



# SAFE

STRONGER, **SAFER** COMMUNITIES  
*of Transylvania County*

2023

ANNUAL  
REPORT



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# Support • Advocacy • Prevention • Outreach

SAFE works with the whole family when abuse is involved.

24/HR HOTLINE: (828) 885-7233

VISIT:SAFETRANSYLVANIA.ORG



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Get involved by helping to prevent domestic and sexual violence!

*SAFE would like to recognize April Cameron, Executive Assistant, for her tireless energy and enthusiasm in making SAFE's 2023 event dreams into reality. Not only is she a great organizer, and fund raiser, but she created this wonderful program.*

*Thank you, April!*

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### Back Cover Warning Signs of Abuse

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**SAFE's Mission**  
SAFE will lead our community in eliminating domestic violence and sexual violence through prevention, advocacy, protection, education, and healing.

## SAFE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Salley M. Stepp, Executive Director  
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# Thanks to Alair and other Generous Donors

With the help of Alair Homes, Dogwood Trust, Lake Toxaway Charities, Audrey Love Foundation, Garber Electric, Mountain Marble, Yoders Building Supply, Jennings Building Supply, Allcon Roofing, Appalachian House, Two Coats Painting, TP Howard Plumbing, and several anonymous donors, SAFE's shelter, Stacey's House, received a much needed expansion and renovation to the kitchen area.



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**Imagine sharing a kitchen and one stove with 5 families.**

With the newly designed kitchen, SAFE has gone from several families crowding in to share one stove, two sinks, and one dishwasher to a spacious and beautiful room containing the equipment and storage of 2 full kitchens. Stacey's House has capacity for over 20 people, which meant its old kitchen, with limited food preparation area and storage, was always a problem. In addition to the 2 small existing pantry closets, it now has an additional, large pantry (grey double doors featured in photo) with lots of cabinets. The 2 dishwashers and deep sinks make clean up a breeze. The shelter has gone from having 1 refrigerator for guest use to 2 large refrigerators for guests and a smaller one for shared food storage.

## **Safety and accessibility is always a priority**

The prior conditions of SAFE's kitchen were worsening after leaks occurred and softened the floor. Some of the fixtures were aging and required frequent repairs. The old floors have been replaced with gorgeous plank flooring. The kitchen is now equipped with an induction stove that are more energy efficient and only heat if the correct type of metal cookware is used, making it much safer for the children residing in the home.

## **Why it matters?**

SAFE's clients have been through enough trauma by the time they arrive at the shelter. Communal living is not always easy. Clients deserve to live in a safe space that provides the necessary comforts of a home for the time that they call it home. SAFE continually strives to provide clients with that comfort while they are getting back on their feet. SAFE's good friends and donors make it possible.



**GARBER ELECTRIC, INC**



# Stacey's House got an Upgrade

**G**orgeous and easy to maintain granite counter tops from Mountain Marble add a classy touch to the space. A large island and extra counter space give plenty of room for multiple families to utilize the kitchen at the same time.



Natural light from the windows paired with the coat of fresh paint and hardwood cabinets allow for a welcoming environment for the survivors that come through SAFE. Who wouldn't want to come home to a kitchen like this?

# Thank you to our Clients

SAFE would like to honor each and every one of our clients for their courage, bravery, and determination. It is not easy to go through what they have. They have fought, and continue to fight, for a better life for themselves and their children. SAFE admires and recognizes the strength it takes to speak up about abuse that has happened in one's life, and to get out of an abusive relationship.

In this program you will find client stories, in their own words. These clients have given SAFE permission to publish their stories in hope of helping others who are still caught in an abusive relationship. SAFE has not used real names and has redacted portions of the stories that contain specific information that could be used to identify the clients or their families. This was done in order to protect the privacy of the clients and to maintain their safety.

These clients are the reason SAFE continues the fight.

## ACE'S STORY



I met him when I was 14. I was a cheerleader; he was a football player. He was smart, funny, and had the bluest eyes I had ever seen. I think a part of me always knew I fell in love with him that night. We were together off and on for the next few years. We were together off and on for the next few years.

After a while, still in high school, I learned I was pregnant with our first child. That fall he left for college, and I stayed and attended the local community college. I later transferred to the college he was at, and we moved into our first apartment. We were best friends and inseparable. We got married a couple of years later. He graduated and received a great job offer. I decided to put my education and career on hold and focus on being the best mom and wife I could. Life was great. I was the neighborhood mom. The PTA mom. The sleepover mom. The football mom. Our marriage was great. Until it wasn't.

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After years of marriage, I found myself becoming increasingly unhappy. We had just been through an incredibly difficult year dealing with the fallout of Covid and it made me start questioning where I was in my life. I loved my family more than anything, but I felt like I was losing myself. My identity for so many years had been as his wife or someone's mom.

The first major decision I made was to go back to school. I made it a point to spend time a few hours by myself at least once a week without answering phone calls or texts. I was becoming the version of myself that I wanted to be. My self-confidence was increasing. I was a better mom and a better wife. I was excited about my life. I didn't know that I was at the beginning of two years in the darkest part of Hell.



