

# The Sojourner Truth

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF SOJOURNER

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- Advocates for victim safety;
- Supports the transition from victim to survivor;
- Educates for the prevention and elimination of domestic violence.

## Feeling Creative?

*Want to feel good while doing good?*

Twin Cities United Way made an unfortunate and abrupt decision this past Spring to cancel funding for domestic violence programs in the twin cities. Having been strong and loyal United Way partners for many, many years, this decision was heart-breaking and we believe, rather short-sighted.



We are determined to move forward and reduce any negative impacts that could compromise the quality of Sojourner's services or our ability to meet ever increasing demands for service in our communities. We have been hard at work developing strategies to replace these funds. One of our strategies is to encourage more innovative community events to help us raise money. If you are interested in being creative and having some fun, you might be able to help us replace some or all of the monies lost.

**Here comes the fun and creative part.....**

Events like silent auctions, white dot sales, sip-n-give, employee jean day and bingo and/or casino nights help raise funds but they can also help raise spirits, unite groups and promote a good time while doing good for others. These are just a few ideas. Think about the groups of people in your life you can get involved and excited about giving. Faith communities, book clubs, you or your partner's place of employment, children's sports teams and civic groups are a great place to start!

We are so incredibly grateful to all of our friends and supporters. We feel confident we will replace these funds and continue our work to create safer lives and communities. Please call Laura for more information at 952-351-4062.



## 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.

## Exciting Program Updates

### SafeU

In response to our belief that education is key to the reduction and elimination of domestic violence, we have refueled our efforts to reach out to youth in our communities. We are pleased to announce that Sojourner has created and implemented a new program focused on providing personal safety information to young people. This program is appropriately titled: SafeU. We all engage in relationships with others. Most often these relationships are fun, well-meaning and positive. However, sometimes they can take an unexpected turn.

SafeU provides information to raise awareness, increase understanding, promote safety planning and foster positive action to maintain healthy relationships. Interactive sessions include small group discussions, simulations, role play and games that encourage critical thinking and open dialogue. One youth stated after a SafeU session: "I learned a lot about myself and what I value in a relationship." After working with students through-out the year, one of our partner teachers wrote, "Thank you for your deep and highly impactful/meaningful activities. We look forward to continuing our partnership next year!" We feel strongly that talking to young people about relationships and safety prevents future victims and abusers while creating safer communities.

### Addressing Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is a significant problem in the United States; over 500,000 cases of maltreatment of people over the age of 60 are reported every year. However, only 1 in 14 cases is ever reported, which makes this problem alarming.

Since most incidents of elder abuse involve mistreatment by the members of the victim's family, abuse of elders is of growing concern to domestic violence programs and service providers. Sojourner Project has provided shelter and community advocacy to victims of domestic violence since 1979. Services to victims of abuse who are over the age of 60 have always been provided but numbers are growing. In response to this expanding need, Sojourner has taken steps to improve outreach and access to those members of our communities who are experiencing abuse in later life.

We have prioritized staff training and are in the process of developing outreach strategies to increase our accessibility to seniors in our service area. Elder abuse, like all forms of domestic violence, takes many forms and can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or financial. It is heart wrenching for these victims to report abuse, because often the abuser is a family member. One of Sojourner's objectives will be to advise seniors of their rights and provide personal and legal advocacy to increase their safety. We will also provide information presentations throughout the community because we believe that by increasing awareness of the problem and coordinating response from all members of our communities, we can prevent and reduce abuse in later life.



## Thank You Volunteers

There are not enough words to describe our wonderful, dedicated and passionate volunteers!

We are so incredibly fortunate to have a solid base of volunteers that dedicate endless hours to support our clients and Sojourner's mission. Volunteers help to support our crisis line, intervention, admin and children's program. Groups come in and help with meals, mailings, maintenance / landscaping projects, and cleaning/ organizational tasks.

Priceless....that is ONE word that describes our committed volunteers. Thank you for all you do!

## Check it Out....



*Above: In-house, specialized training for our staff*

*Below: Hard at work.... one of our SafeU sessions!*



*Above and Right: Beautiful shelter room remodel!*



*Out and About....Tabling at the U of M's Community Involvement Fair*



## The Superbowl and Sex Trafficking

The Superbowl is coming to Minnesota! This huge event will generate millions of dollars and bring in thousands of people from all over the country. This is an exciting time for visitors, the city and football fans but there is a dark side to large sporting events that often goes unnoticed and not talked about...sex trafficking. Staca Shehan, from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, told The Huffington Post: "What we know about sex trafficking is that it is demand-driven and any type of event that brings large groups of people together would generally increase demand," she said. "Pimps and traffickers follow the money, so they bring their victims wherever they can make the most profit. They look for opportunities they can capitalize on."

Minnesota is taking notice and already has things in the works to curtail the increase in sex trafficking. According to a recent article in the Star Tribune, "anti-trafficking efforts received a boost, as a 40-member committee, led by Hennepin and Ramsey counties and the Women's Foundation,

unveiled a plan for the Super Bowl. It includes coordinated stings and training to help bus drivers, hotel workers and 10,000 Super Bowl volunteers identify victims. Advocates want to shift from police intervention to prevention, after years spent toughening prison sentences for pimps and overhauling how the state treats sex trafficking victims." Minnesota will also have prevention programs for youth and a public awareness campaign for adults.

The Superbowl will come and go but what we know is that sex trafficking will continue to stay and happen in Minnesota. It is happening every day, often to minors who are victims and trapped in this life with no way out. The hope is that this large event will put a focus on sex trafficking and as more people become aware that this is occurring in all communities across the state, the pressure will continue to hold pimps and johns accountable and make it harder and less available for victims to be trafficked.



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**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.**

- Teen Gift Ideas**
- Footballs, Basketballs
  - Sports Jerseys & Baseball Caps
  - Teen Apparel
  - Wallets and Purses
  - Makeup and Nail Kits
  - Small Gift Cards (\$15-25) For:
    - Wendy's
    - McDonalds
    - Subway
  - Target
  - Old Navy
  - Best Buy

- Baby and Children's Gift Ideas**
- Pretend Play Dress-Up Clothes
  - Toy Household Appliances/Toy Tools
  - Multicultural Dolls
  - Art/Craft Sets

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

**Financial gifts and gift cards** support the needs of our clients and their children all year round. We are reminded of your generosity, compassion and support every day. We are so grateful. The Holiday season can be a difficult time for those we serve. We have listed some gift suggestions which we will use for our small Holiday Boutique. For a more detailed list, please visit our website at [www.sojournerproject.org](http://www.sojournerproject.org) or call Laura at 952-351-4062 for more information. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your thoughtfulness.

# Holiday Wishlist