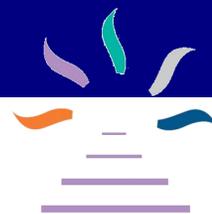


# The VOICE



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.

Winter 2018



5647 State Street  
Suite A  
Saginaw, MI 48603

Administrative Offices:  
(989) 399-0007

Safety & Resource  
Center:  
(989) 755-0413

24/7 Helpline:  
(989) 755-0411

#### OUR MISSION:

Empower survivors and create a culture of safety and respect in our community.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Christi Birchmeier  
Barbara Boggess  
Terri Carmichael  
Terrie Chronowski  
James Hernandez  
Sharon Hopper  
Kimberly Horne  
Darlene Krumpholz  
Mari McKenzie  
David Nall  
Jamie Nisidis  
Jon Pickelman  
Melissa Wallace  
Sonia Severin  
Matthew Tarrant  
Jennifer Wysong

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## HOLIDAY GIVING

# THANK YOU



This Christmas, you brought the joy and spirit of giving to over 200 adults and children through your in-kind and monetary gifts. Though you never met them, you gathered with them to unwrap presents, shared a blessing over a warm meal, and became a part of their extended family forever. Here are some of their words of gratitude:

***“My children were so excited to see that Santa came to the shelter. We were all afraid that Santa wouldn’t find us this year.”***

***“The donors picked out everything perfectly for my girls! I can’t express how thankful I am to see them happy again.”***

***As a parent, you want to be able to provide for your child. I can’t tell you how hard it was on my pride to ask for help this Christmas. I’m so grateful for the donors who shopped for my kids as if they were their own. Thank you.***

***“I honestly don’t know what to say. The feeling of thanks when a stranger treats you like a member of the family - how do you put that on paper?”***

Thank you for your generosity this holiday season and beyond.



## A Note From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

It is my privilege to write my first letter as the new Executive Director of Underground Railroad. These past three months have held many inspiring

firsts for me. I have had the honor of stepping into a new role, meeting the stakeholders who drive our mission, and speaking with survivors whose lives have been changed because of Underground Railroad's work. I look forward to building upon the incredible achievements that have helped create this powerful organization - achievements made not only by Underground Railroad staff and board, but also by our vested volunteers, community partners and donors. Your collective vision, passion, and generosity have forged Underground Railroad as a leader in the efforts to end violence against women. The need for the work you do is more important now than ever. The #TimesUp and #MeToo movements are resetting the national dialogue on sexual and domestic violence. Finally survivors of abuse are being heard and believed. Finally the scope of the problem is being addressed. Through these national and local conversations, as well as through the personal experiences of those I love, I have heard many heartbreaking stories of abuse. I have seen the seemingly insurmountable odds ahead of us in our drive for change. But I have also been touched by the courage, the strength, and the tenacity of the survivors we serve and the community that supports them. I am humbled at the opportunity to work alongside all of you to fight for survivors and continue the legacy of this great organization. And I am excited to experience the positive change we will create together.

Sincerely,

*Christi Birchmeier*

## The Power of PARTNERSHIP



wildfire  
credit union



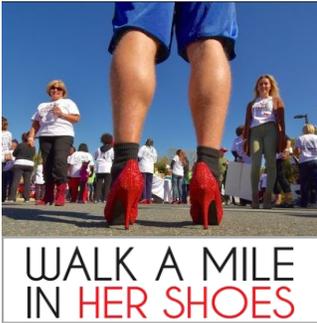
Wildfire Credit Union has partnered with URR in many ways to support survivors of abuse in Saginaw County. Each year Wildfire's Business Services Department sponsors a family with Christmas gifts of household items, health and beauty products, toys, clothes, and more. URR is a recipient of Wildfire's "Jeans for a Cause" initiative where Wildfire employees make a donation to wear jeans at work. And once again this year, Wildfire Credit Union stepped up as a premiere sponsor for URR's annual fundraising events. Their generosity has helped raise almost \$40,000 (and counting!) to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human slavery. Why URR? According to Darlene Krumpholz, Vice President in Business Services, "The work that Underground Railroad does to protect and support survivors should be applauded. The survivors URR works with are people right here in our area. Wildfire is a part of this community, and we want to do whatever we can to make the lives of the people better right here at home."

