Sojourner
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY FROM FEAR TO HOPE

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24-Hour Crisis Line: 952-933-7422
www.sojournerproject.org

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Stay Connected

Follow us on **Instagram** (@sojournermn), **Facebook** (@sojournerproject1), and **LinkedIn** (@sojourner) 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 Manager at 952-351-4062.

Holiday Boutique Spread the Cheer!

For many families, the holidays are a time of joy and celebration. But for families going through difficult times, the season can bring added stress and uncertainty. That's where our community can help make the season a little brighter.

Each year, your generosity makes **Sojourner's Holiday Boutique** possible, giving families the opportunity to choose what they need and share in the joy of the season.

Your gift can make a real difference. A donated toy can bring a child a little extra excitement. A gift card gives a caregiver the freedom to choose what their family needs most. And a financial gift helps make sure every family has something special to celebrate.

How you can get involved:

- **Shop from our Amazon or Target wish lists** to make giving simple and direct.
- **Make giving a family tradition** by involving your children or grandchildren in choosing gifts for families.
- **Organize a collection drive** with your workplace, faith community or neighborhood group to gather gifts, gift cards or financial contributions.
- **Volunteer as a small group** to help with Holiday Boutique setup and operations.
- **Visit our website at www.sojournerproject.org** for this year's most-needed items and links to our registries.

Gifts will be accepted November 30–December 11, by appointment only. Please contact **Abigail@ sojournerproject.org** or call **952-351-4066**.

Thank you for helping make the holidays brighter for families at Sojourner.

Survivor Gift Ideas

Gift Cards: Target, Gas, Grocery
Textured Haircare Products: leave-in conditioner, hair oil, hair gel
Slippers, Wool socks
Self-care items
Pajamas (all sizes)
Fleece blankets (full)
Cleaning supplies: Soap, spray, sponges
Nails Kits/Face Masks/Hair Clips
Cozy blankets

Children's Gift Ideas

Infant/Toddler Toys
Lego Sets
Trendy Toys (Disney, Anime, Minecraft, Superheroes, etc.)
Art/Craft/Science Kits
Pajamas, Sweatpants, Hoodies
Multicultural Books

Teen Gift Ideas

Teen Gift Cards (Fast Food/Target)
Trendy clothes, electronics
Phone Accessories
Stylish Hoodies & Sweatpants
Bluetooth Speakers & Headphones
Gaming electronics
Cozy blankets
Nails Kits/Face Masks/Hair Clips

Fall 2026

The Sojourner Truth

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF SOJOURNER

Inside This Issue:

1 :: Support at Every Step Toward Safety
2 :: What Happens in the First Few Hours?
2 :: Helping Survivors Find a Path Forward
3 :: Sometimes Belonging Is in the Details
3 :: Sojourner's Youth Advisory Board: Year Two!
4 :: Holiday Boutique Spread the Cheer!

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Sojourner
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY FROM FEAR TO HOPE

- Advocates for victim safety;

- Supports the transition from victim to survivor;

- Educates for the prevention and elimination of domestic violence.

Support at Every Step Toward Safety

She had an Order for Protection in place. But she still didn't feel safe.

For one Sojourner client, something as routine as exchanging her young son with his father had become a source of fear and uncertainty.

Her Order for Protection prohibited her former partner from contacting her, with limited exceptions: they could communicate through a court-approved app about their son and have incidental contact during child exchanges at a police department.

But even these limited interactions became opportunities for intimidation and harassment.

During exchanges, he approached her when he was supposed to remain near his vehicle and made derogatory remarks. On another occasion, he bumped his vehicle into hers.

She knew she deserved to feel safe. And she knew she didn't have to navigate this alone.

She reached out to Sojourner.

Her advocate listened, helped her understand her options and worked alongside her to create a plan for safer exchanges. Together, they identified practical steps, including having an observer present when possible, parking near a security camera, calling 911 if the OFP was violated and documenting each incident.

That documentation helped establish a pattern.

The father was eventually criminally charged in three separate cases for violating the OFP. The behavior during child exchanges stopped.

But the harassment continued through the court-approved co-parenting app. He sent inappropriate and derogatory messages, which were documented and reported, leading to additional criminal charges.

He ultimately pleaded guilty to two charges, was placed on probation and ordered to complete a domestic violence program.

Today, the violations have stopped, and she feels safe going to child exchanges. Her advocate also supported her in extending the OFP for another two years. Sojourner continues to check in periodically, and she knows she can reach out if anything changes.

Safety doesn't always happen in one big moment. Sometimes, it comes through many small steps—with someone beside you along the way.

An Order for Protection can be an important tool, but it may not stop an abusive person from finding other ways to intimidate, harass or maintain control.

That's where Sojourner's advocacy matters.

Our advocates listen, help survivors understand their options and work alongside them to identify steps toward greater safety.

Every survivor's path is different. **At Sojourner, no one has to navigate that path alone.**

What Happens in the First Few Hours?

