

# DAIS DIGEST



Dear Friends,

As we embrace another year at DAIS, one word rises to the forefront: gratitude. Gratitude for our resilient community of supporters, for our DAIS staff and advocates who continue to inspire with their dedication, and for the survivors whose courage

remains at the heart of everything we do.

In these earliest months of the year as winter thaws into spring, we find ourselves preparing for the immense challenges ahead while rooting into the steadfast commitment that fuels our work. As we enter our 48th year, our mission remains unwavering as ever: to empower those affected by domestic violence. This mission's strength comes from you — our incredible supporters.

Your generosity has provided stability and security during some of the most turbulent years, allowing us to offer essential services and programs to those in need. With public funding fluctuating, your support has been, and continues to be, a lifeline for our community.

As we look ahead, we know the road forward will have many twists and turns, but also, thanks to you, we know there will be new opportunities as well. With you by our side, we are confident in our ability to meet the needs of tomorrow, offering hope, safety, and healing to those we serve.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in our mission, and making this work possible.

With gratitude,

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

Shannon Barry,  
MSSW Executive Director



Dear Supporters of DAIS,

As we move into a new year at DAIS, I've found that when life feels overwhelming — when so much seems to be happening all at once — it helps to recenter myself by recommitting to what I know to be true. And one thing I know

for certain is the strength of our mission and the incredible community that stands behind it.

Our work at DAIS is built on a foundation of compassion, resilience, and hope. It is a foundation fortified by your support. With your continued partnership, we can step into this year with confidence, ready to meet new challenges and embrace new opportunities.

Your generosity fuels everything we do — from providing shelter and advocacy to advancing prevention efforts and fostering healing for survivors. It is because of you that we can offer stability in uncertain times and create pathways to safety and empowerment for those who need it most.

As we enter this next chapter, I am reminded that progress happens not all at once, but step by step. And with you by our side, I know we will keep moving forward — together — toward a future free from violence.

Thank you for your unwavering belief in our mission and for walking this path with us. Here's to a year of hope, healing, and lasting change.

With appreciation,

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

Heather Crowley,  
President, Board of Directors



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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## Legal Advocacy

### A Conversation with Kambria Farwell, Legal Advocate, on Survivors Navigating Emotions in the Courtroom:

*The DAIS Legal Advocacy Program provides support, information, advocacy and court accompaniment to people who are experiencing intimate partner violence or stalking. DAIS legal services include assistance with restraining orders, family law, criminal law, immigration and other legal matters. Legal Advocates work with people by phone, in individual meetings, in court, and assist victims with safety planning, information, and referrals to community partners. Legal Advocates also provide information and referrals to victims of other types of abuse and concerned community members. Legal Advocates are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice.*

#### **Kambria, can you tell us a bit about the emotional landscape survivors face when entering the courtroom?**

The courtroom is traditionally viewed as a space for truth, logic, and decorum. Historically, emotions haven't been given much space within legal proceedings. This becomes especially challenging for female-presenting survivors of intimate partner violence. When strong emotions surface, the courtroom can react defensively, often offering little in the way of sympathy or understanding. Misinterpreted emotions can sometimes negatively impact legal outcomes, adding an extra layer of difficulty for survivors seeking justice.

#### **What are some factors that contribute to these emotional responses?**

Survivors of abuse often live in a world shaped entirely by their abuser. Once they leave that environment, they enter a new and unfamiliar reality. For many, the legal system feels foreign, almost alien. The first time they may see their abuser again could be during proceedings for restraining orders, which can be incredibly disorienting. This experience leaves them suspended between the life they once knew and the new life they're trying to build.

The legal process itself can further compound this confusion. For instance, the District Attorney might pursue charges from a mandatory arrest, which isn't entirely within the survivor's control. In family court, survivors may have to repeatedly face their abuser during custody hearings, prolonging their exposure to harmful dynamics.