Consumers Energy  
Count on Us®



Consumers Energy provided energy efficient equipment and labor worth more than \$100,000 to Underground Railroad this year. As part of their shelter initiative, URR was contacted by an Energy Advisor for a walk through of the facility to determine our needs. They retrofitted lighting at the Safety & Resource Center, Administrative Offices, and Underground Railroad Resale Store. They also partnered with Pleune Service Company and Laux Construction to purchase and install a new 95% efficient boiler and water tanks for emergency shelter. Consumers Energy covered the cost in full. Thanks to staff at Consumers, Pleune, and Laux for working tirelessly to ensure our residents, clients, and staff did not go without heat and water during this time.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



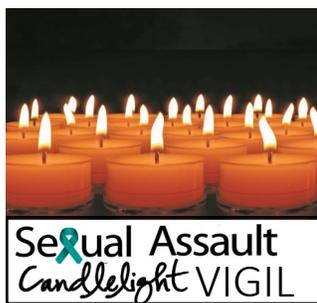
## APRIL 12, 6pm, Location TBD

Walk A Mile in Her Shoes asks men to walk in high heels to raise awareness about gender violence. The event is open to men, women and children. Registered walkers receive a t-shirt and other giveaways. For more information, contact Allie Martinez at 399-0007 ext. 106 or at [amartinez@undergroundrailroadinc.org](mailto:amartinez@undergroundrailroadinc.org)



## APRIL 13, 8am-12pm Delta College, N007

Second Annual Men's Conference. Featuring Ed Heisler, Co-Executive Director of Men as Peacemakers. To register or learn more, contact Allie Martinez at 399-0007 ext. 106 or [amartinez@undergroundrailroadinc.org](mailto:amartinez@undergroundrailroadinc.org)



## APRIL 19, 6:30pm Hopevale Church 4873 N. Center Rd.

Gather to honor and support survivors of sexual violence, and challenge the silence around sexual assault in our community and culture.



## MAY 10, 12pm-1pm Horizons Conference Center 6200 State Street

Our annual luncheon has a new look this year! Attendees will have the opportunity to network and learn more about all of Underground Railroad's services while dining on delicious hors d'oeuvres.



Domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human slavery. These are not easy topics to discuss, deal with, or even prevent. So when I was asked to join the Underground Railroad's Board of Directors in 2016, I had some serious questions to address. How can I serve this organization? I'll be the first to admit I wasn't the most informed. I knew these issues existed, but I didn't know to what extent. I had no idea the purpose men could serve in URR's cause. So many men are quick to dismiss and say, "I treat women with respect. I don't hit. I'm doing *my* part in the reduction of violence against women. What else can I do?" I was one of these men. We have a saying: The majority of men are NOT abusers, but the majority of abusers ARE men. This is a man's problem. It is our responsibility to speak up, help mentor young people, and instill those values we share with those around us. By doing this we help to create one LESS abuser. After discussion with those doing the real work, some research and reflection, I decided this is where I need to serve and give. In addition to my service on the Board of Directors, I am part of the Saginaw County Men's Campaign, working to educate other men in the community about their role in ending violence. Because I see the importance of this work, I also make annual financial gifts to support the mission, and am proud to be a member of the Opening Doors Circle, URR's major gifts group. The work this organization does is astounding. Their reach across the county is expansive. Their services and programs are the result of a generous community. They are extremely grateful, but even more grateful are the survivors.



Starting your Spring cleaning early?  
Consider donating to  
Underground Railroad Resale!

