Learning How to Lean

Before coming to Sojourner I was in a sure enough battle. I am a proud parent of a 13 year old well behaved, very respectful young man and the youngest of my wonderful 10 children. Normally I am a very strong woman but something about this relationship consumed my soul and spirit. I was awakened to sexual violence on a regular basis, along with verbal abuse and an extreme amount of emotional abuse. Not one outweighs the other, they were all terrible. Not only was my safety at risk, the safety of my son was definitely at risk. One day I had a moment of sanity, realizing that the drug addiction that for so many years wrecked my life was basically back, only in human form. This time its name was domestic violence.

Not realizing my son could feel the sadness I was feeling, watching the smile I once had disappear from my face, hearing the joy in my laughter die out slowly… I knew I had to get out. I made a call to Sojourner and was accepted. The minute I walked through the door, just the relief on my son’s face, I knew my life was about to take a turn for the better! His grades are better! Today I get calls from the teachers at his school telling me how well he is doing. Of course he fusses about having 5 mothers checking in with him! Grateful for the many concerned and caring staff at Sojourner who question him about his homework, genuinely wanting to know, how school was….I love that!

Growing up I come from a long line of strong women and that is what I was always taught…to be strong! Never knew nothing more! What I have learned being a resident at Sojourner is something I was never taught - and that was to lean. I learned that it is okay to ask for help and that alone is profound to me because it was not a hard thing to do.

If I could say one thing to the staff of Sojourner it would be “Thank You” for teaching me how to lean and when I need it ask for help. For that I will always remain grateful.

- T.E.
Shelter Resident

Our Mission:
To provide safe shelter for women & children, advocacy and education for individuals and communities victimized by domestic violence.

Sojourner’s Holiday Appeal

Please watch for Sojourner’s Holiday Appeal Letter. Your gift this season will help ensure Sojourner’s ability to provide critical services to victims of domestic violence and abuse.
Law Enforcement and Advocacy
Working Together to Achieve Greater Safety

By: Judi N., Advocate/Trainer

In July, one of our partner police departments received an emergency call from out of state. The caller said she received an online message from her sister saying “call the police” and that was all. The caller wanted the police to do a wellness check, to make sure her sister was okay.

When the police arrived, they found a well kept home, a congenial man, and his quiet wife, Ellana, who had faint bruises on her face and arms. Ellana is married to a US citizen, and has lived here for over 10 years, yet speaks very little English. She was reticent about talking to the police, and did not respond to questions about the bruises, murmuring in Spanish and repeating, “I am okay” in English. Her husband attributed her bruises to the family dog. Although her injuries were apparent, there was no evidence they had been caused by her husband; the police determined there was no cause for arrest.

Ellana’s sister emailed the police, stating Ellana had been abused throughout her marriage; she was not allowed to work, drive or speak by phone to her family since she married and moved from Ecuador to the US. She had a green card, but no legal status outside her marriage. Until that day, her husband had not known about their online connection.

The responding officer called Sojourner and asked if an advocate could accompany two police officers for a return visit to the home. When they arrived, and while the police interviewed Ellana’s husband, the advocate spoke with Ellana in another room. The advocate was prepared to use the language line to communicate, but in private, Ellana’s English improved—she never wanted her husband to know how much she understood. The advocate explained that she was there, to assure Ellana understood her rights and options, and the services available to assist her safety. Feeling supported, Ellana admitted her injuries had occurred when her husband had attacked her. Although physical abuse was sporadic, isolation, emotional abuse and hopelessness had become a way of life for a decade; it was more painful than any beating. Ellana’s fears were addressed and her questions were answered.

Working with the advocate, Ellana felt she now had support she needed. She revealed that she had been assaulted for years. Her husband was arrested and Ellana was able to obtain an OFP through Sojourner. She is job searching, while exploring a new peace and freedom in her life. Her case is an example of how law enforcement and advocacy can work together to accomplish greater support and safety for victims and a stronger community.

Did You Know...?

