

# THE SAFE BEACON

## News from SAFE in Hunterdon



### Ready to Serve: SAFE in Hunterdon has Reopened!

*By Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator*

After temporarily closing our doors in February of 2020, SAFE has reopened and is actively serving Hunterdon County survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault!

SAFE is glad to be back and generously thanks the many community service providers who worked to support survivors in our absence, including the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center (DASACC) of Warren County, Hunterdon Healthcare, Womanspace and Safe + Sound.

Executive Director Dominic Prisco maintains confidence in the organization's relaunch, saying, "For over 40 years, SAFE in Hunterdon has been a critical resource to families affected by domestic violence and sexual assault providing safety, shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, community education and referrals. We are excited to re-launch our agency and once again provide support and services to the survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in our Hunterdon County community. Our passionate and dedicated staff are ready and willing to help those in need."

Will you join us in our mission to support Hunterdon County survivors?

#### IN THIS ISSUE

**READY TO SERVE:  
SAFE'S REOPENING**

**NEW JERSEY BOLSTERS  
CRIMINAL PENALTY FOR  
STRANGULATION**

**VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT  
STRENGTHENED**

**CALLING ALL  
VOLUNTEERS!**

**COMMUNITY THANKS**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
AWARENESS MONTH**

**24/7 HOTLINE**  
**908.788.4044**

DONATE



# NJ Bolsters Strangulation Penalty in Wake of Yasemin Uyar's Death

by Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator

On July 12, 2021, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation that heightened strangulation assault to a crime of the second degree. Previously, strangulation was considered a crime of the first degree, but the recent murder of Union County resident Yasemin Uyar, at the hands of her former partner, prompted swift action to elevate the degree of this charge. According to a press release from the Governor's office, as a second degree charge, strangulation assault now carries a potential sentence of "up to ten years imprisonment, a fine of \$150,000, or both."

Within an abusive relationship, the presence of strangulation as a form of violence increases the lethality for victims sevenfold, according to the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence. Uyar's former partner was a repeat offender who violated the restraining order meant to protect Uyar and her son, Sebastian, multiple times. Uyar endured years of violence and abuse at the hands of her former partner, including strangulation, threats of gun violence, isolation from friends and family, physical threats, emotional degradation and stalking. Uyar's cause of death was determined to be strangulation and blunt force trauma.

SAFE in Hunterdon applauds Governor Murphy for taking a firm position against the use of this abuse tactic. Domestic violence is a cycle with clear indicators of escalation and lethality. It is crucial that service providers and law enforcement have the tools and knowledge to recognize and respond to such violence, as well as the support of a justice system that protects victims.

To support the Uyar family and future costs related to Sebastian's childcare, counseling and schooling, please click [here](#).

Rest in peace, Yasemin. You will never be forgotten.



**"She loves butterflies,  
and she was going to  
give something back to  
the world and be a  
butterfly for other  
people that were going  
through the same thing  
she was going  
through...remember  
her as a butterfly."**

**-Karen Uyar, Yasemin's  
mother**



# Victims of Crime Act Strengthened by Recent Legislation

by Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator

On July 22, 2021, President Joseph Biden signed the VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021. The signing of this act marked a historic bipartisan campaign to stabilize the Crime Victims Fund.

The Crime Victims Fund, established by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984, utilizes non-taxpayer money to support victim services throughout the country. Funds are generated through such sources as fines and penalties paid by convicted federal criminals, as well as forfeited bail bonds.

Each state maintains a crime victim compensation program that receives VOCA funds to support victims through mental health counseling, assistance with medical bills, lost wages or loss of support, and funeral or burial costs. VOCA funds are also crucial to the operations of victim shelter, counseling, and advocacy programs, such as SAFE in Hunterdon.

Domestic violence rates have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to such factors as increased time spent at home under isolation or quarantine orders, continuing financial or economic hardship and stress, stress from newfound challenges of childcare and schooling, and employment concerns.

Survivors face increased challenges in accessing crucial, lifesaving services in the wake of COVID-19. This is due in part to participant limits on programs imposed by health officials, wait lists for care, and adaption of programs and services from in-person to virtual offerings.

Despite these challenges, officials and advocates are hopeful for the future of services, in part due to the stabilization of federal funding. As we continue forward in our support of those who have experienced domestic violence, we must remember the victories we have accomplished, and the work yet to be done.