5647 State Street (989) 249-1924

**Business Hours:**  
Monday - Saturday  
10am - 7pm

**Donation Hours:**  
Monday - Saturday  
10am - 5pm

CHECK OUT OUR

**FRESH NEW LOOK**



Follow us on Instagram at [instagram.com/undergroundrailroadresale](https://www.instagram.com/undergroundrailroadresale)  
Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/UndergroundRailroadResale](https://www.facebook.com/UndergroundRailroadResale)

Lots of new clothes to start your Spring wardrobe!

We're happy to also accept your furniture and home décor donations



*"I just wanted to thank you for providing my daughter with another amazing experience with Girls on the Run. She has been involved in a lot of activities over the years, but none have given her even close to the level of confidence and sense of belonging that GOTR does. I have never picked her up without a smile on her face. Raising a kid these days requires a little extra help no matter how strong a family is. We are very thankful that she has role models like you in her life."*

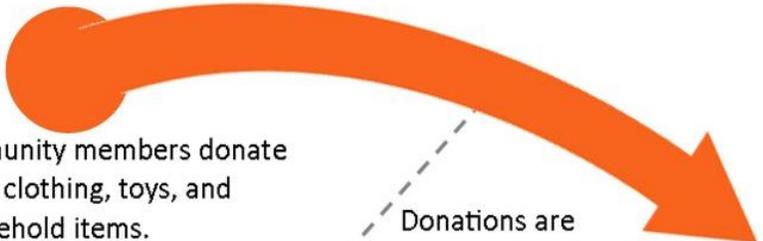
- GOTR Saginaw Bay Parent

Join us to help girls across Saginaw, Bay, Arenac & Tuscola counties activate their limitless potential  
Host a Fall 2018 team or coach!  
Site and coach applications are available at [www.gotrsaginawbay.org](http://www.gotrsaginawbay.org).

# the lifecycle of your donation



Ever wonder what happens to your gently used items when you make a donation to Underground Railroad Resale? Here's how it works!



Generous community members donate gently used clothing, toys, and household items.

Donations are processed and sorted to ensure they're not stained or broken. Seasonal items are stored.

Annually, Underground Railroad Resale provides an average of \$18,000 of free merchandise to survivors, and \$50,000+ is contributed to programming.

Items that meet the immediate needs of Underground Railroad clients are delivered to Emergency Shelter. All other items are priced or tagged for the sales floor.

Unfortunately, some unusable items may be discarded, but we try to salvage or recycle them first. Disposal is costly so we try to limit waste.

## UNDERGROUND RAILROAD RESALE



Unsellable clothes are donated to World Mission, an organization that recycles them to benefit third-world countries.

After 4 weeks on the sales floor, unsold items are boxed and offered free to clients in our emergency shelter and Transitional Housing programs.

Clients receive vouchers to shop for free for additional items they may want or need.



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.

5647 State Street, Ste. A  
Saginaw, MI 48603  
Business Phone: 399-0007



[www.facebook.com/UndergroundRR](http://www.facebook.com/UndergroundRR)



[www.twitter.com/URRSaginaw](http://www.twitter.com/URRSaginaw)



[www.undergroundrailroadinc.org](http://www.undergroundrailroadinc.org)

# what is YOUR LEGACY?



*Leave a Legacy Gift and support Underground Railroad's impactful mission of safety, empowerment, and change. Your Legacy Gift will reflect your lasting compassion for the next generation. Planned gifts offer you an important opportunity to provide meaningful support for URR's work.*

There are many simple ways to make a Legacy Gift to URR including:

**Gift Type #1: Make a gift to Underground Railroad in your will or trust**

**Gift Type #2: Make a meaningful gift and, in exchange, receive guaranteed lifetime income from URR**

If you have already arranged for a Legacy Gift to Underground Railroad, thank you. Please let us know so we can thank you for your support.

If you are considering leaving a Legacy Gift to Underground Railroad and have questions or need more information, please contact Christi Birchmeier, President/CEO of Underground Railroad, at 399-0007 or at [christib@undergroundrailroadinc.org](mailto:christib@undergroundrailroadinc.org)