- We have internship opportunities that provide hands-on learning experiences!
- We have opportunities for volunteer groups to prepare and cook meals for residents at the shelter!
- We provide presentations and education to parents, youth and the community!
- Your company might match you financial donation to Sojourner! Speak with your HR Department!
- Financial donations may now be made online!
- We have a Facebook page! Follow us and see what’s up.
  https://www.facebook.com/sojournerproject1

For more information about ways to stay connected and getting involved, please call 952.351.4062 or email laura@sojournerproject.org for more information!
Capturing the Journey
Words from Clients, Volunteers and Staff

“Sojourner has given me the wings to fly! This place has opened my heart again so I can breathe! Thank you, Sojourner, for bringing my inner strength out!”
– L.F., Shelter Resident

“I first contacted Sojourner about volunteering after losing a very fulfilling job which dominated my life for over 18 years. I needed to find an activity which used my skills to help others. Instead of feeling sorry for myself, I could focus my energy into making positive changes in other’s lives. Volunteering at Sojourner means that I give some of my time but I get much back in return. There are training opportunities outside of Sojourner and learning opportunities from the shelter advocates. Best of all is getting to meet a diverse group of ladies and children through my work.”
– Pam S., Long Time Volunteer

“The best thing about staying at Sojourner is that me and my mom have gotten closer, laugh more… I look forward to moving into our house, having my own room, watching movies and watching her be happy!”
– M.E, Shelter Child Resident, Age 13

“My favorite part about DV group is that I feel safe here. I am seen and heard!”
– H.G. Community Client

“It is particularly fulfilling to watch people transition from victims to survivors, which is a privilege I have had over the years. Having worked at Sojourner for many years, I have had the benefit of having clients call months and years later to give us an update of how their lives changed for the better after they received our services and support. Seeing the positive effects of the work everyone does at Sojourner is one of the primary reasons that I remain at Sojourner and in the domestic violence field.”
– Holly, Community Program Coordinator

“We like to share our time and cooking talents with other women and children in our community!”
– Edina Federated Women’s Club

“I am honored to serve on Sojourner’s Board of Directors. I strongly believe in the importance of Sojourner’s mission and goals. The focus of their work towards the awareness and elimination of domestic violence through the programs and education provided is necessary for the health of the communities served. I enjoy being a part of a diverse Board filled with members who are supportive of Sojourner’s staff, recognize the dedication they bring to their work and have an understanding of the need to provide a safe, welcoming facility for the women and children served.”
– Deidre Belk, Board Chair
The holiday season can be an especially difficult time for the families in our program. Thanks to your generosity and support Sojourner hosts a holiday boutique for our clients. Your gifts help provide joy and reassurance year round. Support Sojourner supports a holiday boutique for our clients. Your gifts help provide joy and reassurance year round.

If you have questions about holiday donations please contact Laura at 952-351-4062 or info@sojournerproject.org.

The holiday season can be a difficult time for those we serve. Below you will find a couple of gift suggestions and for a more detailed list please visit our website at www.sojournerproject.org. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your thoughtfulness.

**Holiday Wishlist**

**Teen Gift Ideas**
- Footballs, Basketballs
- Sports Jerseys & Baseball Caps
- Teen Apparel
- Makeup and Purses
- Wallets and Purses
- Teen Apparel
- Sports Jerseys & Baseball Caps
- Footballs, basketballs

**Baby and Children’s Gift Ideas**
- Pretend Play Dress-Up Clothes
- Toy Household Appliances/Toy Tools
- Pretend Play Dress-Up Clothes

**Women’s Gift Ideas**
- Slippers
- Mittens and Scarves
- Lotion or Body Wash Sets
- Small Gift Cards ($15-25) For:
  - Target
  - Gas Stations
  - Small Gift Cards ($15-25) For:
  - Target
  - Cub Foods & Other Grocery
  - Subway
  - Old Navy
  - Wendy’s
  - Small Gift Cards ($15-25) For:
  - Target
  - Subway

**Art/Skirts**
- Multicultural Dolls
- Art/Craft Sets

If you would like to receive future newsletters and communications by email or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact the Program Support Coordinator at 952-351-4062.