

DAiSDIGEST

Planting Seeds of Stability



Dear Friend of DAIS,

This spring signifies more than the reappearance of greenery in our gardens and leaves on trees; it represents another year of our dedication to breaking the cycle of violence. Our focus this season is on reinforcing and building upon the solid foundation our community has helped us build, enabling our continued resilience in the years to come.

Over the past years, thanks to your support, we've been able to expand our outreach efforts, strengthen our community support system, and enhance the safety and services we offer to those escaping domestic violence, even as we faced significant obstacles. Moving forward from the global pandemic showcased the resilience and flexibility of the DAIS community, qualities that are increasingly crucial today.

Currently, Dane County's growth rate outpaces other regions in Wisconsin, and at DAIS, we've observed a corresponding increase in the number of victims and survivors seeking our help. The challenges we face include meeting the expanding needs of our community, especially with static funding levels and the potential loss of federal support.

In 2024, we're laying the groundwork for long-term stability. Our goal for the year is to see our educational programs continue to serve as effective campaigns that raise awareness from the roots up, with our advocacy and support services expanding to provide consistent, comprehensive care that protects and empowers survivors. Every initiative, program, and client we serve is an integral part of our ongoing effort to create a safe and hopeful environment.

This sustained vision of strength and growth is possible thanks to you, our community of supporters.

Your consistent generosity is the key to our ability to succeed. Together, we're making this vision a reality, ensuring that the stability we achieve after overcoming challenges is enduring, not temporary.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Shannon Barry".

Shannon Barry,
MSSW Executive Director

DAiS
DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION SERVICES

DAIS

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION SERVICES

Our Mission

Empower those affected by domestic violence and advocate for social change through support, education, and outreach.

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Help Line (608) 251-4445
Text Line (608) 420-4638
www.abuseintervention.org



Looking to Volunteer?

DAIS volunteers provide crucial, life-saving services to domestic violence survivors and their families. Your time and compassion will go a long way in providing support to those impacted by domestic violence in Dane County.



Children's Advocate: Children are involved in both structured activities and free play through the DAIS Parent and Child Advocacy Program. Volunteers help lead group activities, as well as assist individual children. Volunteers must be able to commit to one 2-hour shift per week for a minimum of 1 year. Most shifts are weekday evenings, M-TH from 6:15pm – 8:15pm. Daytime and weekday hours may be available based on programming.



Help Line Advocate: Volunteers are trained to answer the 24-hour Help Line and Text Line. Calls and texts from survivors, concerned family and friends, other health/service professionals, and staff from other organizations are typical. Volunteers must commit to at least one 3–4-hour shift per week for a minimum of 6 months. Hours are available from 8am-12am



Reception/Front Desk: Be the first friendly face our visitors and clients see when they come to DAIS. Offer a warm welcome and address general reception tasks. Available shifts are 4 hours (Monday – Friday), must be able to commit to one (or more) 4-hour shift per week. Minimum commitment of 3-months required.



Shelter Chef: Volunteer Chefs work together to cook and serve dinner once a week to shelter clients and families in the DAIS Kitchen and Shelter, in addition to dishes and clean-up after dinner. Shifts are available from 4:30pm-7:30pm on Tuesday or Thursday.

Our application process is open! We are currently accepting applications for our June 2024 training.

Visit www.abuseintervention.org/volunteer/ for more information

Meet Our Staff



Kayla Muchka (she/her/hers)
Development Officer

I graduated with my Bachelor's from the University of Minnesota (Go Gophers!) and my Juris Doctorate from Mitchell Hamline School of Law. In 2018, I moved back to Wisconsin to be closer to my 6 siblings and start my career in nonprofits. Although I haven't always been at DAIS, I have worked in Domestic Violence related organizations for about 4 years and spent some time with organizations focusing on education and accessibility. I was fortunate enough to join DAIS in 2023 and look forward to working on such an amazing team! I grew up in Juneau, WI and recently bought my childhood home, so home renovations have become a new (and difficult) hobby. Outside of work, you can find me at home with my dog, hosting an event, getting involved in my community, or spending time with my family. If you ever want to chat over coffee, you can reach me at kaylam@abuseintervention.org!



