

STORIES FOR PEOPLE
WHO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

bloom

FALL 2026





advocacy stories

Behind the scenes, a new generation of advocates reflects on their first year of supporting survivors, sharing perspectives that have shaped their dedication to the mission.



Seth, Violine, Alex, Katie, and Kaylynn are completing training to become Certified Domestic Violence Advocates. This credential is awarded by ZeroV, our state coalition of domestic violence service providers, and prepares advocates with best practices to support survivors and their children.

"I wish more people understood that leaving an abuser is often a complex process," Violine explains, "It's not simply a matter of walking away."

"You can never know what someone is going through based on how they present themselves," adds Katie. "Survivors are going through unimaginable hardship and still managing to carry on with their lives, showing up to work and parenting their kids."

"I've learned from survivors that strength can look different for everyone," says Violine. "Their resilience and courage have taught me the importance of listening without judgment and meeting people where they are."

"I didn't recognize the experiences in my relationship as abuse until we talked about domestic violence during a criminal justice course in college," shares Kaylynn. "We are the same as survivors and could be in their situa-

tion one day. The best we can do is be a voice for them for the time being, while they're vulnerable."

"It's the little things that keep me motivated," says Katie. "It's not every day we're getting someone the keys to their new apartment. But giving someone a gas card or helping them enroll their child into affordable daycare, that really takes some of the stress off."

"Healing is difficult. When I was younger, I wished for a place outside of school and my family to not worry about my home life," shares Seth. "I want my work here to give that opportunity to the kids. Sometimes getting out and doing something unique and fun can really help you work through the problems you are facing."

"I like to see parents reconnecting with their kids in ways they haven't been able to," Alex adds. "It's really special to witness someone's joy after a hardship and seeing them get their spark back."



BUDDING PARTNERSHIP NEW SENSORY GARDEN

The Arboretum reached out a few months ago with an exciting opportunity to partner on a grant proposal to the American Horticultural Society's Anna I Snyder Sensory Gardens Fund.

Their proposal was one of five in the nation to be funded this year.

"I am so thrilled to work with GreenHouse17 on creating this space of comfort and healing," says Megan Buland, Curator at The Arboretum. "Time spent in nature can be a powerfully healing and therapeutic practice."

Survivors are helping plan and design the garden, ensuring the space reflects their experiences and voices.

"From our first conversation, the Arboretum has been focused on supporting survivors," shares Corissa Phillips, our external relations director. "Thoughtful public spaces like this raise awareness and offer sanctuary."

Volunteers and staff at The Arboretum will provide ongoing care for the garden, which is expected to open in spring 2027.

Sensory gardens engage all five of the senses. Vibrant colors, textured foliage, fragrant herbs, water features, and a sound sculpture encourage interaction. Tall grasses will be planted for privacy around seating areas, and an interpretive sign will connect those in need to our services.



PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN RIDE TO SAFETY

An upcoming public awareness campaign will reintroduce the "Ride to Safety," an important partnership that began more than a decade ago.

Victims of intimate partner abuse and their children can board any Lextran bus and tell the driver they need a ride to safety.

When these words are spoken, drivers are trained to begin the process for safe and confidential transport to our emergency shelter. The partnership provides access to public transportation

from nearly 900 stops across Lexington, offering victims options during safety planning.

Bus window decals and outreach efforts will remind the community that the program is available.

"It's wonderful that we can support programs like these," says Lacey Johnson, Mobility Manager with Lextran. "Knowing that we played a role in connecting someone with the resources they need makes me feel like I'm truly making a difference in their life."

Safety planning is important before, during, and after fleeing abuse. Although every plan is different, most consider timing, transportation, important documents, ways to keep children safe, and trusted people who can help. **Call our 24-hour crisis hotline to begin a safety planning conversation: 800-544-2022.**



TAKING ROOT

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARENESS MONTH



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In the same way trees sustain each other through a network of roots, moving resources where needed most, survivors depend on networks of people and resources to flee the abuse and begin to heal.



ROOTS OF VIOLENCE

Abusers use purposeful tactics to gain and maintain control, including isolation, gaslighting, and economic abuse. It often begins slowly, making the pattern difficult to recognize. As coercive control increases, a victim has fewer choices and less freedom.

ROOTING OUT ABUSE

The signs of intimate partner abuse often appear gradually and can be difficult to identify. What looks like a small or unrelated change may be part of a larger pattern of abuse. A friend, coworker, or loved one may become more isolated, anxious, or withdrawn. Unexplained injuries, frequent absences, and limited communication are common.