Imagine arriving somewhere new with your children, exhausted and unsure of what comes next.

Maybe you left quickly with only what you could fit into a backpack. You're worried about safety, money, housing and school. You don't know what tomorrow will look like.

That journey often begins with a call to Sojourner's crisis line. **An advocate listens, helps her think through immediate safety concerns and works with her to plan how to leave as safely as possible.**

So, what happens when a family walks through our doors?

The first question isn't, ***"What happened?"***

It's: **"What do you need right now?"**

First, we take care of the basics.

There is paperwork to complete, but there's also an opportunity to understand what will help the family feel safe and supported.

Then, we show them their space.

Staff prepare each room with fresh linens and everyday essentials. Families receive welcome bags, and children receive books and toys. An advocate shows them around and makes sure they know where to find snacks, where kids can play and where to go if they need anything.

Maybe the kids are hungry. Maybe someone needs a diaper, medication or pajamas. Or maybe what they need most is a safe place to exhale.

Then, we listen.



A resident may have questions about her children, need medical care or want to understand her legal options. She may simply say, *"I don't know what I need right now."*

That's okay, too.

Together, she and her advocate talk through safety concerns and create a plan shaped around her priorities. **She is the expert in her own life; her advocate brings support, information, resources and options.**

In the days that follow, advocates help connect families with housing leads, schools, appointments, and other resources.

But **she decides what comes next.**

Sometimes progress looks like signing a lease or enrolling a child in a new school. Sometimes, it's simply beginning to believe, "Things can be different."

With safety and support, shelter becomes more than a place to stay. It becomes a starting point for what comes next.

Helping Survivors Find a Path Forward

When a survivor connects with Sojourner's Community Legal Advocacy program, they may be facing difficult decisions and a lot of uncertainty: **What are my rights? What are my options? How can I plan for safety?**

There is no single path that works for everyone. Community Legal Advocates provide information, support and resources to help survivors understand what's possible and make decisions that feel right for them.

Safety planning may look different for each person. It might mean preparing for an emergency, exploring legal options, considering technology and privacy, or planning for children. Sometimes, having a plan can make the next step feel a little more possible.

These numbers tell only part of the story. They don't capture the courage it can take to ask for help, navigate uncertainty or take those first steps.

Advocacy means having someone beside you as you navigate what comes next.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

COMMUNITY LEGAL ADVOCACY

663
Hennepin County Survivors in 2025 Who Completed the Survey

87%
Increased Knowledge & Safety

86%
Created Personalized Safety Plans

87%
Put Their Plans Into Action

Sometimes Belonging is in the Details

When someone reaches out for support during a difficult moment, what helps them feel safe enough to take a deep breath? Often, it's the small things: a welcoming voice, clear information, artwork that reflects their family, a welcome sign in their language or having a choice in everyday essentials.

At Sojourner, we're taking a closer look at these details and asking where small, intentional changes can make someone's experience more welcoming and supportive.

"This work is about looking at everything we do through someone else's eyes, from our physical spaces to our daily routines and practices," says Courtney, Community Outreach and Education Manager. *"When we listen closely to our clients and staff, we start noticing where a small shift can make a world of difference in how safe and supported someone feels."*

That can look like **offering a choice of personal care products and essentials, adding books, art and signage that reflect the diverse communities we serve, and connecting clients with resources that honor their language and identity.** It also means regularly asking, *Is this clear? Does this feel supportive? Is there a better way?* —and listening to clients and staff about what's working and what could improve.

When someone is navigating uncertainty, these details are never small. Every interaction is an opportunity to make someone feel seen and understood.

We'll keep listening, asking questions and making changes that create a more welcoming experience every step of the way.



Sojourner's Youth Advisory Board: Year Two!

There's no better way to understand what young people in our community need than to hear from them directly. That's why Sojourner's outreach team brought together local high school students for a second year of our Youth Advisory Board (YAB).

The YAB meets monthly throughout the school year, both in person and virtually. Students share their perspectives on Sojourner's programs and educational content, help plan events and activities, and learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships along the way. Their ideas help shape our outreach, education and digital content.

During the 2025–26 school year, YAB members hosted a donation drive, helped assess educational content and created a social media campaign for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. Working in small groups, students created Instagram posts that brought a fresh, personal perspective to conversations about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

The YAB is also a place for students to build skills through activities focused on boundaries and consent, bystander intervention, communication and more.

Samra, a senior at Minnetonka High School and returning YAB member, shared that she *"genuinely enjoyed being a part of"* the YAB. She especially valued the opportunity to *"contribute ideas, work with other members, and help make our events and projects successful."*

This year, we're building on that momentum by adding an executive leadership team. Student leaders will help shape the board, lead school activities and awareness efforts, and support Sojourner's annual Holiday Boutique.

We're excited to see what this year's students bring to the table—and to keep creating space for young people to make their voices heard.



Interested in getting involved? Reach out to us at **info@sojournerproject.org** to learn how you can make a difference.

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