

# Annual Report 2020



P.O. Box 1526, Jackson, MI 49204-1526 [www.awarshelter.org](http://www.awarshelter.org)

# AWARE, Inc.

## MISSION

AWARE, Inc. strives to eliminate domestic and sexual violence while promoting social change and empowering survivors by offering shelter and services.

## GOALS

- Provide quality housing and services
- Empower survivors to achieve their goals
- Secure resources to carry out our mission
- Educate community and promote social change

## VALUES

### COLLABORATION

Our success requires collaborating with community partners, court systems, law enforcement, healthcare and other social service agencies to meet the needs of survivors.

### IMPACT

Our aim is to make a difference, effect change, and eliminate the root causes of domestic and sexual violence.

### EMPOWERMENT

We believe in the right of everyone to live violence-free and in everyone's right to self-determination.

### COMMITMENT

We are committed to compassionate and quality services to survivors.



**Community Partner**

# 2020 at a Glance

## BOARD PRESIDENT

As I write this letter, I ask myself what can I possibly write about 2020 that has not been said by people more articulate than I? All I can convey is the sincerest gratitude to our staff for providing services to our clients through the most difficult circumstances.

Like most organizations, this year challenged us to think about our services in new ways. We had to adjust staffing and services to meet the changing need. We had to develop new procedures, create new policies and some of the team had to move to working from home.

Shelter services, counseling, and legal advocacy services were able to be modified and continue. Other services like child visitation and sexual assault advocacy were more profoundly affected. Re-visioning what these services would look like if in-person interaction were not a viable option, challenged everyone involved.

It was only through the dedication and adaptability of our staff that we were able to continue vital services when they were needed the most in our community. We will continue to use what we learned throughout the year to improve our organization and to emerge from this pandemic a stronger, yet more fluid organization.

I also need to thank this community for making it possible for us to invest in survivors. Our services reflect our community's commitment to provide support for families impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault.

We hope to look forward in 2021 toward improving and expanding services while maintaining a safe and secure operations.

Sincerely,

*Amber McKee*

Amber McKee. AWARE, Inc. Board President

# 2020 at a Glance

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nearly five months into the 2020 fiscal year, a pandemic changed our world requiring AWARE, Inc. to adapt its services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Immediate health and safety measures were put into place to safeguard against the spread of the virus. The pandemic set into motion an increased need for technology upgrades and the need to modify our infrastructure to support remote services for survivors and access for employees.

The pandemic forced us to question what safety meant for survivors who were now balancing health risks, with job security, potential homelessness, and physical safety. We witnessed a decrease in advocacy requests from Henry Ford Allegiance Health for sexual assault survivors seeking emergency medical care. Virtual visits for families posed additional safety risks and were impractical given the age of most children being seen at the visitation center.

We knew that the crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault had not decreased. Our counselors and legal advocates experienced increased requests for emotional support and relief through Personal Protection Orders. Survivors disclosed an increase in violence being used against them.

In 2020, the agency had to redefine advocacy and reevaluate its efforts to ensure survivors' access to services. The pandemic compelled us to reflect, adapt, assess, and adjust how we address safety and use our resources to help survivors gain independence.

Thank you, friends, for continuing to support our mission and our agency as we meet the needs of survivors during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

*Angelita Velasco Gunn*

Angelita Velasco Gunn, AWARE, Inc. Executive Director

# Program Services

## RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Emergency shelter services are the cornerstone of AWARE, Inc. In 2020, 4,491 nights of shelter were provided to 180 adults and 153 children. That is an average of 25 nights per family. Despite having to reduce occupancy mid-year due to the pandemic, we sheltered more people than the previous year. 24-hour crisis line calls totaled 772.

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Flexible funding assistance provides low-barrier, one-time emergency funds for expenses related to housing, employment, or other expenses to further safety and self-sufficiency. In 2020, 15 survivors received financial assistance to pay for delinquent utilities, rent, security deposits, transportation costs, relocation expenses, clothing, household items, home maintenance and repairs, and the cost for process service of civil protection orders.

## NONRESIDENTIAL SERVICES

128 survivors of domestic and sexual violence received crisis support through individual counseling services, and support groups.

