

DAIS DIGEST



Dear Friends,

When we talk about intimate partner violence, we often turn to statistics to help convey its scope and impact. You've likely heard that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetimes. These numbers

paint a clear picture of the problems we face. They remind us that this issue is widespread and urgent.

But what we highlight less often are the *countless people* who come together to make healing possible. Behind every survivor is a **constellation of support** from advocates, donors, volunteers, community partners, and survivors themselves who return years later ready to lift someone else up. This is the part of the story that statistics can't capture; the part where compassion becomes action and where healing creates more healing.

This newsletter offers just a small glimpse into that widespread effort of people standing alongside survivors in crisis, people creating safer futures, and people reminding us that while violence wreaks havoc on lives, *the right support helps to build them up again.*

Thank you for being part of this community. Season by season, we are building a world where survivors can heal, thrive, and step into their next season of life with hope.

With gratitude,

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

Shannon Barry,
MSSW Executive Director



Dear Community Members,

As we move into a new season, I'm reminded that the work we do at DAIS is built on the steady generosity of people like you. While the needs of survivors can shift throughout the year, the one thing that remains constant is

your support that makes safety, healing, and hope possible every single day.

In this issue, you'll read stories about programs and people who sustain our mission from volunteers who show up with open hearts, to community partners who create pathways for families starting over. Behind each story is the same truth that none of this work happens alone.

Your contributions, whether financial, in-kind, or through your time and advocacy, are part of the lifeline that surrounds survivors during their most vulnerable moments. With your partnership, survivors build new seasons of stability, confidence, and possibility.

Thank you for continuing to invest in this community. Your belief in survivors fuels our work and strengthens the future we are building together.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Heather Crowley".

Heather Crowley,
2025 President, Board of Directors

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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Awesome Autumn



Starting the Semester Strong at DAIS

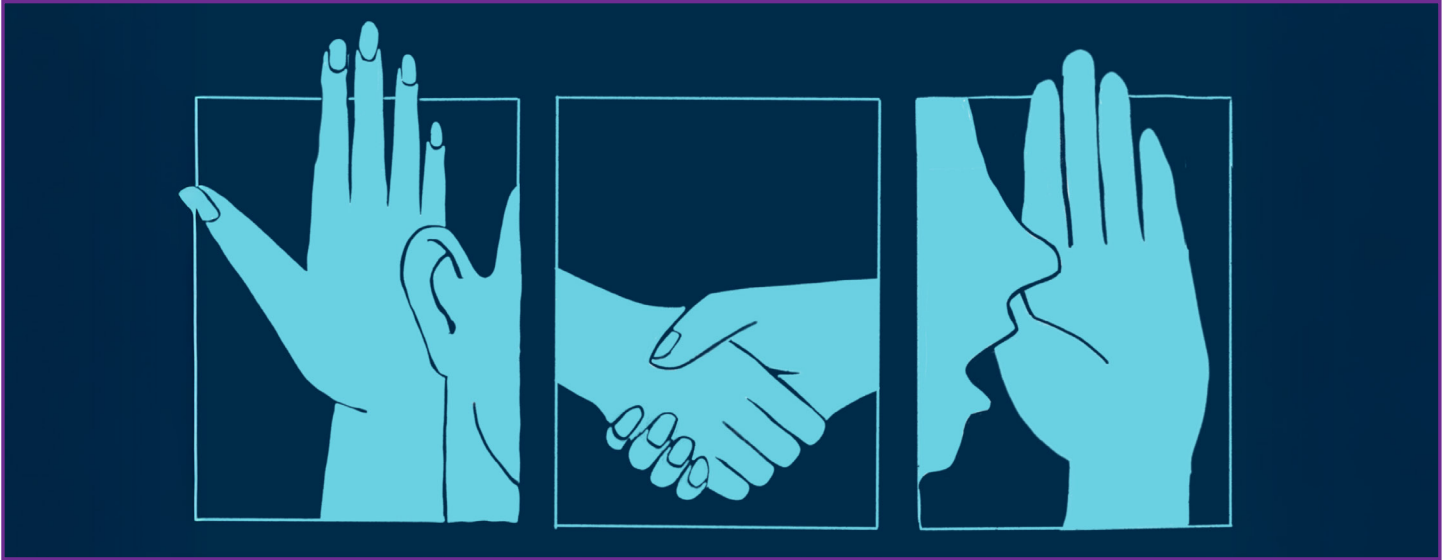
As the leaves turned and families prepared for a new school year, DAIS welcomed the fall season with connection, creativity, and community support!

The annual Back-to-School Week kicked off with a visit from partners at Madison Metropolitan School District and Reach Dane, who worked alongside staff to help shelter families get enrolled and ready for the year ahead. Throughout that week, the DAIS team transformed a space into a Back-to-School Store stocked with backpacks, lunch boxes, and essential supplies. Over three days, 28 current children residents got everything they needed to start the semester with confidence and additional backpacks were packed for children of community-based clients. The week wrapped up with fresh haircuts generously provided by a dedicated volunteer to help make sure students felt their best on day one.