Zoë Hazen (she/her/hers)
Housing First Program Coordinator

I landed in Madison in 2018 after a couple years in south Florida at a journalism program that was inspired by a rebellion against my landlocked childhood in central Illinois. In the 6 years that Madison has seen me through, I have witnessed my life transform and my community blossom. While working as a barista, I earned a degree in art from UW Madison and transitioned into early childhood education as Montessori toddler teacher. My passion around the outskirts of it all was always to create and connect, alongside a special affinity for storytelling and its personal and communal impact. When I came across this position at DAIS, it was a total alignment- I am honored in my role to serve as a community connection point to the vital services we offer for the incredible folks we serve. In my free-time, I explore creating all types of art-workings, studying towards my doula certification, gardening, and my favorite: snuggled up with my partner and our dog. Holler at me anytime at zhazen@abuseintervention.org.



Morgan Reed (she/her/hers)
Youth Violence Prevention Advocate

Being from Madison, I made my "great escape" to Minneapolis in 2018 with the intention of leaving Wisconsin behind. I adopted all-things Gopher and graduated from the University of Minnesota Twin-Cities in 2021 with my B.A. in the Sociology of Law, Criminology, and Deviance. There, I filled my days with involvement in Orientation Programming for first-year students, the university's Leadership Program and Minor, working overnight shifts as a Security Monitor or late nights at Chipotle, and all the while building a passion for serving and supporting students. Despite the turns, bumps, and tumbles my post-graduate life took, my direction and drive towards student engagement stayed true and I found myself back in Madtown. My mind and heart knew that the job posting from DAIS was meant to be for me, and landing this job has brought the clarity and passion I have been searching and waiting for. There's something remarkable about being the happiest I've been in years in the same city I once felt trapped by; but getting to do life in Madison again has brought an array of joys. I now fill my days being outdoors, loving on my two cats and partner, watching documentaries on Netflix, and spending time with people I love; with many of these new faces coming from DAIS :)

Great Givers

What makes a “Great Giver”?

True generosity spans a whole spectrum: whether through essential financial contributions, the invaluable donation of time, or steadfast advocacy, the essence of a great giver manifests in diverse ways. We are honored to celebrate all the facets in which this incredible community of donors, volunteers, and support expresses itself.



Jennifer Parker's journey, which began during her practicum at a domestic abuse shelter in 1982, has since evolved into a lifelong dedication to supporting victims of abuse. After earning her Masters of Science in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1986, Jennifer

worked as a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist and as a member of the Dane County Coordinated Response to Domestic Violence Task Force for over 30 years, focusing on providing healing resources for survivors that guides them towards a violence-free life.

Jennifer's work is not just about offering assistance; it's about empowering survivors, helping them reclaim control over their lives, and rediscovering their inner voice. In her professional sphere, Jennifer developed a curriculum aimed at aiding survivors in connecting with their inner selves and overcoming the impact of their traumatic experiences. Her focus was to be a source of stability in what is often a destabilizing journey for many. This approach is evident in her current focus—her book "Coercive Relationships - Find the Answers You Seek" and the training she offers therapists in how to work with survivors. Her book and training offer insights drawn from her experience working with survivors to challenge the negative beliefs shaped by their experiences and find their inner strength.

Jennifer's impact extends beyond the boundaries of her professional work. Since 2000, she has

been an active member of Unity of Madison, where she initiated the now-annual "Christmas in July" fundraiser for Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS). Recognizing the critical need for support based on her personal and professional experiences, Jennifer saw an opportunity to help DAIS through her community at Unity of Madison.

This initiative reflects Jennifer's understanding of the universal necessity for such support services. She often emphasizes the simple yet profound impact of community support in creating significant change, putting it into words that "it can be quite simple." Over the years, the "Christmas in July" initiative for DAIS has evolved, shifting from physical to monetary donations, allowing DAIS to utilize these resources as needed most effectively. Jennifer's engagement with the community and DAIS reflects her belief in the rewarding nature of community involvement. She encourages others to become actively invested in the welfare of those around them, highlighting the direct impact one can have on others' lives.