He was incredibly supportive in the beginning. The changes started slowly. When I would walk our neighborhood during the day, he would stay outside until I got home. When I went to the grocery store, he always had to come with me. If I did go by myself, he would call me multiple times and he would take our check card out of my hand the second I walked in the door. If I was gone longer than I had said, he would question me for hours. He only gave me money when he decided I needed it. He started to criticize things that had never been a problem before. The house wasn't clean enough. Dinner wasn't at the time he wanted. The kids were being too loud. I wasn't giving him the kind of attention he wanted. He started treating me more as a possession than his wife. The arguments started increasing and I found myself spending more time alone in our bedroom than with him just to avoid them. He couldn't accept the fact that I wasn't relying on him like I used to. I was becoming my own person and beginning to fully see that I was capable of so many things. This just made him more determined to break me.

He hit me for the first time (...). (A)nd we started arguing. The next thing I knew I was on the floor. He had punched me in the jaw. When I was finally able to stand, I tried making my way to our room. He followed close behind and repeatedly slammed me into the doorframe before throwing me to the floor. I left immediately to be with family and tried to process what had just happened. I had always said that if a man ever put his hands on me, I would leave. I never imagined that I would ever be in that situation. I couldn't leave. I had no where to go. No family. No way of supporting myself. I couldn't tell anyone. So, I went home. The next day was as if nothing ever happened. The following weeks turned into much of the same. I was always covered in bruises from him grabbing my arms or punching me in the chest. He would knuckle punch my head and legs, backhand me with his fists and kick me. I made sure everything was covered and nothing was visible, and I always apologized. I knew my marriage was going to end. I just needed to get my degree so I could support myself and my kids.

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I soon started my classes. He became increasingly less supportive. From my first day of class until my last he only asked me two questions, how many guys did you talk to and how many guys hit on you. That's all he was concerned about. It was during this time that he began drinking heavily. He would criticize and insult our kids for no reason. He was insulting and degrading to me. Nothing I did was ever good enough. I was worthless, stupid, a horrible mom and an even worse wife. I would never be good enough. No one will ever love or want me. Everyone would be better off if I was dead. I was constantly being accused of having an affair. This was also the time when the physical abuse stopped being something he did in private. It was not an issue for him anymore to say vicious things to me or hurt me in front of our kids. He also started doing the same to our youngest son. They would get in frequent fights because my son was trying to protect me. He would call him horrible names and tell him he never wanted him. He would break his things and embarrass him in front of his friends. I had so much guilt because I knew it was my fault that was happening. I was exposing them to the abuse because I didn't leave. One evening, after a day of heavy drinking, he came into our bedroom as I was getting out of the shower. It was the first time, and not the last, that he raped me. I didn't realize that our kids had come into the room until our son jumped on his back to get him to stop. As long as I live, I will never forget what my son said to him over and over, "Please hit me instead of my mom." His drinking was past the point of excessive. It turned into an all-day thing and no matter how much I begged, he refused to get help. I was losing the person I fought so hard to become.



(...) was the month when the authorities became involved in our lives. The day started off great, but things took a sharp turn after we left a sporting event. He had clearly been drinking and when I called him out on it, he began driving like he wanted to hurt us. We were all yelling at him, and he finally pulled over and started screaming at our children which became physical. He was unaware that there were people across the street recording him until they started threatening to call the police.

I called the police on him for the first time on. He had been drinking and started damaging our house. He punched multiple holes in the wall, damaged furniture and tried to kick me down the stairs. When they arrived, the male officer immediately began treating me like it was my fault. "Has he ever hit you before? Did you call? Why is it such an issue now? We can't do anything if you're just going to stay quiet. It seems to me if he was hurting you that much you would say something. It's not against the law for him to be drunk in his own house" I had never felt more hopeless. I started to realize that this was my life now...

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*Delle Elaine*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

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The rest of the time was spent with me pretending that my life was close to perfect so no one would suspect anything.



He was arrested for his first DWI shortly after. I thought that maybe spending the weekend in jail would be the push he needed to get help. It didn't change anything. Exactly a week after his DWI arrest he became angry when I couldn't hear him talking to me from another room and he started flipping the furniture over. He had already damaged multiple things in the house, so I told him to leave. He put me in a chokehold and walked me into the bedroom. I bit his arm to get him to let go and he knuckle punched my head so many times I lost count. He then tried to gouge my eye out. I managed to get up and get him onto the front porch where he grabbed my arm, spun me around backwards and pushed me off the deck. I'm not sure how I managed to land on my feet, but I just looked at him and yelled at him to leave. He responded by punching me in the nose. When the police arrived, I was expecting things to go the same way they had with the first officer, but I was very wrong. These officers did their best to take care of me and make sure I was ok. They took pictures of every bruise and went out of their way to comfort me. They put him in handcuffs and put him in the back of the police car. He spent another 48 hours in jail and was told to stay away from us. I moved without telling him and when he found out where we were, I moved again. He eventually found us there too. I thought that by using the restraining order as leverage, he would give me the space I was asking for. I was constantly on edge and had panic attacks almost daily. I didn't know how to exist as a person some days.



