

# Fall & Winter 2021

## HELPING SERVICES for Youth & Families



### News from the Domestic Abuse Resource Center

There have been some exciting new additions in the Domestic Abuse Resource Center! We were recently awarded a new federal grant, through the Office on Violence Against Women, that has allowed us to expand our staff, programming, and the services that we offer to survivors of violence. With this new funding we have been fortunate enough to add two additional full time staff which has allowed us to expand our response to high school and college students experiencing dating violence and stalking survivors in our seven county service area.

Why do we provide services for victims at the Domestic Abuse Resource Center? A possible scenario might look like this: *You are sixteen years old and finally in a relationship with the person that you have been crushing on for months! In the beginning things are going even better than you could have imagined; you are spending almost every weekend together, staying up late texting and talking on the phone, and your friends all keep telling you how perfect of a couple you make! Slowly, you notice a shift in your relationship. What was once a mutual agreement to spend most weekends together has become a requirement that you spend every night after school and all weekend with them. They are telling you that your friends are losers, and your family is lame, and making you feel guilty for wanting to split your time between all the people you care about. The late night phone calls and texts have evolved into your phone constantly ringing or pinging with messages, which turn into angry and aggressive messages when you aren't able to pick up or respond. You have to stop going to sports practice after school because you aren't allowed to have your phone on you, and by the time practice is over your partner is so mad that you weren't answering them that they are showing up back at the school to confront you. In front of all your teammates you are being called terrible names and pushed up against the side of your car. Your friends see all of this, and are concerned about you, but they aren't sure how to help? No one knows what to do or what say to help, so they all pretend not to notice. Even though you are surrounded by people, you have never felt so alone.*

Most of us know what domestic violence is, and what it may entail, but very few people consider what it might look like in a teen relationship. Unfortunately, the story depicted above is a very real glimpse into the life of a teen survivor. For many of the teens we work with, this may be their first relationship, or they may have grown up experiencing violence in their home, so it is difficult for them to identify the red flags in their relationship. This is why we believe that it is so important to work with teen survivors by helping them identify red flags and learn how to set positive boundaries, so that they can go on to have happy and healthy relationships into adulthood.



Photo Credits: Kristi Vreeman

Approximately 1 in 4 teens will experience some form of dating violence before they graduate high school, and one of the most common questions we get asked is, "How do I help a friend who I am worried about?" With such high numbers of teens experiencing dating violence, it is very likely that either the student will experience it themselves or have a friend who they are concerned about. To help combat this issue, we like to go into the schools and offer programming to middle and high school students. Not only do we cover important information, but this ensures the students a safe space to ask questions about topics that aren't always comfortable to bring up. The school districts that we offer programming in continue to expand, and we hope that this is our best year yet!



Roman and Gwenolyn  
share a smile together.



Being a first time mom 7 years ago was hard enough not knowing what to do. Having multiple people telling you different ways to raise a child. Parents As Teachers shined a light on ways to raise children. Some things you know, but a lot of things you don't know.

Having children doesn't come with an instruction manual, but Parents as Teachers is the next best thing. Any concerns or questions they are there, with no judgement. They help set goals, and they are there with you every step of the way.

Parents As Teachers are God's gift to parents. Special thanks to Lori who has been here with both of my kids.

-Brittany

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Another possible scenario may look like this: You do not know where to go or what to do, and you don't know how much more you can take. Your partner is constantly belittling you and calling you names. They tell you how lazy you are and insult you for the amount of money you make. They come home at night and take out all of their anger from the day onto you, by screaming at you, pushing you, and slapping you. When you try to leave they tell you that if you do you will never see your kids again. Your kids are your everything, so how could you leave them?

This sounds like a pretty typical day in the life of a domestic violence survivor, but who was the victim and who was the abuser in your mind when you read the story? Was the male the victim or the abuser? Male victims of domestic violence often suffer in silence. Society and the media almost always portray the male as the abuser, and that is not always the case. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1 in 9 men will be the victim of domestic violence at some point in their lifetime. This number is likely low, as males are less likely to disclose their abuse or seek services because of the stigma around male victims. Males may also not realize that the services and supports offered to victims of domestic violence are available to them as well. At the Domestic Abuse Resource Center we want male survivors to feel as welcome and supported as every other survivor that we serve. We want all of the information that we provide and the materials that we share to be as inclusive as possible, so that all survivors know that they will be heard, believed, and supported when working with one of our advocates. ■

If you have any questions about our services you can reach us 24/7 at 800-383-2988, or on our chat at: [www.helpingservices.org/chat](http://www.helpingservices.org/chat). Services are provided in Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek counties.