199 adults and children seeking remedies through the courts received help with filing a Personal Protection Order, information about the legal process, victim notification, safety planning and referrals.

The sexual assault response team provided support and advocacy to 89 survivors, 46 of whom received advocacy and support during a medical forensic exam.

The Jackson County Family Visitation Center provided 52 monitored visits and seven supervised exchanges for 59 families.

AWARE, Inc. provided training and distributed information to area schools, colleges, community centers, service groups, social service agencies, churches and during community events. In 2020, we reached over 260 adults and students through 10 presentations and events.

# Program Services

## COLLABORATION

Collaboration is a core value of AWARE, Inc. and helps us further our commitment to advocacy, education, and social change on behalf of survivors. To that end, leadership participated in the following meetings and initiatives:

- Michigan Sexual Assault Response Team Coordinators
- Jackson County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)
- Jackson County McKinney-Vento Liaisons
- Jackson County Continuum of Care
- Financial Stability Network
- Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration
- Community Engagement Team Learning Partners Advisory Committee
- Jackson College, Sexual Assault Prevention, Education, and Process
- Region IV Sexual Assault Therapy Clinic
- Community Housing workgroup
- Michigan Visitation Center Network
- Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive Directors Network
- Jackson COVID-19 Action Network
- Human Services Coordinating Alliance
- Emergency Needs Coalition
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Agency Directors Network

In 2020, AWARE, Inc., the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and Blackman-Leoni Township Department of Public Safety joined Ingham County to expand the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Program to Jackson County. The goal of the SAKI team is to focus on processing untested rape kits in Jackson County.

# Program Services

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AWARE, Inc. employees are required to complete 24 hours of ongoing training annually to maintain a well-developed team. In 2020, staff participated in the following training:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
- Advocacy and Safety Planning
- Advocacy with Youth
- Anxiety and Telehealth
- Best Practices on Domestic Violence Shelter Rules and Communal Living
- Bridges Out of Poverty II
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Childhood Trauma and Affect Regulation
- Compassionate Leadership
- Comprehensive Courts in Animal-Assisted Therapy
- COVID-19 Future Planning for the Homelessness Response
- COVID-19 Planning and Response: Isolation and Quarantine
- COVID-19: State and Local Financial Matters
- COVID-19 Steps for Food Service Safety
- Creating an Effective Volunteer Handbook
- Creative Activities Parents Can Do with Their Children During Remote Supervised Visitation
- Creating Culturally Honoring Emergency Shelter Environments
- Crime Victim Compensation Eligibility
- Critical Conversations on Diversity and Inclusive Practices
- Cyber Violence
- Developing a Strategic Plan for Volunteer Involvement
- Discussion of Executive Order 2020-63 Extension of Personal Protection Orders
- Domestic Violence and Child Support Issues
- Domestic Violence Response on Children and Anxiety
- Economic Justice for Survivors with Disabilities During COVID and Beyond

# Program Services

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, staff participated in the following training:

- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Emerging Strategies for Crime Victims of Color
- End Campus Sexual Assault 5th Annual Summit
- Enhancing Services to Male Survivors
- Essentials of Trauma Treatment Certification for Professionals
- Family-based Interventions: Resources of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
- Growing Resiliency When Working with Incest Survivors
- Heading Off the Risk of Exploitation
- Helping Survivors with Interstate Custody and Relocation
- Historical Trauma and Violence Prevention
- How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime
- Human Trafficking
- Internal Family Systems
- Intimate Partner Sexual Assault
- Listening to the Voices of Children Harmed by Fathers
- MCEDSV Region IV Management Retreat
- National Strategy Session on Sustaining Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Navigating Difficult Conversations
- Navigating Trauma
- Online Elder Abuse
- Overlapping Issues: Domestic and Sexual Violence, Mental Health and Substance Use
- Partnering with Survivors Using Restorative Practices
- Peer Executive Coaching
- Practical Strategies for Abuse Partner Intervention and Engagement
- Preparing to Reopen: Lifting Strategies for Programs Serving Victims
- Reclaiming the Power of Breath



# Program Services

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, staff participated in the following training:

- Resources for Sexual Assault Programs
- Respectful Workplace Practice
- Resuming On-site Supervised Visitation Services Safely
- Safety Planning with Survivor Parents and Children During Modified Supervised Visitation Services
- SART 101 training
- Serving Transgender Survivors
- Special Conditions on Workplace-related Sexual Misconduct and Domestic/Dating Violence
- Teen Dating Abuse
- The Impact of Childhood Exposure to Domestic Violence on Adult Relationships
- Trauma and Healing
- Understanding the Confidentiality Requirements of VOCA, FVPSA, and VAWA
- Victim Defendants and COVID-19
- Working with LGBTQI Survivors Following an Assault
- Working with Parents Who Have Caused Harm

# Program Services

## VOLUNTEERISM

In 2020, 30 individuals provided 4,010 hours of service helping us meet our crisis response, childcare needs, administrative and event planning activities, maintenance, yard work and gardening needs. THANK YOU to the following:

Shelah Amburgey  
Lauren Boylan  
Sophia Bradley  
Lisa Fairbanks  
Bree-Anna Goodwin  
Derrick Hadfield  
Ginger Hartwell  
Carmela Hawkins  
Cameron Hohman  
Kayla Holder  
Abigail Jones  
Lauren Kane  
Kiwanis Club of Jackson  
Sandy Langston  
Jane Murray  
Heidi Myer  
Hollie Stephens  
Jazmine Reid  
Rachel Ritter  
Deanna Sioma  
Meghan Thiel  
Scott Thorbjornsen  
Danna Woosley



Kiwanis Club of Jackson funded and volunteered several hours to clean, plant and mulch the shelter yard

# Program Services

## MEN WHO COOK

In 2020, AWARE, Inc. held its 9th annual Men Who Cook modifying the event from an in-person to a drive through. The event was held at the Ella Sharp Park Rotunda and over 135 individuals drove up to receive take-out from 7 aspiring chefs, and helping us raise over \$5,000 for operations.

THANK YOU to the following participating chefs!

Adam Soper, Bond & Company  
Adam Williams, Kellogg's and AWARE, Inc. Board Member  
Brian Dumont, Family Life Radio  
Chad Kennedy, Walton Insurance Group  
Davan Gerding, CCC Catering  
Ruben Pritchard, Petty Machine & Tool  
Tom Mitchell, Gerdau



Adam Soper, Winner for Most Tips.  
Photo by Brooke Morse, Courtesy of JTV, Oct. 15, 2020



Adam Williams, Winner for Best Theme.  
Photo by Brooke Morse, Courtesy of JTV, Oct. 15, 2020



Davan Gerding (not pictured), Winner for Best Taste.  
Photo by Brooke Morse, Courtesy of JTV, Oct. 15, 2020

# Financial Position

## GOVERNMENT GRANTS

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women Justice for Families Grant Program (Jackson County sub recipient)	\$ 116,896
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Victim Services	
• Victims of Crime Act Crime Victim Services	\$445,358
• Victims of Crime Act Sexual Assault Victim Services	\$ 110,448
• Domestic Violence Comprehensive Services	\$ 118,402
• Domestic Violence Emergency Services	\$ 42,374