Eventually, we were living together, once again. Not long after I discovered that vodka wasn't the only thing he was using to get through the day. One night after he had passed out, I found cocaine.



One day when he was away, I received a call, it was a number I didn't recognize that belonged to a Transylvania County EMT. He was fine, just some scratches, and he needed someone to pick him up. My son said he would go. When he got there, he watched as his dad got arrested for his second DWI. He spent another 48 hours in jail. I had no idea what was coming.

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One evening of he started texting me, I just ignored him and finished my shopping. When I arrived home, I immediately started to panic because I knew he was in there. I kept pounding on the door until he finally let me in. (...) He then kicked me in the stomach which put me into the wall. When I stepped forward, he kicked me again. I tried to flee, but he grabbed my left leg. He then pulled it out from under me and proceeded to drag me down the two flights of stairs. When we reached the bottom, I just looked at him and said, “what the hell is wrong with you?” He then backhanded me with his fist put me in a headlock. He eventually let me go and I stood up and looked at him and told him that I couldn’t believe he was acting like this over alcohol. He then backhanded me once again, placed his hands around my neck, pushed me against the wall and started squeezing. He looked me directly in the eyes as he was doing this. He had absolutely no emotion. My vision was starting to go black, and I could feel myself starting to go unconscious. It was at this moment that our son decided to come back. When he saw what was happening, he punched his dad in the side of the head until he let go. The next thing I knew, my driveway was covered with police officers. When I told the first officer everything that had happened, he was arrested immediately. Another officer walked me back into the house and had me write out a statement. The next thing I knew, my kitchen was full of the some of the kindest, most caring and compassionate police officers I have ever known. One officer kept asking me to go to the hospital, I didn't. Later, I realized he was probably right. I could barely stand at that point. He gave me a compression fracture in my spine. When I was being released from the hospital, the same officer was there waiting on me to take me home.



I spent the next morning filing another restraining order against him. About a week later I was in court for the first time. I had to tell the judge everything that happened that night while he was looking through a stack of photos of my injuries. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done. He was charged with multiple counts of assault on a female and a felony count of assault on a female using strangulation. At his hearing, and after speaking with the DA, I told her that I was open to dropping one of the charges and letting him serve his active time on the weekends. I was trying to give him a way to still have a career so he could support his kids. He was sentenced to time in jail and probation. He violated the restraining order for the first time a few weeks later. He was charged with probation violation and a DVPO violation. It took him 25 hours to violate the order again. The next morning when I went to file the violation with the magistrate, I told him how I found out he hacked into my email, he was stalking me, he was threatening to show up at the house, he told my oldest son that he would murder any man I tried to date, and that he wanted me to be as miserable as possible. He followed that up with ‘I just need to finish what I started’. He was charged with more violations and stalking charges and his probation was extended. He appealed that sentence and agreed to a lesser sentence of jail time and several months supervised probation.

I didn’t tell anyone about what was happening to me. I don’t usually put a lot of my life out there for people to see. When I do I try to make sure it’s happy and positive. That’s what I want people to see. I don’t want anyone to know about the bad. I was convinced that no one would believe me, and I was ashamed and humiliated that I let it happen.

Almost everyone who knew us assumed our lives were close to perfect. He was highly respected in his career and very good at his job (...) You couldn't find anyone who had anything bad to say about him. I thought that was why I had so many people stop talking to me after I announced I was filing for divorce. What I later learned is that he told everyone that I had multiple affairs throughout our marriage. He took every opportunity to play the victim. I was accused of ruining his life. I had to make sure that the truth came out. I didn't do anything to deserve what happened to me. I was just trying to become the best version of myself that I could possibly be.

When I was assigned my first advocate at SAFE, I was struggling to come to terms with what I had gone through. I didn't understand how the person who told me daily that I was his world, his life, his best friend, his everything would be capable of putting me through that kind of pain. (...). He saw the bruises. He saw the pain. He saw the breakdowns. He saw the damage. He could stop. He had done it once before. He knew the damage he was doing to his family, and he stopped. He had no intention of letting me become the woman I was fighting so hard for and in some ways, he was successful(...). It took a lot of talking and hard work to admit that that person died that night. She doesn't exist anymore. Instead, she has made the way for a new me. I am not a victim. I deserve happiness. I earned happiness. I know my worth. I am stronger than I ever thought possible. I can do hard things. I will always be grateful for the people in this organization who helped me. I love the person I am today, and I am so proud of how far she's come. I am a survivor.

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# Special Thanks

DISTINCTIVE LAKESIDE DINING  
GRAND

**OLDE STATION**



*at Lake Toxaway*

SAFE would like to recognize and thank Josh, Brandon, and their staff for helping to make SAFE's Grand Olde Summer Celebration Happen!