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Photo Credit: Kristi Vreeman



## Get Involved!

**Our Family Education and Support** program receives referrals from OB units, doctors serving young children, preschools, daycares and we also take self-referrals. Do you want to know if your child is on track developmentally or have questions as to why they are not sleeping through the night yet? Many people just want to be sure they are giving their child every opportunity to be ahead of the game when the child starts pre-school. You can call the Helping Services Office at 563-387-1720 and ask for the Family Education Program. This free program serves families with children prenatal/birth to age three in Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee and Clayton counties. The program follows the Parents as Teachers® approach, a home visiting model based on the premise that all children will learn, grow, and develop to realize their full potential. We look forward to working with you and your family. ■

## Director's Message



There is a lot going on in the world, and it can take a lot to process the many challenges we all face. Our team's role at Helping Services is to be by your side when life presents its challenges. Challenges can be exciting new life changes such as raising a new baby. Challenges as a youth growing up in the world can be fueled by peer pressure when it comes to making healthy choices regarding tobacco or alcohol. And every day challenges can be heightened by living in an unhealthy relationship. Our Family Educators, Certified Prevention Specialists, Youth Mentoring Coordinators, and Domestic Abuse Advocates are there for you when you need someone by your side.

Our team at Helping Services does its best to be there for you—our neighbors, family, and friends living throughout northeast Iowa. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your trusted team.

*Carson Eggel*

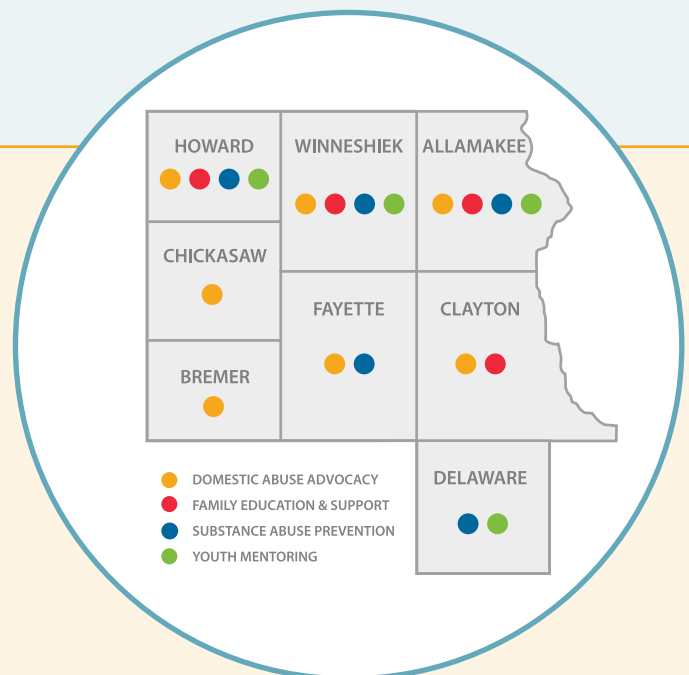
Executive Director

### Helping Services Board of Directors

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*Board Members at Helping Services can serve up to three consecutive two year terms.*

*A special thank you to Jim Bower and Donna Kubesh for their dedication to the Board of Directors, as each of their terms recently ended. Each served as a volunteer board member since 2015.*



- **IRA Charitable Rollover** If you are 70 1/2 years old or older, you can make tax-free IRA contributions directly to Helping Services for Youth & Families & receive tax benefits.
- **Beneficiary Designation** This provides support using an IRA, life insurance policy, annuity, and retirement plan. This allows you to support causes' important to you after your lifetime.
- **Wills and Living Trusts** Designate a percentage or dollar amount through your will or revocable trust.

## Legacy Giving

As you think of ways to support Helping Services for Youth & Families consider making a gift through your will and/or trust. You are able to make gifts to support programs throughout northeast Iowa during your lifetime and beyond. Three common ways to make donations are: ➤

If you would like more details on options visit [HelpingServices.org/Donate](http://HelpingServices.org/Donate) or please contact **Ben Krouse-Gagne, Director of Community Engagement** at 563-387-1720 or [benkg@helpingservices.org](mailto:benkg@helpingservices.org).

*Each donation to Helping Services allows services throughout Northeast Iowa to thrive and assist more clients in your community.*





## Substance Use Prevention Program

(Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette, Howard, Winneshiek Counties)

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 99 Youth served in Youth Mentoring
- 546 Youth participants at substance use prevention presentations
- 44 Youth participants served in Curriculum Based Support Groups
- 180 Adult participants at IT substance use prevention presentations
- 485 Adult participants at substance use prevention presentations
- 107 Adult participants at problem gambling prevention presentations
- 17 Adult participants at IT problem gambling prevention presentations
- 75 Servers who attended TIPS training for alcohol retailers
- 13 Parks & Trails became nicotine free
- 29 Businesses that adopted nicotine free workplace policies
- 500 Parent Education Materials Distributed
- 50 Quit kits distributed
- 650 Community Events - people reached with coalition info/education
- 17 Adult participants at IT problem gambling prevention presentations
- 75 Servers who attended TIPS training for alcohol retailers

