



P.O. Box 272, Hopkins, MN 55343
952-933-7433
24-Hour Crisis Line: 952-933-7422
www.sojournerproject.org

Return Service Requested



Stay Connected



Follow us on **Instagram** (@sojournermn) and **Facebook** (@sojournerproject1) for regular updates. Help is available 24/7 via our **Crisis Line** at 952-933-7422.



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 Outreach and Education Coordinator at 952-351-4062.

Women's Gift Ideas

Fuzzy Socks/Slippers
Pajamas
Scarf/Mitten/Hat Sets
Journals
Lotion/Body Wash Sets
Fleece Blankets (twin/full)
Gift Cards (\$25-50) for:
- Target - Gas Stations
- Cub Foods

Children's Gift Ideas

Infant/Toddler Toys
Art/Craft/Science Kits
Lego Sets
Toy Household Appliances/Toy Tools
Family Board Games
Small Footballs, Soccer Balls and Basketballs
Basketballs
Full-size Footballs, Soccer Balls & Basketball
Nail Kits & Body Spray
Wallets & Purses
Pajamas & Slippers
Stylish Hoodies & Sweatpants

Teen Gift Ideas

Fleece Blankets (twin)
Multicultural Books
Pajamas, Sweatpants/Hoodies
Basketballs
Bluetooth Speakers & Headphones
Basketballs
Full-size Footballs, Soccer Balls & Basketball
Nail Kits & Body Spray
Wallets & Purses
Pajamas & Slippers
Stylish Hoodies & Sweatpants

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Fall/Winter 2023

The Sojourner Truth

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF SOJOURNER

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Sojourner's 2023 Board of Directors

- Mary Carter
- Sarah B. Dannecker
- Andy Gardner
- Jo Hoo
- Vicki McGinty
- Mike Murphy
- Laura Sisterman
- Jeff Smith
- Shelley Strohmaier
- Shelley Weier



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

A Brighter Future: Angie's Story of Resilience and Change

After experiencing escalating abuse from her husband, Angie arrived at Sojourner Shelter with her two teenage children. Angie feared the incidents would get worse and was looking for a place where her family could be safe and get support. She reported feeling overwhelmed with everything on her plate and was struggling to stay motivated and push forward. Shelter advocates worked with Angie and her children to develop a safety plan and decide on their next steps.



Angie had previously been working with a lawyer and was planning to file for divorce but could no longer afford the high attorney fees. Legal advocates helped her file an Order for Protection and connected her to a pro bono attorney so she could pursue a divorce. The family stayed in the shelter as the court proceedings dragged on. Angie attended domestic violence support group and met with a therapist to help her find clarity and stay focused on her goals.

Advocates also connected with Angie's children to create their own individual safety plans and provide emotional support. The kids still attended their home school, and they thrived while in shelter, attending school sports programs and dances. The children were old enough for the courts to take their wishes into consideration regarding parenting time with their dad and this allowed them to feel autonomy and safety. Angie was able to get a better job while she was in shelter and that allowed for more financial independence. Eventually, her husband moved out of the house and Angie and the children were able to return home.

At Sojourner, we have the privilege of being a part of transformative stories like Angie's. Your support allows us to be a lifeline during difficult times for many people who live in our communities. In every dollar donated, in every hour volunteered, and in every word of encouragement shared, you are making a tangible difference. Thank you!

“ I believe the time in the safety and kindness of Sojourner literally saved my life, plus it gave my children the strength and understanding to overcome the challenges facing them and be successful.”
Angie

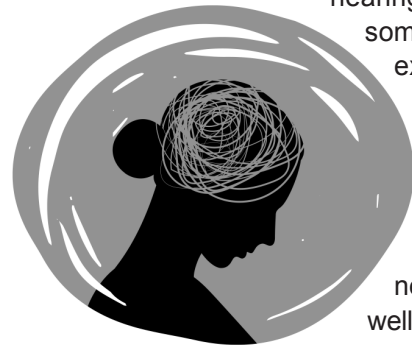
Holiday Boutique



This Holiday season, our boardroom will once more undergo a magical transformation, creating a welcoming space for parents to personally select gifts for their children. Adult clients will receive gift cards and self-care items in acknowledgment that they matter too! While the season can be very joyful, it can also bring additional financial and family stressors for those we serve. The Boutique embodies the spirit of giving and community support by reminding clients they are cared for during the coldest part of the year. It's worth noting that our generous donors play a crucial role in making this possible, as 100% of the boutique gift cards and items are donated. The support for this event never ceases to amaze us! Below are some suggested gifts. Please visit our website at www.sojournerproject.org for a more detailed list and links to our Amazon and Target wishlists. Gifts will be accepted November 27th-December 8th, through appointment only. If you have questions or to set up an appointment, contact [Melanie](mailto:Melanie@sojournerproject.org) at 952-351-4066 or Melanie@sojournerproject.org. Thank you!