SUPPORT TAKES ROOT

Talk openly about domestic violence in your circle of influence to identify yourself as someone who supports survivors. If you are concerned about someone, ask how they are doing and give them room to talk about what is happening.

Understand that leaving can be the most dangerous time because the abuser is losing power and control.

It is also important to remember that the person being abused is the expert of their own experience. They have been witness to the patterns and can determine the risks better than you. Know what resources are available, so you are ready to help when asked.



Save the date for Purple Thursday on October 15. We wear purple on this day to remind survivors there is a community rooted in support for their well-being. Visit our website for more ways to show your support during the month: GreenHouse17.org/DVAM



KENTUCKY STRONG FINDING KINDNESS EPISODE

An award-winning docuseries recently filmed in Kentucky will shine a light on our mission.

Finding Kindness, co-produced by Monty Hobbs and Valerie Smaldone, shares stories about people and organizations making a difference in their community. Their next episode celebrates the spirit of Winchester and features guest host Crystal Gayle.

"Traveling the road, I meet so many kind people. America is full of wonderful people. We need to hear about it," Crystal says.

During filming, the She Angels Foundation, a giving circle with the purpose of supporting women and girls, presented Darlene with a generous donation to our mission! **Look for Finding Kindness: Kentucky Strong on Apple TV, Amazon Prime, and UP Faith and Family in January 2027.**

The episode showcases several local businesses, including Laura Freeman's Mercantile on Main and Mt. Folly Farm. The new Winchester Cafe, offering southern breakfast and lunch options, was constructed as the set for the show.

"Being included was special because we support strong survivors in Winchester," says Darlene Thomas, our executive director. "This will reach a national audience with our mission. It was a joy to welcome Crystal Gayle to our farm!"



ROCK RELIEF LOCAL MUSICIANS UNITE

Ned Bellau, drummer and band leader of the local band Canvas, founded Rock Relief as a way to bring the local music community together. The first concert raised funds for families in eastern Kentucky devastated by flooding.

"I began calling friends in the industry to volunteer their time and talent for a concert. When more bands volunteered than there was time for them to perform, I knew we had something special."

In the years since, Rock Relief has become an annual tradition, bringing together talented lo-

cal musicians who donate their time to support important causes. The Cellar Bar & Grille at Lansdowne has generously hosted the event each year and continues to be an important partner.

Music has been part of Ned's life since he was a teenager. Today, he works as a Senior IT Project Manager while continuing to spend many evenings and weekends performing with Canvas.

"Everybody needs help at some point in their life," he says. "If there is a way to give back, this is my way."

Last month, the **5th Annual Rock Relief** for domestic violence raised the roof and a lot of support for our mission. Thank you to Misti Dawn from Classic Rock 92.1 for emceeding the event— and The Strayz, Southern Brothers, Rhythm Phoenix, and Canvas for performing.

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) U-Pick Days on the farm were magical. We've enjoyed celebrating the beautiful buckets of flowers picked.

The Lexington Sherwin-Williams Paint Store women's resource group donated paint and time to help spruce up the shelter.

It was a delight to partner with our friends at the International Book Project for a pop-up bouquet bar at their bookstore.

We're grateful for lovely quilts handcrafted by the Thrifty Needles quilting club and donated throughout the year for survivors and their children.

Big thanks to Simply Southern at Fayette Mall for donating dresses and skirts for residents.

My Beautiful Life Project converted the emergency shelter conference room into a calming spa experience for survivors, with haircuts, massages, snacks, and flowers.

Thank you to Sedona Taphouse Palomar for supporting survivors during their August Dine Out for Charity program.

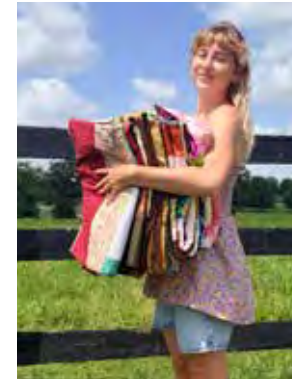
Sending thanks to Monica for her special delivery of farm fresh eggs to the emergency shelter every month.

Employees from Alltech volunteered to clean the emergency shelter porch and windows during their annual Make a Difference Day.

It was an honor for our flowers to adorn the tables at the 90th Junior League Charity Horse Show.

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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For questions about this publication or making a charitable gift, contact Corissa Phillips, CFRE, by call to 859.519.1904 or email to cphillips@greenhouse17.org.

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