#### **How do these recurring interactions with an abuser affect survivors?**

It's incredibly challenging. These encounters can trigger intense emotional responses—fear, anxiety, frustration—all of which are natural but difficult to manage in a legal setting. Unfortunately, strong emotions in the courtroom can sometimes make survivors seem less credible or composed in the eyes of the court, impacting how their testimony is received. This perception creates yet another

barrier to achieving the justice and protection survivors deserve.

**You mentioned earlier that female-presenting survivors face unique biases in the courtroom.**

**Can you expand on that?** There's a persistent false dichotomy in how women, both survivors and attorneys, are judged. If a female attorney shows passion, she risks being labeled as overly emotional. If she presents a logical and composed front, she may be seen as cold or detached. The same dynamic applies to survivors. They are often expected to fit the mold of the "perfect victim," articulating their experiences in ways that neatly align with legal statutes. Any deviation from this expectation can lead to victim-blaming or diminished credibility.

A Forbes article I recently read highlights studies showing how implicit biases disproportionately affect women in the courtroom. Narratives around parental alienation or mutual abuse can lead to some of the blame being shifted back onto the survivor, suggesting that they somehow participated in their own abuse. This outdated and harmful perspective still plays a significant role in legal proceedings.

**What role do Legal Advocates play in supporting survivors during court proceedings?**

Legal Advocates serve as vital sources of information and emotional support. We help survivors understand the law and the specific statutes that apply to their cases. But just as

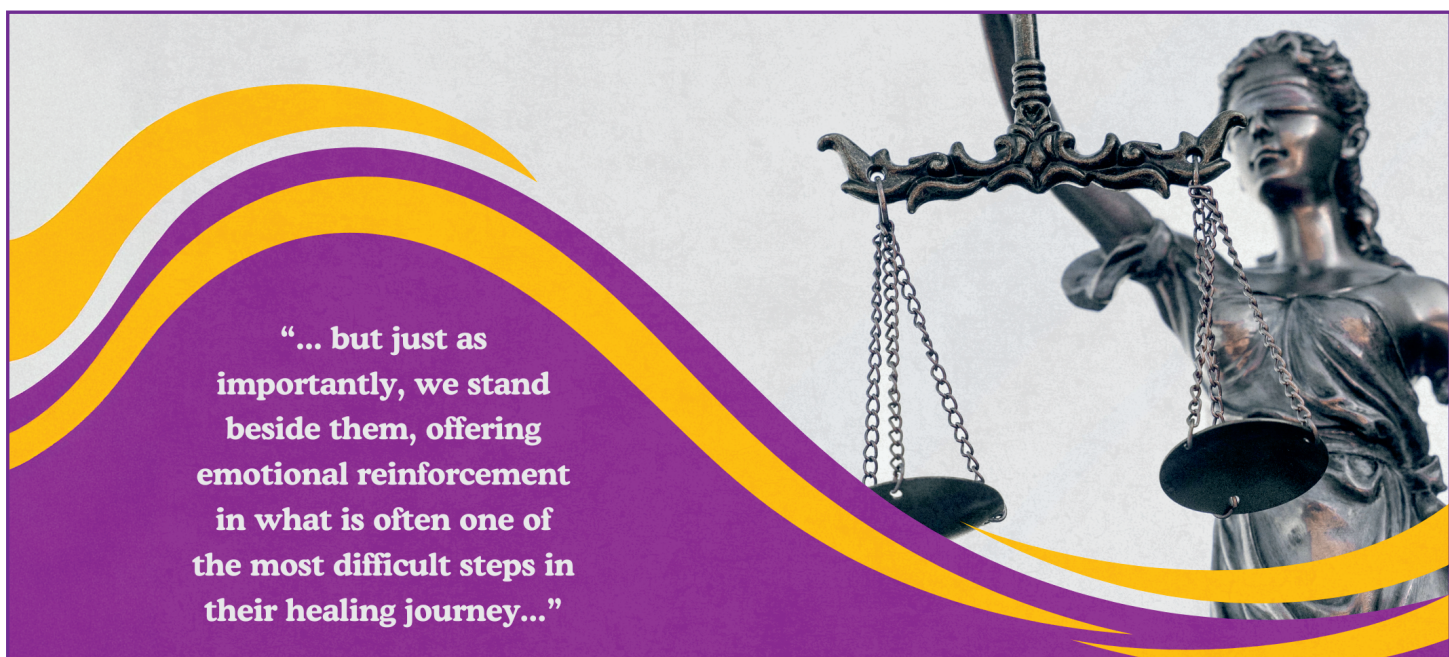
importantly, we stand beside them, offering emotional reinforcement in what is often one of the most difficult steps in their healing journey. Facing the courtroom alone, particularly when representing oneself pro se, can be daunting. Having someone in their corner can make an enormous difference.