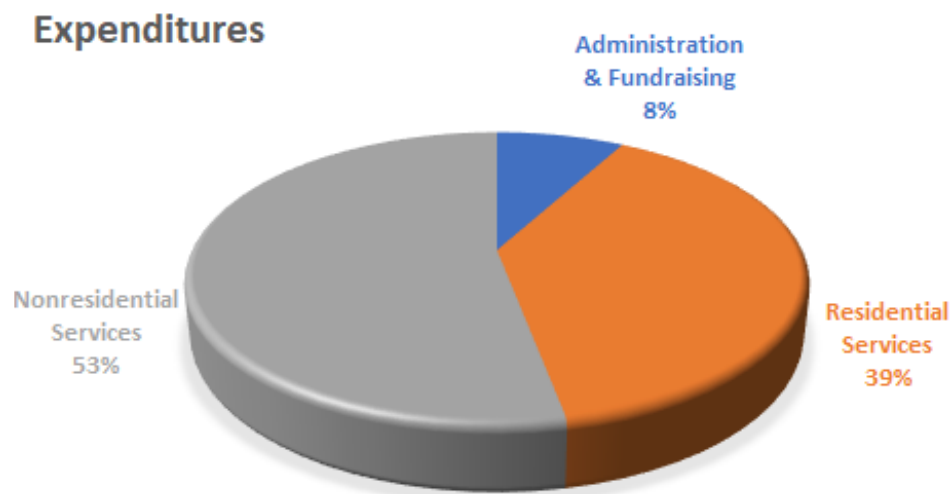
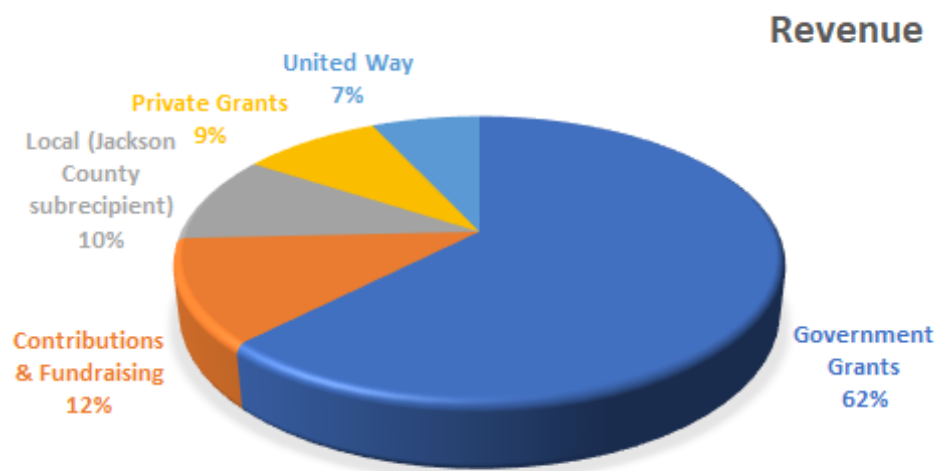
## CONTRIBUTIONS & FUNDRAISING

United Way of Jackson County	
• Community Solutions Fund and contributions	\$ 60,304
• FEMA	\$ 10,511
Fundraising Events	\$ 56,874
Contributions	\$ 82,186

## PRIVATE GRANTS

Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence	\$ 23,700
Speckhard-Knight Foundation	\$ 15,000
DTE Foundation	\$ 10,000
Steven R. Hoekman & Nancy J. Bauer Charitable Fund	\$ 9,000
The Hurst Foundation	\$ 7,500
Bill & Vi Sigmund Foundation	\$ 7,500
Anonymous	\$ 5,000
Jackson Community Foundation COVID-19 Fund	\$ 5,000
Kiwanis Foundation	\$ 4,300
Mabel Harris Charitable Trust	\$ 3,000
Phil & Pat Willis Foundation	\$ 3,000
Gaynell Fausell Charitable Trust	\$ 3,000
Louis Glick Memorial & Charitable Trust	\$ 2,000
Allan B. Copley Charitable Trust	\$ 1,750
Bob Olson-Kulka Foundation	\$ 250

# Financial Position



# AWARE, Inc.

## EMPLOYEES

Angelita Velasco Gunn, Executive Director

Lee Knapp, Operations Manager

Jessica Embury, Marketing & Events Manager

Nina Thomas, Administrative Assistant

SeQuita Brown, Director of Shelter Operations

Joanne Marr, Senior Client Advocate

Khadija Emerson, Client Advocate

Leeshia Langston, Client Advocate

Alma Morgan, Client Advocate

Pauline Ohrey, Client Advocate

Fawn Rowe, Child Advocate

Catherine Williams, Client Advocate

Clarissa Winters, Client Advocate

Karis Tripp, Legal Advocacy & Outreach Services Manager

Heather Hunter, Legal Advocate

Sue Griwatsch, Legal Advocate

Valerie Daft, Counseling Supervisor

Carla Freeman, Counselor

Lane Lewis, Sexual Assault Program Manager

Tianna Betser, Sexual Assault Advocate

Samantha Mosher, Sexual Assault Advocate

Jocelyn Ulrich, Sexual Assault Advocate

Chelsea Baxter, Visitation Center Operations Manager

Mersadi Saucedo, Visitation Center Monitor

Tina Erisman, Visitation Center Monitor