Vicarious Trauma: Maintaining Staff Wellness

We often remark our greatest asset is the dedicated, compassionate and resourceful staff at Sojourner. Advocates play a pivotal role in the lives of survivors and provide truly life-saving support. This work can be deeply rewarding. It can also be very difficult. Anyone who works with survivors of violence and abuse can face vicarious trauma. Also known as secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma is a response that occurs when repeatedly hearing about or witnessing someone else's traumatic experiences.



Advocates often bear the emotional weight of empathizing with the painful stories recounted by survivors, which can negatively affect their own well-being. Symptoms include anxiety, depression, numbness, intrusive thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks related to the stories they've heard, difficulty maintaining emotional boundaries and physical symptoms, including sleep disturbances, headaches, and other stress-related ailments. Over time, advocates may experience shifts in their beliefs and worldview, which can lead to feelings of cynicism, distrust and helplessness. Noticing the signs of vicarious trauma is crucial, as it can eventually lead to compassion fatigue and burnout if not addressed. Sojourner recognizes this potentially profound impact and prioritizes efforts to mitigate and respond to vicarious trauma.

Some of our organizational strategies include:

- Upholding an organizational culture of respect, teamwork and shared humanity

- Trainings on trauma-informed care, professional boundaries, mental health and advocacy, mindfulness and self-care practices for staff, interns and volunteers
- Staff retreats and outings
- Additional "self-care" days off, along with normal PTO
- Strategic planning to explore additional ways to prioritize staff wellness

The challenge of vicarious trauma is amplified when operating in a world grappling with issues like the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, and heightened societal stressors. We know that self and community care are essential to prevent and heal from vicarious trauma. Below are a few strategies that support the health and well-being of us all:

Self-care strategies:

- Moving your body
- Mindfulness practices
- Being in nature
- Artistic expression
- Setting healthy boundaries
- Sleeping & eating well
- Maintaining a clean and organized space

Community-care strategies:

- Living wages, affordable housing, childcare & transportation
- Accessible mental and physical healthcare
- Safe communities free from violence, racism & prejudice
- Skill-sharing and mutual aid programs
- Availability of nutritious foods & green spaces

By embracing a proactive attitude toward vicarious trauma, we aim to ensure staff remain resilient, healthy, and able to continue providing unwavering support to survivors of abuse.

Behind the Scenes: Staff and Board in the Strategic Planning Process

Over the past few months, Sojourner has embarked on the creation of a new strategic plan with the guidance of MonkeyBar Management. Regular strategic planning is an important effort that supports the well-being and sustainability of any organization. Our process began with a survey of staff and board, to understand our current internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities. Then, board directors and leadership staff participated in a full-day workshop to discuss themes and what needs to be prioritized.

This strategic plan will maintain the foundation of our success and services, while exploring new areas for growth and impact. We recognize the importance of adapting to the evolving needs of domestic violence survivors and the ever-changing landscape of social services. The heart of our strategic planning process lies in our dedication to improving the lives of survivors and maintaining the strong community support we currently enjoy. We are confident in our clear and resonant mission and are excited to see where this journey will take us. Stay tuned for more details!

Highlights of 2023 thus far...



Young Tabling Volunteer at James J. Hill Days



Our Newest Board Member, Sarah B. Dannecker



U.S. Bank Volunteer Group Fresh Coat of Paint for the Shelter!

Staff Mini-Golf Outing



You're invited to Pint Night on October 29th!



Join Sojourner Project staff at **Fat Pants Brewing Co.** on Sunday, October 29th from 12-5pm to mark **Domestic Violence Awareness Month**. \$1 for each pint sold will be donated, helping us provide free and confidential services.

Fat Pants Brewing Co. is a local, family-owned brewery, recently named a

Star Tribune gold place winner for best brewery and best beer. They have both indoor and outdoor seating, serve food, wine and craft cocktails and are family and dog friendly (pets on the patio). This event is a great way to support Sojourner, while enjoying the crisp Fall weather and spending time with friends or family.

We hope to see you there!