### VOLUNTEERS

- 503 High school students who participated in youth leadership groups
- 177 Community members who participated in community coalitions

## Domestic Abuse Resource Center

(Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, Winneshiek Counties)

- 201 New Victims Served
- 1,367 Total Resource Line Calls and Chats
- 61 Transportation Trips

## Family Education & Support

(Allamakee, Clayton, Howard, Winneshiek Counties)

- 46 Families Served
- 71 Children Served
- 103 Visits: In Home
- 88 Visits: Videos
- 313 Visits: Phone Calls
- 12 Playgroups
- 3 Informational Developmental Videos

*Through the pandemic both staff and coalitions rose above the many roadblocks and new challenges to continue reaching out to families, individuals and communities throughout northeast Iowa. Our staff and volunteers focused on providing education and resources and mainly keeping in touch to maintain relationships. We are proud of our team for stepping up and completing so much over the past year.*



*The team enjoyed a day together this summer exploring the trails of Pikes Peak State Park.*



Youth Mentoring enjoyed some go-kart rides earlier this summer as a group.



A donor's generous gift continues to allow for some unique opportunities for Mentoring, including a trip to a Minnesota Twins baseball game.

## Mentoring Brings Meaning and is Rewarding

Hello, my name is Jeff. I live in Decorah Iowa with my wife. I have 5 adult children, and now that they are starting their own lives, I have more time to do something extra outside of work.

I initially thought about starting a new hobby, or picking up an old one. I felt like I needed something to bring more meaning and enjoyment to my life.

I heard the mentoring advertisements on the radio, and also saw their ads in the local newspaper. It planted a seed. I had previous experience working with kids through our church. It was something that I really enjoyed, and I thought that this might be as fun and rewarding also. Through this process, I have been able to pick my own new friend and share my time and experiences with someone who really needs a beneficial experience. We enjoy doing things like kayaking, learning to golf, eating ice cream together, and joining the planned monthly mentoring events when we can.

The whole process has been more challenging than expected, yet I very much look forward to times spent with my mentee. I have been mentoring with my mentee for one year and seven months. Our friendship continues to grow in a positive direction. I would recommend to anyone to give mentoring a try. ■

## Interested in becoming a mentor?

Call us at **563-387-1720**  
to set-up a time to meet with  
one of our Mentoring  
Coordinators, or fill out an  
application on:  
[www.helpingservices.org](http://www.helpingservices.org)

*Thank You!*



"I enjoy going  
to places I never  
knew existed with  
someone I feel  
safe with."

—Winneshiek County mentee



Matches in Delaware County created some fun fishing memories over the summer.

**Thank You** to the Iowa Department of Public Health  
for its support of this project through the  
"Improving Tomorrow: Prevention Focused Mentoring"  
grant awarded to Helping Services.





## HELPING SERVICES for Youth & Families

PO Box 372 • Decorah, IA 52101

Update your contact info at [info@helpingservices.org](mailto:info@helpingservices.org)

### ***Holiday Lights Celebrates its 17th Season***

*Holiday Lights welcomes you to the 17th season starting on Wednesday, November 24, from 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm for the opening Walk-Thru Night! We are thrilled to welcome you to walk through the park for this special one night only event. Visit **Pulpit Rock Campground** to see the larger than life displays up close, enjoy some soups, cookies, hot cocoa, and have your photo taken with Santa. **Please visit [HelpingServices.org/HolidayLights](http://HelpingServices.org/HolidayLights) for the most up-to-date information.** Safety of guests and volunteers continues to be the highest priority and we are working with Winneshiek County Public Health and the City of Decorah to put needed safety measures in place.*

We are excited to welcome families back for the Walk-Thru Night to kick off the holiday season in northeast Iowa. *"These past 18 months have been filled with tough choices and we are grateful Holiday Lights has been here to bring families joy"* said Ben Krouse-Gagne, Director of Community Engagement.

Following the opening night Walk-Thru Night, Holiday Lights will be open nightly 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm for drive-thru visitors Thanksgiving through Christmas Day. Each night dedicated volunteers will greet your vehicle, provide directions, and accept free-will donations to support Helping Services' programs. Thank you to each volunteer that helps make Holiday Lights successful each year.

*For those unable to attend, you can support Holiday Lights online at [HelpingServices.org/HolidayLights](http://HelpingServices.org/HolidayLights). Questions about Holiday Lights can be directed to Ben Krouse-Gagne, Director of Community Engagement, at 563-387-1720 or [benkg@helpingservices.org](mailto:benkg@helpingservices.org).*

*Photo Credit: Nick Chill Photography*

# **HOLIDAY** *Lights*

Open nightly 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
for drive-through visitors  
Thanksgiving through  
Christmas Day

