



Safe Passage

No one deserves to be abused.

Safe Passage's Quarterly

July 2019

A Message from the Executive Director

Mary Ellen Schaid

For many people, the end of the year is December 31 and you celebrate with champagne, parties, and New Year's Resolutions! For much of the nonprofit and government world, June 30 is actually the end of our year, or at least our fiscal year. We celebrate by looking back at all our staff and supporters have accomplished, how far our clients have come, and planning for the next year of our life-saving work.

We've achieved so much over the last year. We've built partnerships with our local law enforcement to screen for the most dangerous cases of domestic violence, connecting victims at the highest risk to services as quickly as possible. We've sheltered hundreds of individuals. We've helped clients receive orders of protection. We've provided free counseling and support.

We're proud of our staff and all we've been able to do over the last year, but know there is so much more that needs to be done. As we look towards the future, we are thinking about any and every way we can expand service, increase prevention, and ensure everyone is safe. We're so thankful for your partnership and hope you'll join us in the new year!

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Awareness Months and Events

Learn how our agency participated in Sexual Assault Awareness Month and how we celebrated Pride Month!

Become Involved

Hear what's going on with our volunteer and internship programs. Apply to work at Safe Passage and apply for a board position!

Counselor's Column

Domestic Violence counselor, Erika, teaches us about the amygdala and how trauma can play a role in it's development.

Upcoming Events

Cut it Out: Renew your beauty license by participating in our upcoming training.

Pokanoka's/Dual Dash: Dust off your running shoes! Pokanoka's is right around the corner! Learn about this year's changes and a new opportunity for runners!

Awareness Months and Events

Sexual Assault Awareness Month



In April, our staff recognized sexual assault awareness month with 3 events open to the community. As always, we hosted our Walk a Mile event complete with an after party at Fatty's. This year, we awarded Commander Steve Lekkas from the DeKalb Police Department and Sergeant Justin Kness from the Sycamore Police Department with our Shoe-per hero certificate. We are grateful for their dedication to our agency and the support they show survivors of violence.

Our annual rally, Take Back the Night, was very well attended and as powerful as ever. Over 15 survivors participated in an open mic opportunity and shared their stories of abuse, struggles, and victories. Thanks to the Egyptian Theater for letting us use their space!

New this year, was "Voices," an art gallery hosted by our sexual assault counselors. They worked with their clients to create canvas depicting their experience with abuse and their journey through healing. Thank you to DeKalb Area Women's center for providing a space for our event!

Pride Party Celebration

June was Pride month and we celebrated with our first ever Pride Party on June 29 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church! Attendees ate snow cones, enjoyed popcorn, played yard games, participated in pride themed art activities, and learned about local businesses and organizations who serve and affirm the LGBTQIA+ community.

At Safe Passage we know the barriers members of the LGBTQIA+ community face when trying to access services. We are proud to serve all genders and all relationships. Everyone deserves to be safe and to have a healthy and happy relationship.

Big thank you to Walgreens of Sycamore for donating water and snacks for the event!

Thank you to DeKalb County Community Gardens, Northern Illinois University, Lighthouse Professional Counseling, DeKalb Public Library, and DUI Counseling for hosting a table at our event!



Expanding Our Education

This last quarter of our year has been full of advanced training and learning opportunities for our staff! In May, many of our sexual assault staff participated in the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA)'s Statewide Training

Conference. There, our staff learned more about fighting for racial justice in the sexual assault movement, how to prioritize survivor-leaders, breathing and meditation strategies, and so much more!

In June, staff attended trainings on strangulation and human trafficking. Every opportunity to learn more helps our staff to become better advocates, leaders, and champions for ending domestic and sexual violence!