With their help and supporters like you, SAFE will be able to continue its necessary programs for this community and the survivors of domestic and sexual violence that come through SAFE's doors. It takes all of us to make the changes necessary to end the cycle of domestic and sexual violence. Please reach out to 828-885-7233 to get involved.

# WHAT IS SAFE DOING NOW FOR THE FUTURE

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM (DVIP)**

SAFE recognizes that domestic violence is a family issue. Both the abuser and the victim needs assistance. DVIP is a certified program for working with abusers. It uses a psycho-educational curriculum to provide instruction to individuals who have a history of using abusive behaviors.



Referrals to the program come from the District Court, Department of Social Services, and probation/parole offices. On some occasions, individuals realize they need help and refer themselves. Some employers have referred their staff. All referrals are required to complete an assessment prior to acceptance into the program.

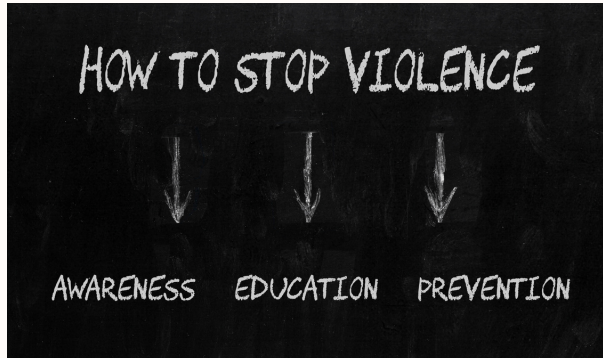
Data suggests 94% of participants who complete the program do not re-appear in court on domestic violence related charges.



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# PREVENTION



## SAFE DATES

is a 10-session high school program that addresses attitudes and behaviors associated with dating abuse and violence. The program covers topics such as defining healthy and unhealthy relationships, defining and understanding abuse, healthy

boundaries, how to get help in an abusive relationship, overcoming gender stereotypes, anger management and coping strategies, effective communication, and prevention of dating abuse.

## BAR OUTREACH

is a program to raise awareness about Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA), creating safer spaces and encouraging community accountability. SAFE's Rape Prevention Educator provides training to staff of establishments that serve alcohol to promote an environment of safety in the bar community, inform bar staff of DFSA and the drugs used, and promote bystander intervention.



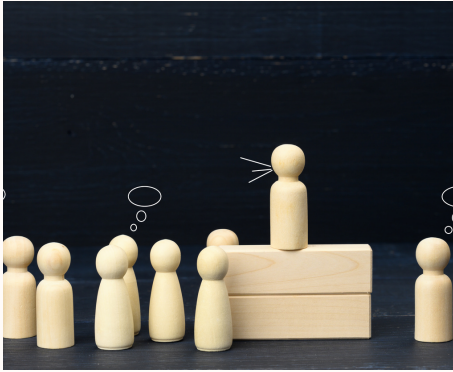
## TASK FORCE

is a body of community members who are committed to planning, implementing and evaluating programming for the prevention of sexual violence. The long-term goal is to engage the community in affecting a cultural change that makes sexual violence unacceptable.



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## **BYSTANDER INTERVENTION TRAININGS**

are designed to enhance understanding of the concept of bystander intervention. If someone sees someone being assaulted, they should call 911, not assume someone else will do so.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Outreach personnel work with organizations, businesses, institutions, and other groups to inform them about the services SAFE provides to the community. SAFE's staff works diligently to connect with the underserved populations in Transylvania and South Jackson Counties.

Building bridges and forming collaborations in the community helps extend awareness of the issues of domestic and sexual violence, as well as, increasing the number of healthy families and relationships in our community. If your business or organization would like to have someone from SAFE speak at your next event, or to learn more, please reach out to schedule a presentation. Telephone 828-885-7233.



## **YOUTH PROGRAMS**

SAFE recognizes that not only is domestic violence a family issue, but it is a generational issue. Children learn what they see as they grow up. Trust is destroyed at an early age. As adults, they are likely to repeat abusive behavior if no one teaches them other ways to deal with conflict. SAFE's program works with the younger members of the family to break the generational cycle of violence. It provides counselling to children in its shelter and assists children with the development of coping skills.



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# COURT SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

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Victims who need immediate protection from their abuser meet with staff who assist them in applying for a protective order. This court order legally keeps their abuser away from them, as well as gives the District Attorney the basis to press criminal charges if the order is violated.

When people come to SAFE for help, for some, it is the first time they are speaking to anyone about the abuse. This process can be difficult but healing. It is a moment filled with strength and empowerment even if they do not yet realize it. This is where they can release the emotions they have held back for a very long time. Staff support them as they

fill out protective orders and write their impact statements.

Sometimes there are other steps that must be taken. Staff will accompany clients to the Magistrate to press criminal charges. If it is a felony, they go with the client to the Sheriff's Department to file a report and open an investigation. Staff support SAFE's clients throughout the process by communicating with the District Attorney's office, law enforcement, other court personnel, and attorneys. Staff keep the client informed of all court dates and answer any non-legal questions they may have.