**From your perspective, what changes would help create a more supportive courtroom environment for survivors?**

Judges and legal professionals must receive trauma-informed training. Understanding the psychological impact of abuse is crucial for interpreting the emotions that arise during proceedings. Additionally, implicit bias training specific to gender and survivor experiences should be prioritized. There's no such thing as a "perfect victim," and the best judges I've worked with are those who strive to understand and account for the emotional complexities survivors bring into the courtroom. This empathy doesn't undermine legal objectivity; it enhances fairness and justice.

**Any final thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?**

I would emphasize the importance of creating space for emotions in legal spaces. Survivors deserve to be seen not only as legal entities but as whole people navigating unimaginable difficulties. The more we integrate empathy and understanding into our legal systems, the closer we come to fostering true justice for survivors of intimate partner violence.



## Community Connections



### Strengthening Community Ties: DAIS and the Power of Partnership

In October, DAIS proudly hosted its second annual Community Resource Fair, gathering over 20 local organizations dedicated to providing essential resources for community members and survivors of domestic violence. It was a family friendly event complete with face painting, yard games, food trucks, and musical performances. Each participating organization set up tables and booths for guests to visit to learn about the complementary services available to community members. All these organizations contributed to DAIS' mission of fostering a continuum of care that meets the varied needs of survivors and their unique journeys to safety and healing, along with any member in the community that might benefit from their support.

At DAIS, we recognize that every survivor's story is distinct, which means the support we provide must be equally varied and adaptable. This includes city and countywide support across a spectrum of services, from emergency shelters and advocacy to

legal assistance, housing resources, mental health resources and beyond. The community resource fair highlighted an array of services that allow survivors to access the resources that resonate with their specific needs. This event is about more than a single service; it's about strengthening the connections and partnerships that make up our community's approach to ending domestic violence. By building a robust network of services, we strive to ensure that no survivor must navigate their journey alone.

Domestic violence is a complex issue that requires a community-based solution, and DAIS is committed to addressing this challenge by fostering relationships across Dane County, ensuring that survivors can access a network of support as diverse as their needs. Together, we are creating a pathway for survivors that offers the safety, respect, and empowerment they need every step of the way.

## Celebrating Our Staff

We are privileged to have a team of dedicated, compassionate individuals working to support survivors and foster a community of safety and healing at DAIS. This past season, we got the chance to celebrate two of our remarkable staff members whose commitment and exceptional service have been recognized in profound ways.



Pictured above is Shannon Barry, DAIS Executive Director, Governor Tony Evers, Kristin Olgren, DAIS Manager of 24/7 Programs, and Faye Zimmel, DAIS Director of Services

Kristin Olgren, Manager of our 24/7 Programs, was honored with the **Sharon Lewandowski Justice Award** at the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse Awards Ceremony in 2024. This award recognizes individuals who make a meaningful impact in domestic abuse prevention and intervention, demonstrating a true commitment to justice and survivor safety.

