



Safe Journeys

Listen. Believe. Connect.

Support for Survivors of Domestic & Sexual Violence

WINTER 2022
The Journey:
Safe Journeys Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

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A note from our Executive Director



It's hard to believe that 2022 is almost over. It has been a year that has been exciting for Safe Journeys. The Illinois legislature increased State funding for domestic violence services by \$50 million. This allowed us to talk about what services are needed in our community and how we can better support staff and clients. With this funding, we were able to provide significant raises for staff in recognition of the difficult work they do day in and day out. We hired crisis advocates to respond to local hospitals so that staff do not need to respond 24 hours a day (unless they want to do so). We are hiring another supportive counselor, a case manager, a system's specialist, and a maintenance person for our shelter. We have also hired a bilingual specialist to lead an expansion of Spanish-language services. We also increased funding for staff training and for shelter client activities.

These expanded services will allow us to better meet the needs of domestic and sexual violence survivors in our area. However, we know that more can be done. We continue to work on strategic planning. If you would be interested in speaking with me about what services you believe are needed in our community, please reach out to me. I would love to talk!

We also know that most survivors do not reach out to agencies for support. Therefore, we are committed to educating everyone in our community about recognizing the signs of domestic and sexual violence, responding in a way that supports survivors and holds offenders accountable, and referring to services. To learn more, visit our website (safejourneysillinois.org) or reach out to Melissa, our Community Engagement Director.

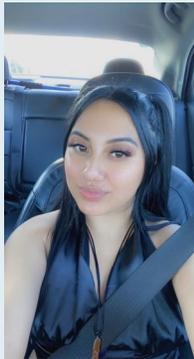
As we enter 2023, I am excited about the opportunities ahead to create a community where everyone is safe.

Susan Bursztynsky

Our Service Area

Did you know Safe Journeys provides support services in both LaSalle and Livingston Counties? We have outreach offices in Streator, Ottawa, Peru and Pontiac.

Additionally, staff are available at IVCC in Oglesby and staff at the Criminal Justice Center in Ottawa.



Nallely O

Did you know?

Safe Journeys has specific programming for Hispanic/Latinx and Spanish-speaking domestic violence survivors. This includes supportive counseling, legal advocacy, and outreach by bilingual (Spanish/English) staff.

For more information, contact Cicela at 815.673.1552 x 3227.

Staff Spotlight: Nallely O.

What is your role within Safe Journeys? How do you interact with survivors?

I've been a shelter advocate at Safe Journeys since March 2021. Much of my interactions with clients happens at the shelter. Whether a survivor is having a rough day and needs someone to talk to, or needs help filling out a job application, I'm there to happily assist. I also answer calls on our support hotline where I provide active listening and emotional support to survivors as well as information about our agency and services. Furthermore, being bi-lingual, I have the pleasure to provide translation services to Spanish speaking survivors in shelter or on the support line. Interacting with survivors helps build trust and rapport while helping them through their healing journey.

Describe a typical workday.

A day at work consists of working closely with clients. As a shelter advocate. I assist survivors with any needs they may have. When I'm not with clients, I'm answering calls on our support line, providing emotional support, signing up survivors for services, sending referrals and working together with other staff, counselors and legal advocates within our agency. Although our roles at Safe Journeys are different, we all work toward the same goal to end domestic and sexual violence.

What support do you have in place in order to journey alongside survivors of trauma?

Empathizing with survivors of trauma is important because it helps us to connect and understand how another person feels. In this working environment, sometimes our own support is needed. Having a good relationship with coworkers and supervisors helps on days when needing to debrief. Practicing self-care helps to remind us to also take time for ourselves.

Service Spotlight: Case Management

Are you a survivor of domestic or sexual violence? Do you need assistance with life changes or community resources? Contact Safe Journeys to utilize our Case Management program free of charge.

We can assist with job searching, resume writing, filling our paperwork, searching for an apartment, coming up with a budget, or applying for community resources.

Let our Safe Journeys Case Managers, Julie and Lauren, help you tackle all life throws your way. Contact Julie at (815) 673-1552, extension 2261 or julied @safejourneysillinois.org to get started.

You don't have to rebuild alone.

Our Core Services include:

- ◆ 24/7 support line
- ◆ Emergency Shelter
- ◆ Legal Advocacy
- ◆ Medical Advocacy
- ◆ Case Management
- ◆ Support Counseling
- ◆ Prevention
- ◆ Bilingual Services

Intern Spotlight: Chanice Owens

What was your role with Safe Journeys?

I was a non-clinical intern that audited many of the training materials available to ensure cultural humility and best practices.

What experience did you bring to your role?

I have never worked with the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault population before, but I have worked with felons that often had related crimes in their history. This allowed me to work with a perspective of how a perpetrator often manipulates the survivor. I have also worked and learned alongside diverse populations, which taught me that just because someone may be of a specific ethnicity does not mean they will share the same culture or beliefs as another of the same ethnicity, we must always refrain from stereotyping individuals.

What experience did you gain through your internship?

I was able to take my lessons on cultural humility and trauma-informed care and see how they function in the real world. Textbooks cannot provide examples of the complex and unique intersectionalities that comprise the clients serviced by Safe Journeys. It was extremely valuable to be able to learn how the different departments are able to work together to provide the services needed by each client.

What would you say to someone who is interested in becoming an intern/volunteer with Safe Journeys?

Do it. It is truly a caring staff and environment. I have never worked in an organization where I felt so supported and encouraged to grow.

Our Many Names

Safe Journeys was established in 1978 and has undergone several name changes including:

- First Step
- Against Domestic Violence
- Alternatives to Domestic Violence
- ADV & SAS (A Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Service)

The name Safe Journeys was established in 2018 to provide a softer, more meaningful name to our organization.

If you or someone you know is looking for an internship or job experience in social work, public health, counseling, social justice, education, and/or advocacy, let us know! We love our interns.



Chanice Owens, Intern



Safe Journeys

510 N Bloomington St.
PO Bx 593
Streator, IL 61364

Support Line: 815-673-1555
Office Phone: 815-672-2353
Email: info@safejourneysillinois.org
Visit us at www.safejourneysillinois.org
Facebook: [@Safe.Journeys.Illinois](https://www.facebook.com/Safe.Journeys.Illinois)
Instagram: [@Safe.Journeys](https://www.instagram.com/Safe.Journeys)

Mission:

We empower survivors of domestic and sexual violence and end such violence in our communities.

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Every Story Matters: An Opportunity to Give

Here at Safe Journeys, we want survivors to know they aren't alone. Even more, we want them to know that their story matters. In 2022, we undertook our first ever, grass roots giving campaign, named "Every Story Matters," along with our first annual "Safe Journeys Color Run" that took place this past summer in Streator at Twister Hill Park. The event hosted over 60 children ages 5-17. It also served as a way to connect our community with our services but most importantly, a way to celebrate our survivors.



Closing out 2022 we continue to find ourselves in need of valuable community donations to help sustain our efforts to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence in both Livingston and LaSalle counties. Should you consider a gift to support our efforts, we thank you in advance. Safe Journeys is a registered 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

COMING UP

January—Stalking Awareness Month & National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

February— Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month & Black History Month

Spring 2023: The Journey E-Newsletter comes out

June 17, 2023 Family Color Run (Rain Date: June 24, 2023) at Twister Hill Park, Streator