Staff has learned that if a client is informed as much as possible, it



makes the process a little easier and reduces their anxiety.

This is also a time when staff can connect clients to other resources they may need such as referrals for legal advice, therapy, housing, and public benefits.

Staff are also available to support and advocate for clients at the hospital who are receiving care because of abuse or who are going through the process of getting a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam.

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## Empowerment



Stacey's House provides survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence a temporary safe haven. SAFE staff provides listening ears and support to the residents of Stacey's House and works to maintain a safe and stable environment. Stacey's House is equipped with 24-hour security cameras as well as other security systems, a personally answered 24-hour-a-day, 7-days a-week call line for victims needing immediate assistance. The shelter provides basic personal care items, food and toiletries for new residents. If you or someone you know needs emergency shelter call: 828-885-7233

## Shelter and Safety

## Supportive Counseling

SAFE provides counselling to clients who need assistance to heal from the trauma of their experiences.



## Independent Life Skills

Many clients arrive at the shelter never having learned the essential skills to live independently. This is one reason many victims return to their abusers. Clients are encouraged to participate in various programs that give them the skills and confidence to live on their own. SAFE volunteers and staff teach gardening, financial management, cooking, and parenting classes, to name a few.

# KAYCEE'S STORY

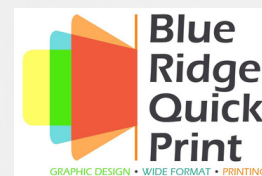
**B**

efore I jump into my story, allow me to preface this by saying I didn't have the best relationship role models growing up. The most traumatic moment I recall as a child was my parents screaming at each other and throwing each other's clothes all over the yard. My sister and I held each other on the couch begging them to stop, yet we were not heard, and I think they were too involved in their own stuff to realize we were watching this all unfold.

By the time I started dating, I was not interested in getting involved with anyone for a long period of time. I did not trust men and truly believed most of them were cheaters. When I met the guy who would one day become my husband, I was 16. He was funny, he took me wherever I wanted to go and did many of the things I wanted to do. He was the first one to say I love you after a few months. I eventually said it back, it was like at that moment he knew he had me hooked.

Looking back and reading some of my teenage journals, I realize he was abusive long before I ever married him. We were consistently off and on and my friends were encouraging me to break up with him. As I read my journals, I wonder why in the world, I didn't listen to my friends, why did I believe so deeply that he loved me back? I constantly forgave him for the wrong things he did to me. Many of the people he worked with thought he was such a cool and sweet guy and would tell me how great he was. At times I wondered if I was the only one who knew who he really was.

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Finally, after he locked me in a room for several hours after dragging me in there like a rag doll because he didn't like what I said. I broke up with him. Eventually, he texted me again. I had deleted his number so I wouldn't be tempting myself, but the second I got the "hey, what's up?" I knew it was him. I tried to play it cool, but eventually I was in his trap again. There were times people would tell me he was cheating; he'd cuss me out and put me down in the middle of stores and push me around. This cycle continued for a couple years before I finally told him I was done and got as far away as I could.



He'd call and apologize for how badly he had treated me. He swore he was working on himself. I later returned home and we once again were dating. I thought he really had changed. It was like the very beginning of our relationship all over again. I didn't work for a long time because he insisted he'd take care of everything. He never liked any of my friends and was a jerk to them when they came over, so eventually I didn't hang out with anyone.

Sometime after having our first child, I discovered he had been cheating. From that time on, you'd have thought I was the one who cheated. He'd freak out any time I went somewhere other than work. I would get cussed up one side and down the other for shopping with my mom. If I worked over or later than scheduled for some reason, he'd ask where I had been. I couldn't even put on make-up without being accused of seeing someone else.



At some point he became very demanding and forceful when it came to sex. There were times I would lay there crying and just let him have his way. I often had to start showering when he was not home, because my nakedness must mean I wanted to have sex. I felt so violated in my home. My body no longer felt like my own and I was not sure I would ever actually want sex again in my life.

I began to understand what was happening to me. I so wish that I had learned more about abuse and healthy relationships in middle and high school or had better examples. His love for me was selfish and I had experienced just about every form of abuse there was. I began to realize this was not normal and that he needed help, but he'd never get help because he "didn't need to be fixed."

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The first time I left, I went to my parents. I stayed there for several weeks while they consistently reminded me of the commitment to my husband and God and that I needed to go back to my husband and work it out. In their defense, they never were made aware of everything and to them it appeared I was just unhappy and left. After being told multiple times to return to my husband, listening to my parents' fight, and him trying to get me to come home, I returned. I wish I had known at that time there was a shelter, like SAFE, available for women being abused, but who knows if I'd even go because of my own pride.



At one point I did go and press criminal charges for shoving me down but dropped them almost immediately after his family begged me to, telling me how it would affect his job and could affect our child's life. He was able to talk his way out of things, once again. I watched him so many times get pulled over for his lead foot or reckless driving and somehow talk his way out of a ticket. He was and is a master manipulator.



