



Safe Journeys

Listen. Believe. Connect.

Support for Survivors of Domestic & Sexual Violence



SPRING 2023
The Journey:
Safe Journeys Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

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A note from our Advocacy Director

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence often reach out to Safe Journeys at a time they feel lost and need help. Safe Journeys' advocates can help them to navigate many different systems. In addition, advocates work to empower survivors to take the steps that the survivor feels are important for the safety of them and their family.



Medical advocates assist survivors in navigating the medical system, which is discussed more in the service spotlight. Our civil court advocates help survivors navigate the civil court system, which can be complex for someone who is not used to it. This includes assisting survivors seeking Orders of Protection and Civil No Contact Orders. They are able to discuss these protective orders, assist with filing a petition for such an order, and provide emotional support during the court process. They also provide referral information for local attorneys. Civil court advocates also provide emotional support in related family law cases and can assist with the name change process. Likewise, Safe Journeys' criminal court advocates help victims navigate the criminal justice system. They provide emotional support to survivors meeting with law enforcement and with prosecutors. They provide information on the criminal court process, crime victims' rights, crime victims' compensation, address confidentiality, and automated victim notification. They can also assist survivors with applying for crime victims' compensation, address confidentiality, and victim notification.

Our case managers assist clients with locating and receiving the services and resources they need to live lives free of violence. Many times this includes finding housing or employment and providing information on budgeting. The client determines what is most important for them and the case manager provides information and support to address the identified need(s). One of the newest roles we have is our child welfare advocate who provides support to domestic violence survivors who are also involved in the child welfare system. They provide domestic violence education and support while clients are engaged with child welfare agencies. Safe Journeys also provides advocacy services to Hispanic and Spanish-speaking survivors through the Bilingual Services Program.

Safe Journeys' advocates provide support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence as they navigate many systems. The goal through this work is for survivors to feel that they are heard and believed, regardless of the system with which they are engaging.

New service alert!

PAIP Services

What does PAIP stand for?

Partner Abuse Intervention Program

More information coming in the next newsletter or check out safejourneysillinois.org for updates.

SafeR Journeys Podcast

Presented by Safe Journeys of Illinois

If you spend time with young people, this is for you!

New episode every other Monday

Listen on Apple Podcasts

Staff Spotlight: Lauren M., Livingston County Legal Advocate

What is your role within Safe Journeys? How do you interact with survivors?
My role at Safe Journeys is the Livingston County legal advocate. In this position, I am able to assist both survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Interactions with clients occur primarily at the Livingston County Law and Justice Center. Meetings and follow up appointments are also held at the Pontiac office and over the phone. When interacting with survivors, matters regarding civil and criminal issues are discussed. While assisting survivors, interactions are also often held with judges, law enforcement, and/or the Livingston County States Attorney. In this position, it is important to build a bridge with the survivors, judges, law enforcement, and the prosecution team.

Describe a typical workday.

Similar to all roles within this agency, there is absolutely no typical day. The most requested civil legal advocacy service is an order of protection. This service looks like assisting the survivors file petitions for orders of protection, explaining different protections and remedies associated with the different orders, preparing for court and setting expectations, and attending order of protection hearings with the survivor. When a survivor is requesting assistance with an emergency order of protection, I am notified by the Livingston County Circuit Clerk, or the Livingston County States Attorney Office that assistance is immediately required. Then, plenary hearings are scheduled. Other aspects that include civil legal advocacy are divorce and child custody hearings. Criminal legal advocacy involves attending criminal hearings and sharing information with the survivor so they can remain informed. As a trial approaches, meetings with the survivor and the Livingston County States Attorney are scheduled so victim witness preparation can occur to best prepare the survivor to testify.

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

While in this position, support is provided from my immediate supervisor and other members of management. Their support looks like providing quick education on related topics, clear understanding of the legal process related to the advocate role, and validation of thoughts and feelings. Additional support is obtained from the Livingston County States Attorney office, the Circuit Clerk's Office, bailiffs, law enforcement, and other social service agencies. Their support looks like sharing like-minded ideas that are victim centered, increasing safety, and closing gaps related to domestic and sexual violence between our agencies.