Source: NNEDV

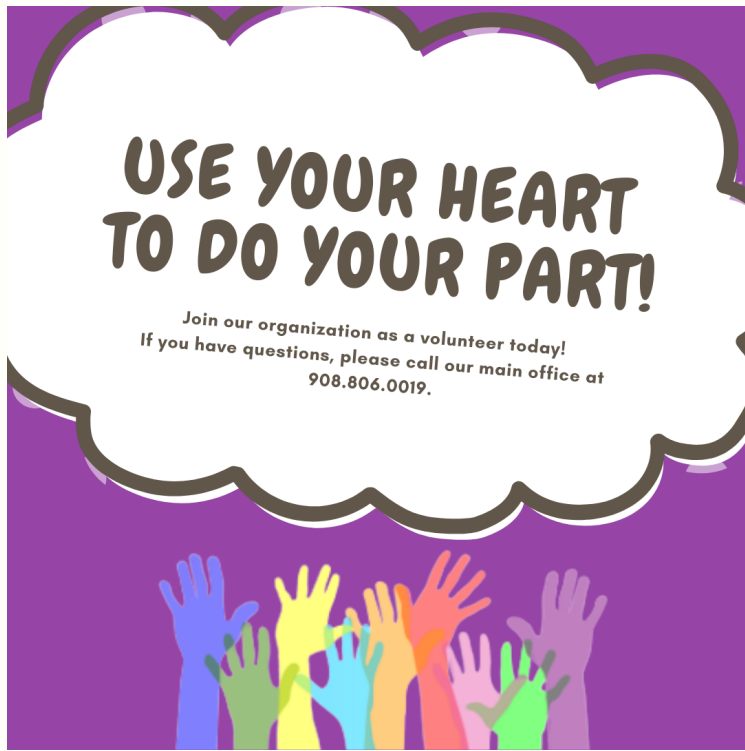
**"This is going to enable us to provide more help and support to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking, and other crimes all across America."**

-President Joseph Biden



President Joseph Biden signs the VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021.

Source: CNN



Apply here!



## Calling All Volunteers!

*By Rebecca Ramos, SAFE DVRT Coordinator*

SAFE is currently recruiting volunteers for our Domestic Violence Response (DVRT) and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART)!

The role of the DVRT/SART volunteer is to provide victims of domestic and sexual violence with immediate support at the moment of crisis and provide all available information regarding the law, safety options, and available resources at a victim's local police department or hospital.

All applicants selected as part of the DVRT/SART teams are required to successfully complete a 60-hour training provided by SAFE in Hunterdon.

Volunteers must be 18 years old or older, have a valid driver's license and reliable transportation, be willing to submit to a background check, and be available to commit to 3-4 volunteer shifts per month. To apply, scan the QR code to the left of this article or click [here](#).

## Community Thanks

*By Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator*

SAFE would not be able to sustain its programs and mission without the support and generosity of our community partners.

This month, SAFE would like to thank the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick (Hunterdon County Chapter), I Support the Girls, Project Linus of Hunterdon and Warren Counties, and St. Edward's Roman Catholic Church in Milford, NJ.

The FSSP generously donated gift cards to be used by our clients for household items, clothes, and emergency needs. I Support The Girls supported our female clients through a large donation of intimates and personal hygiene supplies. Project Linus thoughtfully donated handmade blankets to bring our clients comfort, and St. Edward's stocked our shelter with much-needed baby supplies and diapers.





# October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Here's How to Get Involved.

By Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator

October marks Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

This nationwide effort emerged in 1987 as a means of joining community members and organizations together in an effort to raise awareness of domestic violence. In the three decades that have passed since the introduction of DVAM, societal support for those experiencing domestic violence has increased greatly. Domestic violence has shifted in the public's eye from a private family matter to a public health crisis.

With increased support for those experiencing domestic violence comes renewed resources and protections for victims, as well as increased education and engagement opportunities for the public.