I then left again, but all my paychecks went directly into our joint account, so the card was declined when I went to get gas, as he drained the money from the account. My options were limited and so once again I returned.



After that we worked with several different marriage counselors, though nothing ever changed, and I was always the one to blame. He time and time again tried to convince me that he'd never hurt me, even though he had. I would be scolded like a child for crying and told to get over myself.

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Eventually, I got my own bank account set up in my name, bought a car solely in my name, started to build up my credit with my own card. I got a decent job and I started to set myself up so that when I left, I could make it on my own and the only connection would be our child.

Leaving for good has had its challenges over the years. He would often use our child as leverage to get me to do what he wanted and to come back. I have made sure both my child and I receive counseling to combat the trauma we've both lived.

To those of you out there in this situation, I encourage you to seek assistance from places like SAFE or at least a loyal and understanding friend. You are not the lies they are telling you. Listen to your inner self and if you are constantly fighting or breaking up, it is probably not meant to be.

Now, I enjoy getting to be freely me by going to concerts, dancing about the house or the grocery store, girls' night with my best friends, and watching all the ridiculous rom coms on Netflix that I want. I am who I want to be without limits and without fear!

Be well!

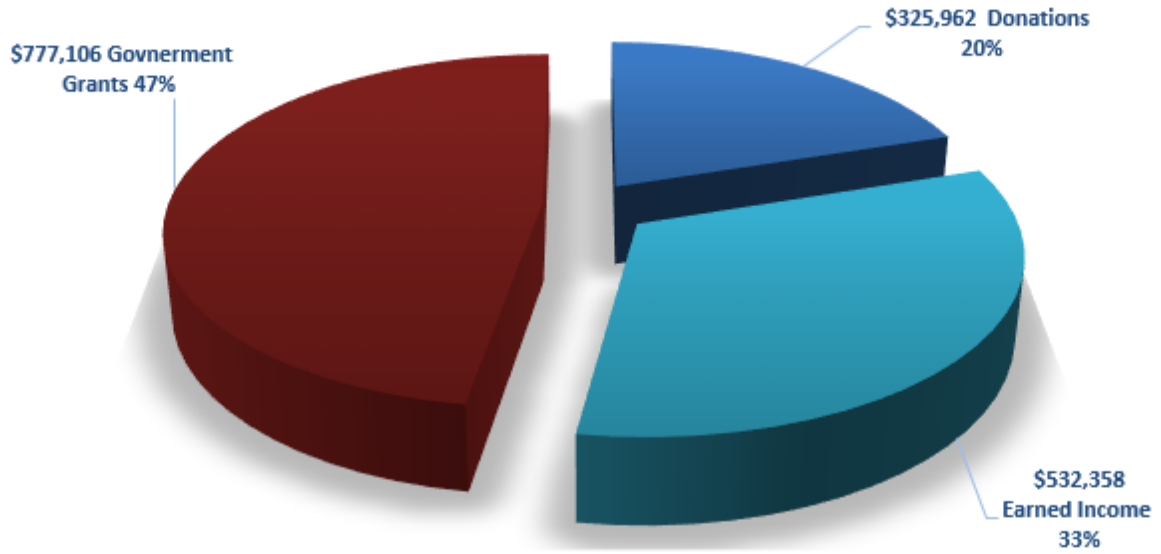


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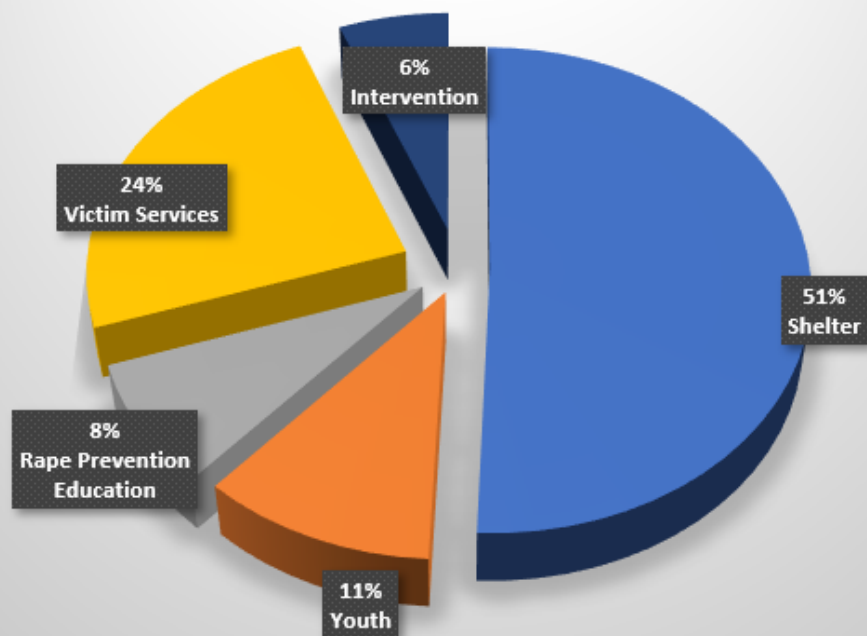


**TERRITORY**  
brevard, north carolina

## Organizational Income 2022-2023



## Expense By Program



# SAFE's Resale Stores are Changing

You may have noticed a new “SAFE’s Attic- Too” sign at 383 South Broad Street in Brevard (formerly the location of Advanced Auto Parts.) No, we are not closing our Attic Store at 370 South Broad Street. We are expanding our resale business into the new location. The stores are walking distance from each other.

