

# AWARE



## 2023 Annual Report



## 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.



Educate the community and promote social change.



Secure resources to carry out our mission.

## 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**

MORE INFO :

517-783-1638 · PO Box 1526 Jackson, MI 49204 · [www.awarshelter.org](http://www.awarshelter.org)

## A letter from AWARE Executive Director

In 2023, my board and I focused on building and sustaining AWARE's foundation. This began with our greatest resource, our employees. Like every sector, we experienced a revolving door of people—being hired and leaving for higher wages, or more flexible schedules.

Unfortunately, we cannot offer much flexibility with schedules. Our work requires three shifts, which translates to working both evenings and weekends to deliver services, 24-hours a day and seven days a week.

We did, however, complete a salary survey and developed a plan to increase base and hourly wages over the next three years for our crisis response teams. Further strategies included implementing a retention benefit for staff completing one-year of employment, and encouraging work-life balance, offer wellness activities, and professional development.

The Board of Directors focused efforts on revisiting and updating its strategic plan, board recruitment, and creating a fund development plan to increase revenue and sustain services into the future.

We look forward to a stronger 2024 as we move ahead with implementation.

Sincerely,



Angelita Velasco Gunn  
Executive Director



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**Residential Services**

In 2023, 114 adults and 66 children sought emergency shelter. 5,286 nights of shelter were provided, an average of 46 nights per family. 946 crisis calls were received by our advocacy team.

**Flexible Funding Assistance**

Flexible funding is low barrier financial assistance for expenses that further survivor self-determination or impede access to safety. In 2023, 33 requests were met. Assistance included covering the costs for utilities, rent, transportation costs, household items, clothing, food, and the cost of process service of civil protection orders.

**Nonresidential Services**

Nonresidential services include counseling, legal advocacy, and sexual assault crisis response. In 2023, 82 survivors of domestic and sexual violence received counseling services. Another 169 adults seeking remedies through the courts received assistance with filing Personal Protection Orders, court accompaniment, victim notification, safety planning and referrals. Our sexual assault response team provided advocacy and support to 18 survivors.

**Volunteerism**

In 2023, volunteers donated over 1,095 of hours of service by supporting crisis services, participating in our events, providing meals or healthcare services to families in shelter, or as active members to the agency board and committees.

**Outreach and Collaboration**

Our success as an agency depends on collaborating with community partners, locally, regionally, and statewide. In 2023, AWARE participated in committees, workgroups, and initiatives including Jackson County Continuum of Care, Community Action Agency homelessness workgroups, and the Jackson County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).

1,069 individuals received information and training on domestic violence and sexual assault issues including healthy relationships, consent, survivor trauma response, volunteerism, and AWARE services.

## 2023 Fundraising Events

### *Men Who Cook*

Men Who Cook returned for its 12th year in October. Because of our 13 amazing chefs, we raised over \$10,000 for operating support and crisis services. The event was made possible by event sponsors

Accounting Systems Alternatives, Gerdau, McDonald's, South Central Credit Union, and TAC Manufacturing. A special thank you to our chefs Shannon Arnett, Aaron Dimick, Brian Dumont, Dexter Evans, Ryan Felty, Davan Gerding, Chad Kennedy, Steve Mills, Luis Reynaga, Vic Schiro, Vincenzo Silvestri, Mike Smajda, and Adam Soper.



Shannon Arnett  
Best Booth Decorations



Vincenzo Silvestri  
Best Tasting Dish



Mike Smajda  
Most Funds Raised

### *Kentucky Derby Party*

Our 2nd Annual Kentucky Derby Party was held at Veritas in May and raised over \$ towards operating support and crisis services. A huge thank you to the generous event sponsors American 1 Credit Union, Boswell, Schultz, Sonnenberg & Arnett, PLC, the Erb family, Heise Claims Service, Orbitform, True Community Credit Union, and Walton Insurance.



# Revenue

## Government Grants

*Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Victim Services*

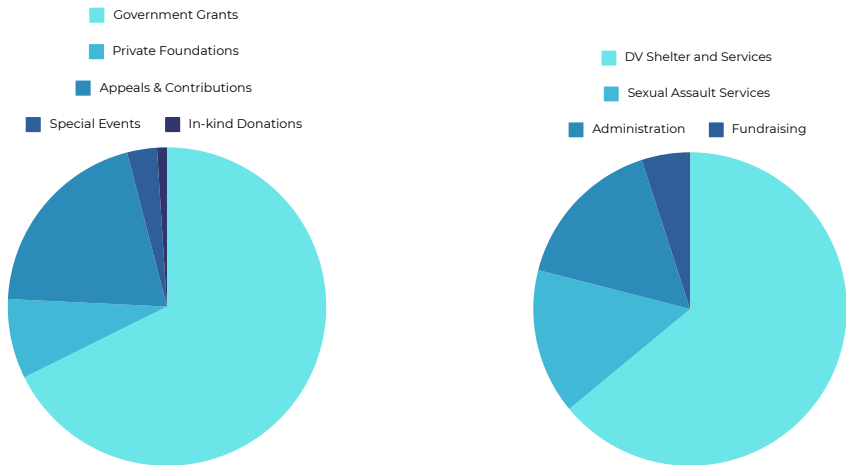
- VOCA-Domestic Violence Victim Services - \$377,847
- VOCA-Sexual Assault Victim Services - \$115,328
- Domestic Violence Family - FVPSA - \$17,427
- Domestic Violence APRA Act - \$11,619
- Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter -TANF-MSHDA - \$31,983
- ARPA FVPSA Vaccine Mitigation - \$24,032
- TANF/GF - \$9,793

*United Way of South Central Michigan*

- FEMA - \$10,000

## Private Grants & Foundations

- United Way of South Central Michigan - \$20,988
- The Speckhard Knight Foundation - \$15,000
- DTE Energy Foundation - \$10,000
- Bill & Vi Sigmund Foundation - \$10,000
- Hurst Foundation - \$8,500
- The Natalie Field Foundation - \$5,000
- Anonymous - \$5,000



**Revenue**

**Expenditures**



# **AWARE Team**

## *Board of Directors*

Terry Langston, President  
Lindsey Erb, Vice-President  
Traci Spring, Secretary  
Ryan Felty, Member-at-Large  
Kristin Maxson, Member-at-Large  
Angela NaDell, Member-at-Large

## *Employees*

Angelita Velasco Gunn, Executive Director  
SeQuita Brown, Director of Shelter Operations  
Larry Daft, Maintenance Technician  
Emilee Heise, Fund Development and Marketing Manager  
Nina Thomas, Clerk & Data Analyst

Heather Hunter, Nonresidential Services Manager  
TaRaya Austin, Sexual Assault Advocate  
Casey Corey, Sexual Assault Advocate  
Demita Murphy, Legal Advocate  
Carmelita Valdez-Weaks, Legal Advocate

Joanne Marr, Senior Client Advocate  
LaShawn Caldwell, Client Advocate  
Alma Morgan, Client Advocate  
Fawn Rowe, Outreach and Children's Services Coordinator  
Kennedy Sours, Client Advocate  
Lori Wheeler, Client Advocate  
Catherine Williams, Client Advocate

Elizabeth Alderson, Counselor  
Valerie Daft, Counselor  
Candy Strouss, Counselor

## *Contractors*

ASA, Inc.  
IT Now!, LLC



