter.

Volunteers from the Lexington Hilton Downtown planted over 2,000 sunflowers on the farm.

EVEREVE at Fritz Farm donated new clothing for survivors, held a fundraiser, and supported the Fashion Takes Flight event.



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Follow the QR code link to review our recent
annual report for supporters of our mission at
GreenHouse17.org/annual-report

Green House17

Nurturing lives

harmed by intimate partner abuse.



800.544.2022

24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE



For questions about this publication or making a charitable
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