Lauren M.

Service Spotlight: Medical Advocacy

Imagine how a person feels when they are alone in an emergency department after experiencing domestic or sexual violence. Thinking that no one will believe them. Not knowing what their rights are. Hurting emotionally and physically. Safe Journeys' medical advocates are available to provide emotional support and answer 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The four local emergency departments in our two-county service area call Safe Journeys when they have a person in the emergency department who needs services due to domestic or sexual violence. Our on-call staff and volunteers respond to the emergency department within 60 minutes.

With the survivor's permission and as appropriate, the medical advocate discusses the impact of trauma, crime victims' rights, the medical process, protective orders, and the criminal process. The medical advocate works closely with the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) at the hospital providing information about the forensic examination and providing support during the examination, which can be invasive. Perhaps most importantly, the medical advocate is there to figuratively (and, sometimes, literally) hold the survivor's hand throughout the medical process. The medical advocate also discusses Safe Journeys' services and is able to approve shelter and make referrals for other services when appropriate.

Safe Journeys recognizes that a person may not remember everything that happens right after a trauma. We also recognize that a person may think of questions later. Therefore, if the survivor agrees, Safe Journeys' staff follows up within 48 hours to answer any other questions and again ask about if there are other services requested.

Thanks to Safe Journeys' medical advocates, survivors who desire medical advocacy are not alone at the emergency department. They are told that the assault is not their fault and that they are believed.

Volunteer Spotlight: Gavin Finefield

What is your role with Safe Journeys?

Board of Directors, President

What experience do you bring to your role?

As both an Ordained Presbyterian USA minister and businessman in the community I bring both empathy, organizational and communications skills to the board.

What have you gained through your time serving with Safe Journeys?

Joining the Board in 2017 I was overwhelmed by the amount of work and detail that had to happen to ensure the success and care of our organization. I have gained greater insight in the dedication of the staff, the hours spent working to ensure not only financial support for the organization but more importantly the very purpose of the organization the safety, protection and privacy of our clients. There is so much silent care that happens beyond the general public's notice and for this I am thankful, but I am also aware that as a Board Member I have a duty to teach and share what Safe Journeys does in our communities.

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

Volunteering with Safe Journeys is a rewarding experience. It offers the chance to see and witness how much silent need there is in this world. Silent need, a phrase that I think each volunteer needs to embody, because it is here that empathy, compassion, and confidentiality is needed when working with individuals and families that seek our help. Volunteering is on multiple levels but devotion to help is necessary when it comes to direct interactions with clients. If that is too much, consider talking with our staff and find out how you can be involved in fundraising or seeking supplies for the shelter. There are always ways to help those in need, just come forward and ask how you can help.



Gavin Finefield,
Board of Directors

- Services:**
- ◆ 24/7 Support Line
 - ◆ Shelter
 - ◆ Medical Advocacy
 - ◆ Legal Advocacy
 - ◆ Child Welfare Advocacy
 - ◆ Bilingual/Bicultural Services
 - ◆ Counseling
 - ◆ Prevention



Safe Journeys

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Instagram: [@SafeJourneys](https://www.instagram.com/SafeJourneys)

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



Time to show your true colors! The 2nd Annual Safe Journeys Color Run is Saturday, June 17 at Twister Hill Park in Streator, IL. The walk/run is along the Hopalong Cassidy Trail. The run takes you on a 1.5 mile loop and returns to the park. The event is open to individuals and families. Every 10 minutes starting at 8:30am, a new group will set off on the color run. The final heat will leave the starting line at 9:20am. Use the QR code or visit News>Family Color Run at SafeJourneysIllinois.org to register.



COMING UP

March—Women's History Month

April — Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 29 — March to Believe at Washington Square Park, Ottawa at 12PM

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