

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.



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A letter from the Executive Director

We are celebrating another successful year at Underground Railroad! Toward the end of last fiscal year, we began preparing for our five-year site visit by the Division of Victims Services. The peer monitored process is an opportunity for staff from other Michigan domestic violence agencies to review our organization and practices. The standards are developed by the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, and guide toward excellence in both services and administration. Early this fiscal year, Underground Railroad received a near perfect score. We are excited to further evaluate and perfect our services based on

this review. At Underground Railroad we are continuously working hard to create an organization that aligns closely with our purpose and values. This last year we began developing our strategic plan for the next three years. Our focus includes providing high quality and accessible programs and services, cultivating community relationships to best support survivors, and developing sustainable funding for longterm operations. In the process we have spent many hours examining the organization to determine what we can do to foster positive change for survivors and our community. A large piece of this is a commitment to

advancing diversity and inclusion throughout our systems. DEI initiatives were carefully woven into each pillar of our strategic plan, as we strive to model equality, listen to marginalized voices, and better reflect the community we serve. In the next year we look forward to leaning into our strengths and learning from our weaknesses to ensure a healthy future for survivors of abuse in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Sincerely,

Christi Birchmeier
Executive Director

Board of Directors

CHRISTI BIRCHMEIER—PRESIDENT
Underground Railroad, Inc.

DAWN BOUCHER
Mannor Group

DAVID BROWN
Isabella Bank

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Wells Fargo Advisors

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Wildfire Credit Union

MARI MCKENZIE
Retired, Yeo & Yeo

DAVID NALL
Covenant HealthCare

JON PICKELMAN—CHAIR
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ERIC NEUMEYER
My Member Insurance Agency

JAMIE NISIDIS
Braun Kendrick

JAY PEPLINSKI—TREASURER
Glastender, Inc.

EMMA ROGERS
Future Insurance Agency

JEN WYSONG
Independent Bank



OUR PROGRAMS

We believe that survivors need access to safety, information, options, and resources to make informed choices for themselves and their children.



OUR COMMUNITY

We will provide leadership in our community on issues affecting survivors. Prevention through education and activism is the ultimate goal.



YOUR IMPACT

Our supporters make change possible. Through monetary and in-kind donations, and volunteering, the Saginaw County community uplifts and empowers survivors.

WHAT



WE DO

Our mission is to empower survivors and create a culture of safety and respect in our community

1

SAFETY

- 24/7 Crisis Helpline
- 24 Hour Emergency Response
- Emergency Shelter

2

EMPOWERMENT

- Advocacy/Counseling/Support Groups
- Court Support
- Housing Assistance
- Youth Services
- Safe Visitation & Exchange

3

CHANGE

- K-12 Healthy Relationship Curriculum
- Community Education & Training
- Mid-Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force
- Girls on the Run





Tasia came to emergency shelter suddenly after a horrific event. That afternoon she appeared shameful and quiet; her spirit was broken. As much as she wanted a place of her own, it was in Tasia's best interest to stay in shelter. With no income, three kids and medical issues that needed to be addressed, on-site housing was the best place for healing and safety. In the beginning, she was very negative, very sure nothing would ever change. Her history was like a roller coaster. She would work hard to find jobs and

housing, to secure transportation, to keep it all running. Then it would disappear. Her abuser would destroy anything good in her life. After several months in shelter, Tasia was approved for transitional housing. She is getting stronger and more confident. You can even see it in her appearance. Tasia is still soft-spoken, but clear on what is right and what is wrong. She is a fighter and persistent in working toward a fresh start that will bring her the peace and happiness she deserves.



One of our volunteers met Jacob during a police ride-along for the Leadership Saginaw Program. Saginaw Police Department officers were responding to a domestic violence call. When they arrived, Jacob was on the porch trying to comfort his mom. His mom's boyfriend was inside the house, angry and destructive. As officers interviewed all three parties, they learned that Jacob had made the call to 911. Jacob had recently attended

Underground Railroad's healthy relationship presentations in his freshman health class. He said he recognized the behavior that night as abuse because of what he learned about dating violence warning signs. This was the first night it had been dangerous enough to call the police, but he knew it could get worse if he didn't intervene. The boyfriend was removed from the home, and Jacob's mom was given resources to connect with advocates who could help.



Annette has volunteered with Underground Railroad Resale Store for over 6 years. She is part of a loyal volunteer team that sorts and tags donations from our generous community. Last November, Annette suffered a sudden and severe illness. After an eight day hospital stay, Annette was transferred to a rehab facility to learn how to walk again. When she was finally

discharged, Annette returned home to rebuild her strength. "All I could think about was getting back to the store to volunteer," Annette said. In January we were able to welcome her back with open arms. "I had to cut back from volunteering every day, but I'm still here three days a week. I love it, and I'll be here as long as I can."