Typical activities and outreach efforts during Domestic Violence Awareness Month include events to mourn those who have lost their lives to domestic violence, as well as celebrate those who have survived. [SAFE in Hunterdon will be holding a candlelit vigil to do just that on Thursday, October 21st at 6:30 PM. Show your support and care for those who have experienced domestic violence by attending our event. Details are on the next page.](#)

Support and advocacy do not have to be grand gestures; in fact, the smallest actions can make the largest difference. Practice supporting survivors by sharing content, news, and infographics that are posted by community resources, such as SAFE in Hunterdon. [Even sharing our hotline number on your Facebook or Instagram page can make an astounding difference.](#)

Finally, you can be a part of the movement to end domestic violence and uplift those suffering by simply being present for those you care about most. If someone you know seems to be struggling, taking the time to talk to them can make a world of difference. Your care could save somebody's life. [If you don't know how to address a situation seems unsafe, try these simple words: "Is there anything I can do to help you? I'm ready to listen."](#)

Domestic Violence Awareness Month presents us a powerful opportunity to show support for survivors of interpersonal violence.

[How will you use your voice and your actions to say "no more"?](#)



Source: Eastern Pa Conference of the UMC



Source: Rutgers University



Source: Talkspace

# SAFE Spaces: Visit Our Community Awareness Displays!

*By Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator*

SAFE in Hunterdon has partnered with the Hunterdon County Library System to bring community awareness displays on domestic violence to two county library locations.

Our "Empty Seat at the Table" display is located at the Headquarters Branch of the Hunterdon County Library on Route 12. This display serves as a public reminder of the vacancies left in a community when a life is cut short by domestic violence.

Our Clothesline Project display is located at the North County Branch of the Hunterdon County Library. This display utilizes colored t-shirts to raise awareness about different types of domestic and sexual violence, including childhood abuse, physical violence, and emotional abuse.

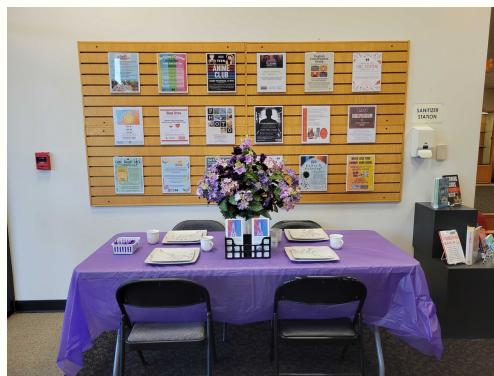
Please visit our displays to learn more about the dynamics of domestic violence and honor those who have experienced it.

Special thanks to the Hunterdon County Library System for giving SAFE the opportunity to engage the public in ending domestic violence through these displays.

## ***North County Branch Display***



## ***Headquarters Branch Display***



# Communities for Change: Join BW NICE to Support Hunterdon County Survivors

*By Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator*

BW NICE (Business Women Networking Involving Charity & Education) is a professional women's empowerment organization that provides women at all stages of business and personal life with support, education, and resources. The organization sees value in the balance of business networking and charitable outreach. Each BW NICE Chapter is dedicated to raising funds and awareness supporting a local organization in the fight against domestic violence and sexual abuse.



Source: bwnice.org

BW NICE of Hunterdon County welcomes new members!

The Hunterdon County Chapter meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the Mountain View Chalet in Asbury, NJ from 8:30 a.m. -10:30 a.m. and is open to all women in business and women in transition. For those that would prefer to attend virtually, a Zoom meeting option is available.

The Hunterdon County Chapter is proud to support SAFE in Hunterdon. In addition to monthly networking meetings and events, the chapter provides critical support to SAFE in Hunterdon through monthly collections and our annual fundraiser, The Red Shoe™. Proceeds from The Red Shoe™ go directly to client services to assist women and families in safe and transition housing gain their independence for a new and better life. Stay tuned for more information regarding the date for our 9th annual Red Shoe event!



Source: bwnice.org

For more information regarding BW NICE and the Hunterdon County Chapter, please visit the chapter's website [here](#).

## Shine Your Light at SAFE's "A Light in the Darkness" Candlelight Vigil!

*By Sarah Pawlowski, SAFE Prevention Educator*

SAFE in Hunterdon will be hosting a candlelight vigil to honor those in Hunterdon County who have experienced domestic violence. The event will take place on October 21st at 6:30 P.M. and will feature a musical performance, poetry, and remarks from several speakers. Speakers will include recently appointed Hunterdon County Prosecutor Renée M. Robeson and Karen Uyar, mother of Yasemin Uyar.

Event details and flyer can be found on the final page of this newsletter.



# *A Light in the Darkness*

**COMMUNITY CANDLELIGHT VIGIL  
TO SHINE A LIGHT FOR VICTIMS OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



Thursday, October 21, 2021  
6:30 PM

Historic Hunterdon County Courthouse Steps