Our new store, SAFE’s Attic Too, will have a grand opening celebration in late August or early September with a winter holiday theme. Come see all the beautiful holiday ornaments, dishes, home décor and more. All at great prices. You can even buy a Christmas tree complete with lights and ornaments.

Our lease is up at College Plaza and the Interiors store (furniture and décor) will be closing as we transition into our new location/model . We would rather sell the furniture than move it so we will be having major markdowns on everything. Watch postings on social media and in the newspaper for sale date notices. We have already been having a lot of “dollar” sales at the current Attic store to cut down on inventory before the transition. New items are going onto the sales floor daily! Don’t miss out on some great finds!

Donations will continue to be accepted at the current location, Tuesday through Saturday, 10 – 4:30. People often ask if we take books, or other specific types of items. My answer is “we take it all!” If we don’t have room for it, or can’t sell it, we will find a home for it at one of our sister non-profit agencies or will recycle it. Our goal is to not throw anything into the landfill that we don’t have to.



# NE NE'S STORY

## "YOU CAN PERSEVERE"

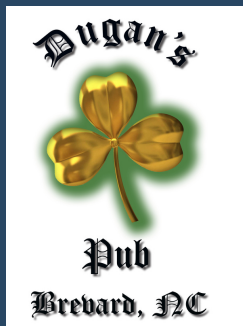


afterward. Soon after, the slaps turned into punches and getting pushed into hot scalding water. He then started threatening my life and holding knives to my throat.

I finally got tired of lying to people about visible marks on my body and reported it to the law and went to a women's domestic violence shelter. After being in the shelter for two weeks he called me and said he wasn't charged with anything, and he was so sorry about the misunderstanding and wanted to meet up with me.

I told him "NO." He continued to call night and day. I decided to meet with him one last time. That night ended up a nightmare. After a pleasant day of shopping and eating. He asked me to spend the night with him, I told him yes. We went to his house, and he asked me to be his woman again. I told him that I did not want to take it back to that level. He then pushed me down and raped me in every orifice on

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So here is my story. It was not until after being divorced for years that I encountered my first experience with physical, psychological, verbal, and emotional abuse. The first predator was an older man who started off by showering me with expensive gifts, restaurants and trips. I will never forget the shock I felt when he asked me a question about my day, and I failed to answer, and he slapped me in the face. He slapped me so hard that his fingerprints stayed on my face for days



my body with a knife to my face. I started to scream and cry asking “GOD” to please save me.

Soon after, I heard sirens, the cops knocked on the door and said a neighbor heard screaming from the house. I was still crying, hurting and my neck was cut up (bleeding). I told the officers what happened, and I was transported to the hospital. He was arrested later that night. I went to court and testified, and he was charged with 4 felonies: rape, battery, assault, and kidnapping. I went back to the domestic women’s shelter and after about three months started talking to this guy I met on social media. He convinced me to leave the shelter and get an apartment with him. I did. Everything went well for about one month.

One evening I had an urgent issue concerning childcare, so I called him during his work hours. He was not at work and had not been at work for a few days. After three days of being gone, he showed up at the apartment. He started screaming and grabbed my hair, calling me stupid. I tripped and fell, and he kicked me in the head. He said I embarrassed him for calling his job and asking for him. To make a long story short, he stole my baby’s daycare money, stole my car, and beat me up. I had to call and report my car stolen and report the abuse.

After that incident, I stopped dating for a long while. One day while working a man dropped off a note with a request that I call him on the number listed. He wanted to take me out. I told him that I was not interested in dating anyone because of past abuse. He told me that he would never hurt me and that he loved God and was raised in the church. He said that he had a criminal past and he needed to get back to God and wanted a good wife. After we talked, laughed, and cried together for months we decided to make it official and make a leap and get married. We had been married for a few months, and everything was lovely. I made sure he stayed on the straight and narrow.



He started going to bars late at night, calling me fat, degrading curse words, calling me retarded. He said he needed someone better than me. He called me ugly and constantly (...) One day I came home, and he was in a bad mood said he had a bad day. (...) He said I was part of the cause because I was lame, and I was no longer fun. (...) I told him that he made me nervous, and I was leaving until he calmed down. He punched me in the ribs and in the back of my head. He then got on top of me and was choking me. He said I hate being married to you and I miss all the good sex I used to get from my exes.