Our 24/7 programs include our always-available help line, text line, and the only homicide prevention shelter in Dane County. Kristin's transformative work in reimagining the DAIS Shelter Program as a holistic support community embodies the spirit of this award. Since joining DAIS in 2020, she has expanded programmatic support and fostered a safe, empowering environment where survivors move from survival to thriving. We are incredibly proud of Kristin's leadership and her lasting impact at DAIS.



Pictured above is Rebecca Lovell, DAIS Shelter Administrative Coordinator, alongside her father Keith Lovell, who attended in support of Rebecca's receiving of the Distinguished Service Award at the DAIS Celebrate Strength Luncheon.

We are also thrilled to share that **Rebecca Lovell**, our Shelter Administrative Coordinator, received the inaugural **Loren Mortenson Distinguished Service Award** at the 2024 Celebrate Strength Luncheon. This award honors the late Loren Mortenson, a beloved DAIS supporter, and recognizes individuals who mirror his extraordinary dedication.

With nearly 17 years of service, Rebecca is a perfect first recipient. She expertly manages the complex operations of our shelter while going above and beyond to bring joy and comfort to survivors. Whether ensuring essential items are stocked or organizing moments of lightness, Rebecca's warmth and dedication create an environment where healing begins.

We are inspired daily by Kristin, Rebecca, and the entire DAIS team. Their work reflects the heart of our mission. Congratulations to both for these well-deserved recognitions and thank you to all our staff for their incredible contributions.

## Continuity of Community Care

### The Power of Support Through Adopt-a-Family



At DAIS, we often say that domestic violence is a community issue with a community solution. This belief drives every initiative we undertake, but few programs highlight it as powerfully as our Adopt-a-Family program. At the year's end in December, the outpouring of generosity from our community was remarkable. For the first time, we had more donors than families to match—over 20 donors were on a waiting list, eager to make a difference. Because of this, our case managers have been able to accept more clients, ensuring even more families feel supported as they rebuild their lives.

Adopt-a-Family a program that allows DAIS to continue to care about the people we've served, even when they're no longer an active client. We want to do everything we can to continue to support their safety and independence. So, every year, we invite clients from the current calendar

year to create a Holiday Wish List. We then match the Wish List with a donor in the community who will help fulfill that family's wishes for the holiday season. Businesses and organizations can choose to adopt a family as well.

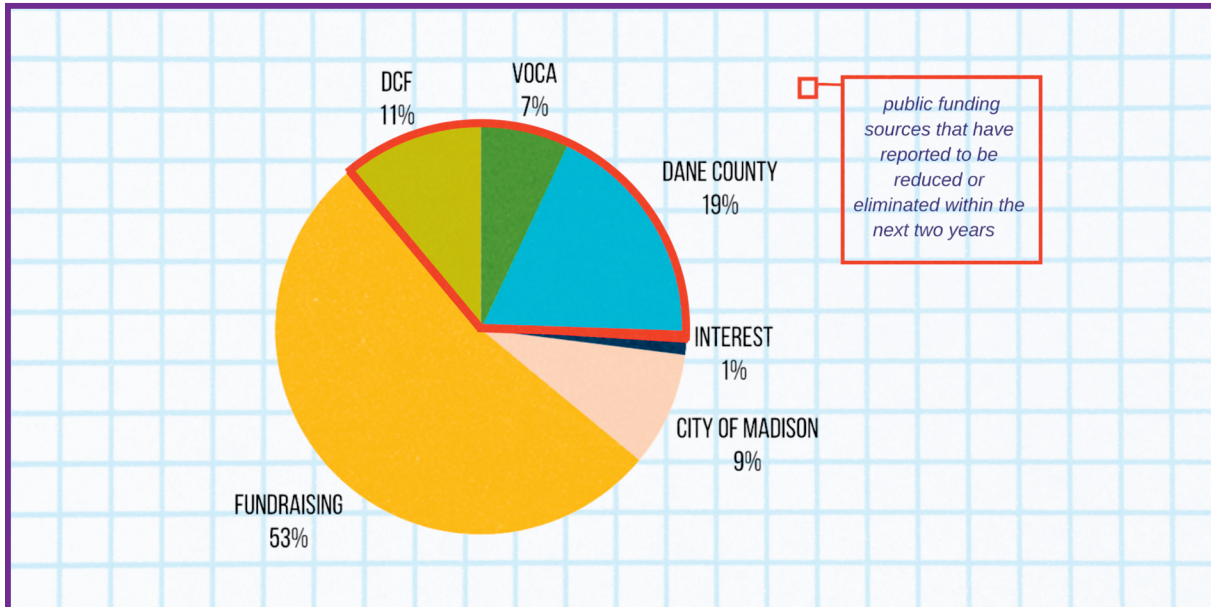
We wanted to take a moment to highlight the impact of this program and why it is so meaningful. Adopt-A-Family is not just about receiving gifts during the holiday season—it's about feeling a sense of connection and belonging. Research shows that when individuals experience traumatic events, their recovery and long-term well-being are profoundly influenced by the support they receive afterward. Feeling seen, valued, and cared for during moments of vulnerability can help to mitigate the severity of long-term psychological impacts, including PTSD. This is where Adopt-a-Family program truly shines: it offers survivors a tangible reminder that their community stands with them, turning compassion into action.