Jennifer's commitment to DAIS is further demonstrated by her service on our board for two terms. Reflecting on her long-term association with DAIS, she expresses admiration for the organization's growth and evolution, a journey she has been privileged to witness and contribute to.

Jennifer Parker's story is one of unwavering dedication and compassion. Her work, both in her professional life and through initiatives with her community highlights the profound difference one individual can make in the lives of many. Her message is clear: support, however simple it may seem, can lay the foundation for a new, empowered life for survivors of domestic abuse.

Prevention Outreach and Education



Girl (Scout) Power: Supporting Youth-Focused Learning

Did you know that our Outreach and Prevention Services extend to youth? These services play a critical role in providing age-appropriate, empowering education to young individuals that support them to navigate their formative years with a healthful perspective. DAIS has recently broadened these efforts through a collaboration with local Girl Scout troops.

This initiative began last December when a leader of a first-grade Girl Scout troop reached out to DAIS. The goal was to conduct an educational session focused on teaching respect, understanding personal boundaries, and supporting young minds to establish healthful interpersonal interactions as their baseline.

Recognizing the importance of laying a solid foundation of respect for self and others, the DAIS team developed content that was engaging, interactive, and suitable for their age group. The session was focused on relevant situations a first grader might encounter, like as put by one of the scouts, "when my friend won't stop touching my hair bows." DAIS outreach staff responded with resources on how to respectfully set that boundary—teaching the troop how to also recognize boundaries in their friendships. The initial session was a blend

of interactive discussions, videos, and kinesthetic activities, like demonstrating the gestures for saying 'no' or requesting personal space.

The program's impact expanded unexpectedly when a parent, impressed by the workshop, shared a photograph on social media. The post garnered interest from other troop leaders who then sought similar DAIS programs for their groups and continue to do so.

The program also aims to serve as a resource for the caregivers of these young people. Parents and guardians are also invited to attend these sessions, and the learning comes home, reinforcing these essential teachings and integrating them into their children's everyday lives. A parent underscored its value, commenting, "This is necessary—I was unaware such education was available on this topic." DAIS is committed to offering this crucial education and equipping young people with the skills needed for a safe, healthy life.

Looking to get connected to one of our outreach programs? Contact:

outreach@abuseintervention.org

Legal Advocacy & Celebrating Volunteers



Triumph in Adversity: DAIS Legal Support Empowers

While a survivor navigates the numerous and often overwhelming facets of legal proceedings that they may face, DAIS stands as an unwavering ally. Our Legal Advocacy Team not only provides critical tangible support but empowers individuals to reclaim their stories. One such story of resilience and courage is that of a client, whom we'll call Jane, who overcame incredible odds, including a traumatic brain injury from domestic abuse.

Jane's journey with DAIS was transformative. Faced with her abuser's sentencing, she chose to do something remarkable – speak out. Our staff collaborated closely with her, helping to craft a victim impact statement that would encapsulate both the injustice of the harm she experienced and the resilience of her spirit.

The effect of her brave choice to create a victim impact statement was profound, and the day of the hearing marked a pivotal moment in Jane's journey. The judge, moved by Jane's testimony, issued a sentence beyond what the defense and prosecution had proposed, a decision echoing the severity of the crime and the significance of Jane's story. This moment transcended legal triumph; it was a personal victory for Jane, who, filled with newfound empowerment, exclaimed,

"I should be a lawyer," recognizing her powerful influence on the court's decision.

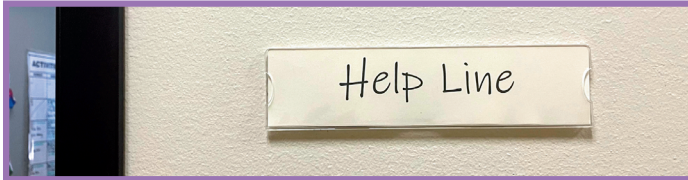
In her statement, she referenced the invaluable support she received from DAIS, highlighting how it helped navigate her through the complex legal and emotional labyrinth of the trial while reckoning with the effects of her injury. Jane's story is a vivid illustration of the transformative impact of DAIS' Legal Advocacy, which offers more than just support, information, advocacy and court accompaniment to people who are experiencing intimate partner violence; they empower, support, and stand beside those on their path to recovery and justice. Jane's journey of courage inspires us to continue to amplify every voice and honor every story.