I went through emotional, mental, verbal abuse and physical abuse with him for 3 years. He would abuse me and then buy me something nice and cry and promise not to ever do it again. He told me he had a bad childhood, and he was transferring those negative emotions to me. The abuse continued but was more severe, pulled my hair out in chunks and told me if I leave, he will kill me. I was stressed, I got kicked out of school, and almost lost my job.

He told me that he got a young girl pregnant by accident and wanted to know if I would help take care of the baby. He cried and said he was sorry. I told him that was the last draw, and he immediately locked all doors and started to choke me until I started blacking out. A friend of his knocked on the door, I regained consciousness and grabbed what I could fit in my hands. I crept outside the back way. Once I started the car, he saw me driving off and jumped on top of the car holding on to the windshield wipers. He used his heel and kicked in the front windshield window trying to grab me. I called the police and reported the strangulation and how I got away. I left and went to Helpmate and later SAFE. I immediately filed for divorce, reapplied for school, and filed a restraining order against him.

I stayed at SAFE until a was able to find my own apartment. SAFE and Helpmate has helped me get back on my feet and I will forever be grateful. I passed all my classes in school, and I just started the next quarter of classes.

I am enjoying my peace and my healing journey. I am evolving into who I was born to be. My witty and humorous personality is back. On the days when I'm feeling a little low, I pray and press on. Perseverance is possible for anyone who wants a change from being in an abusive situation, just don't wait until it is too late.

When I was going through my abuse I felt alone, and like no one could ever relate to my fear, low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Needless to say - you never know who could benefit and gain strength from your testimony.

With care,  
Ne Ne

Thank you to our sponsors!



# ANNUAL PLAY IT SAFE GOLF TOURNAMENT

# 2023

**MONDAY**

SEPTEMBER 18TH, 2023

**TICKET**

**\$250**



## A Special Thank You to Lake Toxaway Country Club

and the community of Lake Toxaway for the use of your beautiful course and clubhouse. SAFE appreciates your continued help in supporting victims of domestic and sexual violence. Through your kindness and generosity, SAFE continues the mission of eliminating domestic and sexual violence in our community.

Thank You for Your Support!

Lake Toxaway Women's Golf League

Lake Toxaway Charities

Thank you for supporting SAFE's efforts in prevention, advocacy, protection, education, and healing. One day, together, we will stop domestic and sexual violence in our community!

**Email: [april@safetransylvania.org](mailto:april@safetransylvania.org) to register!**



Thank You

Dear Player,

It is an honor to have you play in SAFE's 2023 Annual Play it Safe Golf Tournament at Lake Toxaway Golf Course.

Your registration in this event provides critical funding for our programs including hospital and court advocacy, shelter, prevention education, counseling, independent life skills training, and a 24 hour emergency call line.


SAFE is committed to supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence in our community by assisting them in finding hope and independence through empowerment and support.

Sincerely,

Salley Stepp, Executive Director

# RULES OF PLAY

The following information is being provided to make your golfing experience more enjoyable.

- 
- This is a scramble tournament. Everyone plays their ball from the shot chosen until the ball goes into the cup. Report one score and turn in your team card to the Pro at the end of the round.
  - There will be a shotgun start. The team leader will register the whole team and is the only one who needs to come to the registration table.
  - Each team will receive a complimentary giveaway bag and a continental breakfast.
  - Each team is provided 2 carts. There are no additional carts available. If two people feel uncomfortable riding with a teammate, one player may choose to walk while the other drives the cart or take turns walking/riding. We respectfully request players carry their clubs on the shared cart to maintain the pace of play.
  - Mulligans are available for \$10 a piece or 3 for \$25. A Mulligan allows the purchaser to have a "do over," meaning they can try the shot a second time without having to count the stroke.
  - A Red Ticket may be purchased for \$10. One ticket entitles the male purchaser to make a shot from the red tee. A female ticket holder gets a gimmie within two club lengths of the hole.
  - Lunch will be provided. Information regarding lunch will be available at the time of registration.
  - Presenting Sponsor, Alair Homes, is providing each player with two beverage tickets.
  - Winning teams and raffle winner will be announced at lunch. The prizes for each member of each winning team will be a \$100 gift card to Lake Toxaway Pro Shop.

**Please refer all questions to a SAFE volunteer or the Lake Toxaway golf staff.**

# Special Purchase Tickets

*Mulligans*  
\$10  
or  
3 for \$25



## Red Ticket Special!

- Female: Gimmie Within two club lengths of the hole
- Male: Shot from the red tee

\$10 per Ticket

Good for one hole!







**SAFE**

STRONGER, **SAFER** COMMUNITIES  
*of Transylvania County*

**828-885-7233**

*515 N. Broad Street  
Brevard, NC 28712  
[www.safetransylvania.org](http://www.safetransylvania.org)*

### **Warning Signs of Abuse**

- Extreme jealousy or insecurity
- Constant belittling or put-downs
- Explosive temper and false accusations
- Isolation from family and friends
- Constant mood swings toward someone
- Physically inflicting pain or hurt in any way
- Telling someone what they can and cannot do
- Repeatedly pressuring someone to have sex