Autumn festivities continued with a joyful shelter Halloween celebration. Staff from every department decorated their office suites and hallways with lights, themes, and kid-friendly decor, creating an indoor "trick-or-treat" route for young residents. Laughter, costumes, and candy-filled buckets brought something sweet to the season, reminding resident families and the DAIS team alike of the joy of community in even the smallest moments.





DAIS' Advocacy Approach

From having conversations with friends and family to volunteering at DAIS, there are so many ways our community can actively work towards a culture free of intimate partner violence.

By definition, an **advocate** is "a person who supports or promotes the interests of a cause or group". Meaning, in the most simplest terms, a DAIS advocate is someone who supports or promotes standing with survivors. However, we feel it is *our approach* to advocacy through comprehensive efforts to address intimate partner violence that supports the best outcomes possible for the people we serve. This includes how we support and train our advocates.

When a new volunteer or staff joins our community, they complete our 26 hour intensive "New Advocate Training" led by our Prevention, Outreach, Education, and Training department. Throughout the two week training, attendees learn about DAIS and our services while also learning best practices when advocating for survivors and victims.

While the baseline passion for standing with survivors is a driving factor for many advocates, education that includes exploring intimate partner violence's roots and intersectional histories, challenging misconceptions, learning about the

cycle of violence, understanding power and control, and equipping advocates with culturally relevant tools makes all the difference. Most importantly, advocates are taught that centering the survivor is paramount.

Centering survivors in our advocacy looks like:

- Recognizing that, while there is a brighter path forward, there is still a now that needs to be supported through the experience of shame, fear, cultural pressure, and trauma surrounding domestic violence.
- Remembering that survivors are the experts of their own lives and experiences.
- Following survivors' leads in navigating the path forward so that healing is rooted in choice, dignity, and self-determination.
- Acting as a resource for change, not an arbiter, as it is the survivors and victims who are navigating the systems impacting their autonomy, agency, and consent.

It is with this foundation that our staff and volunteers enter into the work to help ensure that survivors are met with resourced and empowered advocacy, every step of the way.



Bill brings kindness and presence to Kids' Space

When someone chooses to volunteer, you already know they have a generous spirit. But then you meet someone like Bill Easton, and you're reminded that generosity can take root, and then bloom, in the most inspiring ways.

In 2019, before COVID, Bill began volunteering at DAIS as a Shelter Chef, preparing meals for families, children, and adults staying in the shelter. It was a way to connect with people over a shared meal and lend his skill and love for cooking to create comfort and nourishment for the residents.

The shelter resident youth would want to cook alongside Bill, and his history of working with children inspired him to later join Kids' Space which is a program that provides children staying in shelter with a safe, nurturing, and fun environment while giving their parents rare, restorative moments of peace.

For those unfamiliar, Kids' Space is a designated space in our shelter designed especially for

children and youth. It encompasses a series of four interconnected rooms with each tailored to different age groups from infants to toddlers, elementary aged to teens. Each room is curated with age-appropriate books, crafts, sensory toys, and play areas that encourage creativity and calm through any stage of childhood.

Bill enjoyed the chance to build rapport with the young residents he saw week after week as they completed their shelter stay, and form new connections as new residents were welcomed. No matter the child, his approach is simple: *follow their lead*.

"The right way to play is how they want to play," he says.

A planned activity might start with building a fort out of plush blocks and evolve into a racecourse, obstacle path, or (supervised and safe) "crash course." Sometimes, it's as simple as pushing a toy



An action shot of Bill demonstrating a favorite stroller route around the room.

stroller around the room. "I once asked, 'How fun can a stroller be?'" Bill laughs. "The answer is: *very fun!*"

On top of all of the other ways he served our shelter residents, week after week, he's also become a behind-the-scenes hero for the Parent, Youth, and Child Advocacy team, helping to both meet the needs of the program and transform spaces for it to expand into.

Years ago, Bill asked if he could start tending to the once totally unkept garden space in the shelter yard through fixing up the garden beds, installing an irrigation system, mulching and projecting weed control to maximize the garden yields. Over time, with his vision and passion at the helm, he led the transformation of once under-used space into a thriving garden that residents and their kids could enjoy together, though he doesn't take the credit that belongs to him.

"It's DAIS' residents' garden," he says. "I just want to make sure it's successful."

He would visit local farmers' markets to pick up seedlings, bring them back to the shelter, and teach the kids in Kids' Space how to plant, water, and care for them. The garden became a place for

connection and laughter. Like the time Bill taught the kids how to harvest tomatoes, only to realize they were a little *too* enthusiastic, popping green ones into their mouths and quickly spitting them out. "Turns out they don't taste as good as the red ones!" he joked.