Seventeen Years of Lifeline Support: Debbie Wittwer's Unwavering Commitment to DAIS Helpline

At the epicenter of our services are unyielding efforts from dedicated volunteers. Among them is Debbie Wittwer, the longest-serving volunteer at DAIS, who has devoted 17 years to aiding survivors of domestic abuse through our Help Line.

Debbie's journey with volunteering began when she sought a role that promised continuity beyond just project by project based participation. Debbie found her fit at DAIS' Help Line, with the chance to contribute regularly and meaningfully.

The Help Line serves as the first point of contact for people seeking help from DAIS, and it's a crucial component of the support system, guiding survivors to be proactive in their circumstances at any point in their journey. Debbie's role over these years has been multifaceted—she's been the listening ear and kind voice for those in dire situations as well as a source of knowledge and first line of defense to getting folks connected to resources. When Debbie answers the phone, she is prepared for anything: from educating concerned family members to aiding victims with resources as they navigate their way out of perilous circumstances.



Debbie, alongside other Helpline Advocates and volunteers, find themselves focused on what they can provide to the caller for support in that moment, what Debbie explains as asking the question “what can I offer them where they are at”. Each person’s experience and situation requires a different solution as they begin the process to get what they need.

Despite the challenges, Debbie’s vision remains focused: to offer support before any referrals get made. This involves working with clients over the phone, providing immediate assistance and guidance, especially around safety planning. However, the transient nature of these interactions means Debbie often doesn’t see the long-term impact of her efforts. “Each call exists in that moment,” she says, acknowledging the ephemeral yet vital connection she forms with those she aids.

Witnessing DAIS’ growth over the years, from a small operation in a house on Monroe Street to a full-fledged shelter, Debbie celebrates the community’s support in expanding services. Yet, she also acknowledges that with growth comes increased need.

Reflecting on her 17-year tenure, Debbie sees her volunteer work as a journey that has expanded her beyond her self-described logical, number-driven mind. It has deepened her empathy, a quality that has proved essential in providing a grounding presence for many survivors. Her dedication not only demonstrates the profound impact of long-term volunteering but also underscores the continuous need for community involvement in addressing domestic violence.

As DAIS and its helpline continue to serve as a vital resource, volunteers like Debbie Wittwer stand as pillars of hope and support, showcasing the remarkable difference one individual’s commitment can make in the lives of many.

Reason for Giving:

We reached out to Nicholas C. Watt from KEW Law after the firm’s generous donation to DAIS this past year to learn what inspired their giving. Nicholas responded from the perspective of someone who has worked with survivors since the first months of his law career 13 years ago.

“I know first-hand that the law and the court systems have a lot of work ahead of them to properly address domestic abuse and violence. I also know from first-hand experience the challenges in helping survivors of domestic abuse given the psychological and emotional scars that linger longer than the physical effects. In short, survivors need more support than is available, so providing monetary support to an organization, such as DAIS, that is committed to helping them is important to me.”

- Nicholas C. Watt, KEW Law Partner

Would you like to share your reason for giving? Email zhazen@abuseintervention.org

DAIS

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION SERVICES

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Help Line (608) 251-4445
Text Line (608) 420-4638

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DAIS DIGEST

Spring 2024

Mark Your Calendars:

TWELFTH ANNUAL

Nakoma Golf Club
8/26/2024

PRESENTED BY : J&K SECURITY SOLUTIONS
Integrate Your World

FORWARD MADISON
VS SOUTH GEORGIA TORMENTA FC

JUNE. 15, 2024
GAME @ 7:00 PM

Join DAIS as the community partner for the Forward Madison Soccer Game. Proceeds from 50/50 raffle sales and portion of ticket sales will go directly to DAIS.

Help Line:
(608) 251-4445

Text Line:
(608) 420-4638

Email:
crisisline@abuseintervention.org