Become Involved with Safe Passage

Volunteer and Internship Program Updates

By Volunteer Coordinator, Pamela Rosales

It's been a party over at the Volunteer Department! This summer the Volunteer Program has had fun parties dedicated to thanking our wonderful volunteers and interns! We had a relaxing arts and pizza night, where the new and old volunteers met one another and painted mandalas. We had a movie night, watched Bohemian Rhapsody, and ate popcorn with a variety of toppings. Most recently, we had a 90's themed "Slumber Party" where we watched 90s music videos, played the "Hella 90s" trivia game, and had face masks. Our parties are a nice way to let our volunteers and interns know that the hard work they put in never goes unnoticed!

At the beginning of the year, I've met with staff, volunteers, and interns to evaluate the volunteer program. Through these meetings, the program directors and I have restructured the program that best fits Safe Passage's needs. We now have four volunteer positions: PAIP Volunteer, Legal Program Volunteer, Hotline Volunteer, and Children's Program Volunteer. There's a 10 hour weekly requirement for each volunteer position, as well as 2 Medical On-Call shifts a month for the positions that work directly with survivors. Our Residential Program will have two interns that will be on-site 20 hours a week and will be participating in 3 Medical On-Call shifts a month.

Our next 65 hour domestic violence and sexual assault training will be held in January 2020. Look out for a volunteer & internship orientation night that we'll be hosting this fall! It'll be a great way for the community to learn more about volunteer and internship opportunities.

If you're interested in learning more about volunteering or interning with us, please contact Pamela Rosales at prosales@safepassagedv.org.

Other Ways to Get Involved at Safe Passage

We currently have 2 full time positions available within our legal department and 1 part time position open within our abuse intervention program.

[To learn more and apply, click here.](#)

Our board members put their time, energy, and passion into supporting Safe Passage in our fight to end violence in DeKalb County! Join our board to help our agency thrive!

[If you'd like to apply for a board position, click here.](#)

Please direct questions about job opportunities and board positions to our administrative line at 815.756.7930

Counselor's Column

Who's the Boss?

By Domestic Violence Counselor, Erika Montes

One of the most challenging work in the consultation room is to rewire an anxious brain exposed to traumatic experiences. The amygdala is a region of the brain responsible for detecting fear and preparing for emergency events. It is the decision maker and controls many different reactions in both the brain and the body. Every brain is hardwired to allow the amygdala to seize control in times of danger - the fight/flight/freeze responses. This is where the emotional memories are stored and where turns situations trigger for anxiety.



In order to rewire the anxious brain, the amygdala has to be trained to stop responding to triggers. In other words, the brain needs new experiences to learn. One of the most effective interventions to train the amygdala is practicing self-care as basic as breathing exercises and working out.

If you are ready to make peace with your amygdala, try to practice these 10 steps:

1. Avoid gossip and drama
2. Let go on things you can't control
3. Avoid comparing yourself to others
4. Keep your inner peace larger than your fears
5. Don't do anything that doesn't feel right for you
6. Don't be afraid to spend time alone
7. Speak kindly to yourself
8. Stay away from toxic people
9. Please yourself before trying to please others
10. Ignore any opinion that don't enhance your life

Upcoming Events

Cut it Out: Training for Beauty Professionals



Calling all beauty professionals! Cosmetologists and aestheticians are required to complete 1 hour of domestic abuse training by September 2019 in order to qualify for license renewals. Join Safe Passage for the training on July 24, 5-6 PM in DeKalb Public Library's Story Time and Activity Room. The event is FREE, but donations are appreciated. To view our most needed page, [please click here.](#)

RSVPs are not required, but encouraged. Please contact Kaiya Kersh with your RSVP or with any questions: 815.756.7930 or kkersh@safepassagedv.org.

Pokanoka's Run/Walk and the DeKalb Dual Dash

This year, our annual July 4th race, the Pokanoka's Run/Walk, will be held on September 28. Register now

through September 21 to receive your free t-shirt! [Register here.](#)

Have you heard? We partnered with the DeKalb Corn Classic to offer runners a discounted registration fee and special medals when you attend both races! [Learn more here.](#)



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