Your generosity as a donor in any season helps bridge the gap between trauma and healing, reinforcing the idea that no one in our community faces this journey alone. This continuity of care, from the services DAIS provides to the kindness of donors, exemplifies how a united community can create transformative change. To those who participated, thank you for making Adopt-a-Family such a resounding success this year. Together, we are proving that community care is not just an ideal—it's a reality that changes lives.

To learn more about the Adopt-a-Family program or to submit your information for interest in participation this year, visit [abuseintervention.org/adopt-a-family](https://www.abuseintervention.org/adopt-a-family)

# Donor Impact

## Visualizing the Value of Your support



Across Wisconsin, domestic violence shelters and victim services organizations are grappling with the fallout of significant funding cuts. The federal VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) funds, which once provided \$40 million to support survivors, have dropped to just \$13 million. This dramatic reduction limits grants to community-based organizations and government agencies, putting life-saving services at risk across the state.

In the face of these challenges, one thing remains constant: the power of community. It is individual donors, like you, who step in to ensure survivors continue to receive the care and support they need. Private contributions make it possible for DAIS and other organizations to fill the gaps left by funding cuts by keeping doors open, services running, and lives protected.

When we say, “thank you,” we truly mean you. Every single contribution matters. Each gift, no matter its size, has a ripple effect that extends beyond the immediate moment. It means a mother and her children have a safe place to sleep tonight. It means a survivor has access to

trauma-informed counseling that helps them heal. It means an advocate can sit beside someone in court, ensuring their voice is heard.

This is not just about numbers—it's about people. At DAIS, 53% of our funding in 2023 came from individual donors like you. As 78% of public funding sources become uncertain, we know this percentage will only grow. It's your generosity, your compassion, and your belief in our mission that allow us to provide hope and healing in the changing tides of public funding.

Your support turns a statistic into a story of survival and transforms navigating dangerous situations into a pathway to safety. When you give to DAIS, you are not just helping to sustain services—you are standing beside survivors as they rebuild their lives, letting them know they are not alone.

As we navigate this challenging time, we are reminded again and again that community is at the heart of what we do. Thank you for being the reason we can continue and thank you for believing alongside us in a future free from domestic violence.

# DAIS

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## DAIS DIGEST

Spring 2025

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL



Maple Bluff Golf Club

8/11/2025

PRESENTED BY:  JK SECURITY SOLUTIONS

Reserve your sponsorship or foursome for this year's thirteenth annual Raise for DAIS golf outing at [abuseintervention.org/raise-for-dais-13th-anniversary](http://abuseintervention.org/raise-for-dais-13th-anniversary)



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