Bill regularly fulfills wish list needs for Kids' space, including sensory toys and other items that help kids regulate and relax. He loves seeing the joy those small additions bring.

And when he noticed the teens' once-a-week video game time was turning frustrating with gamers crowded around a tiny, glitchy screen, Bill quietly fixed it. After asking our Parent, Youth, and Child Advocacy Manager what was needed, he purchased a new, large gaming TV that made the experience fun again. You could say the new TV really *fit the Bill!* (Sorry Bill, we just had to.)

Because of some precious moments each week, the kids in shelter get to simply be kids — not students doing homework, not family members navigating uncertainty — just kids at play, in community, surrounded by care.

And volunteers like Bill make that possible.



Connecting in our Community, One Conversation at a Time

We've all heard the reminders that we can never truly know what others are facing.

Most of the time, the people we pass on the street, in a grocery store line, or at a community event carry stories we'll never hear.

But for the advocates on the DAIS Prevention, Outreach, and Education Team, those stories sometimes find their way back to us. Whether we're tabling at a community event, speaking to a workplace, or visiting a classroom, our advocates

have the privilege of meeting people where they are, which is often in quiet moments of reflection, courage, and gratitude.

Details are always changed to protect privacy.

A Full Circle Moment

At a family-friendly community event, a parent stopped by our table with their young children. As the kids chatted with an outreach advocate about what makes a good friend, their parent quietly shared with another advocate that DAIS had once

saved their life back when those same kids were just infants. With the help of a Legal Advocate, this parent found safety and stability. Now, years later, they wanted to give back by volunteering with DAIS.



The Happiest Day

At a spring resource fair, an attendee approached our table in tears, which the advocates soon found out were happy ones. Their divorce from their abuser had just been finalized, a moment they called “the happiest day of my life.” They shared that it wouldn’t have been possible without the support of a DAIS Legal Advocate and supportive Crisis Intervention Staff. They talked about their child’s recent achievements and their own sense of safety, freedom, and gratitude, thanking DAIS for helping them reach that point.

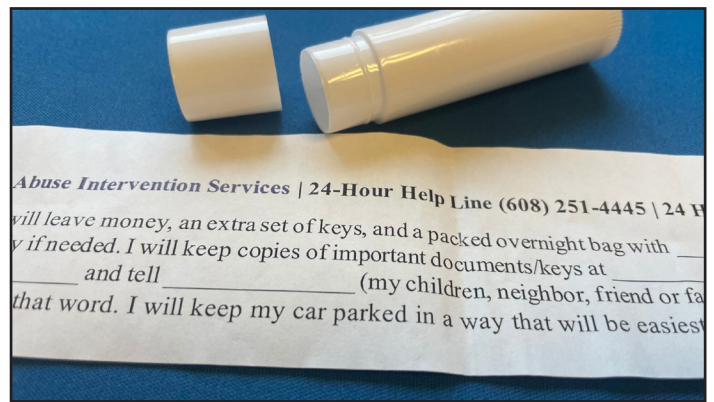
Empowerment, For Any Step of the Journey

A DAIS advocate connected with a concerned person whose spouse, years ago, navigated intimate partner violence in a previous relationship. Even though that experience was long over, the impact resonated with their spouse and often trickled into navigating everyday

life. This, unfortunately, is not an uncommon experience, with many survivors experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms chronically after surviving the abuse. The DAIS advocate shared the Help Line information along with additional resources their spouse might find supportive. Months later, the initial concerned person reached out again to share the incredible news that their spouse had connected with a Help Line advocate multiple times and was feeling more empowered and lighter, able to tackle everyday challenges they hadn’t been able to before, just through the simple power of being seen by someone who understands and is there to listen.

Honoring a Life Lost

At another outreach event in a community new to DAIS, a parent grew emotional when they noticed our chapstick and lipstick safety plans, printed resources rolled up and tucked into a faux lip balm or lipstick case for discretion so that the survivors can have resources with them in a way that is likely to remain undiscovered. They explained that their own parent had been killed by an abuser just months earlier. Taking one of each safety plan, they shared, “If I couldn’t save my parent, maybe I can save someone else.”



Example of Chap Stick safety plan available at our tabling events.



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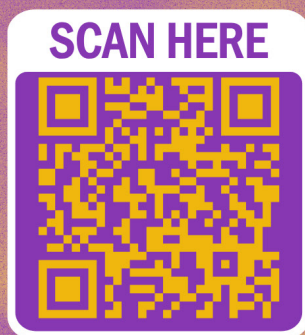
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Winter 2025/2026

DAIS Shelter Wish List



Your contributions provide comfort and support to our Shelter residents and help DAIS make the most of our resources. Thank you for your support!

Help Line:
(608) 251-4445

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