Our pet shelter serves more than just cats and dogs. We've housed guinea pigs, birds, reptiles, and even a hedgehog! Popsicle fled with his family late one evening and spent the night in a car with mom and her two kids. The family had left in a hurry and did not have time to grab his cage, bedding, food, or water dispenser. The next morning the family called emergency shelter and were given space right away for

mom, the children, and Popsicle. Staff made an immediate trip to the pet store and was able to purchase a small crate, straw, food and water bottle. Popsicle has been able to stay in a room with his family. Since then, a crafty volunteer has built him a studier home. Staff and other residents collect paper towel tubes for him to chew. His family loves having him close for snuggles as they heal from abuse.



Shun first came to Underground Railroad in 2016 after experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic violence. After a short stay in emergency shelter, she was offered housing. Working with her advocate, Shun was able to find a job, and received six months of rent assistance while she worked to become stable. During counseling she learned to not blame herself for the bad things

that abusive people do. She learned that it's okay to set boundaries and say no. In 2020, Shun received a certificate of completion from the YWCA's Getting Ahead economic empowerment program. She is now considering a career in human services to help others who may be experiencing similar hardships. She is hoping to volunteer with Underground Railroad soon to give back.



At the end of every season, each Girls on the Run team imagines and completes a community service project. The team at Freeland Elementary School wanted a project that would combat loneliness and foster friendships. After hearing several ideas they unanimously agreed on the “Buddy Bench!” A child sitting on the Buddy Bench may be looking for a friend because they are new at school, wanting to make new friends, missing

friends who are absent that day, or wanting to play something different. Many people came together to make the Buddy Bench a reality, donating funds, supplies, time, and skills to the project. The team at Freeland Elementary has vowed to use the skills they learned during Girls on the Run - empathy, inclusion, and acceptance - when they see someone seated on the Buddy Bench. What a great opportunity for friendship!

118
households
received
housing
assistance

5284 hours
of group
& individual
counseling

414 PPOs
provided
& 3,754
hearings
attended

98 families
spent time in
Safeplace

3,827
crisis calls
answered

13,399 nights
in shelter
for over
600 people
& 7 pets

949 hours
of free
childcare





3,341 K-12
students
learned about
healthy
relationships

346 girls were
inspired
through Girls
on the Run

Generous
donors gave
over \$100,000
to annual
fundraisers

Over \$250,000
worth of
merchandise
was donated to
Underground
Railroad Resale



716 volunteers
donated over
14,300 hours of
service

176 adults &
children were
adopted for
the holidays

141 community
education
& public
awareness
events

"Touchy
Subjects"
podcast had
3,921
downloads

GET

DONATE FINANCIALLY

LEAVE A LEGACY

DONATE STOCK

DONATE GOODS

INVOLVED

Your donations provide immediate physical needs and long term solutions for those in need. Your gifts give survivors of abuse the first step to heal and transform their lives. Give today at undergroundrailroadinc.org/contributions

Your estate gift can change the lives of generations to come. Learn more at undergroundrailroadinc.org/planned-giving

When you donate stock you'll make a meaningful impact in your community, and avoid paying costly capital gain tax as well. Learn more at undergroundrailroadinc.org/stock-donations

Your donations of food, clothing, cleaning supplies, personal care products, and household items help keep our shelter and housing programs running. Surplus donations stock our resale store and help fund our programs. See our wish list at undergroundrailroadinc.org/contributions

To learn more about donations
email our Development Director
at ksova@urrinc.org





Your business can make an impact while engaging employees! Volunteer as a group, offer workplace giving opportunities, or organize a collection drive at your company location.

Many of our volunteers are called to give back through their church or civic minded organizations. Volunteer opportunities include maintenance projects, event volunteers, resale store sorting and more!

You don't need a group to make a difference! We have one-time and long term opportunities to join our volunteer family!

To learn more about volunteering email our Volunteer Coordinator at csanders@urrinc.org

ORGANIZE YOUR
EMPLOYEES TO SERVE

GET INVOLVED WITH
YOUR CHURCH OR
COMMUNITY GROUP

COME AS YOU ARE



Underground Railroad 's Empowerment Circle is named for the philosophy that drives our mission and work. The Empowerment Circle is a special group of major donors whose annual support helps empower survivors and inspire change in Saginaw County. Members receive special recognition throughout the year. The list below reflects gifts made between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022.

Inspiration Level \$1,000+

Mary Sue Barry
Patricia Barry
Julie & Peter Bender
John & Sharon Benson
Tammy & David Bernier
Brent & Barbara Boggess
Warren & Anna Booms
Leanne Brown
Terri Carmichael
Jeanne Murphy Causley
Mary Chris & James Church
Louis & Karen Constan
Thomas & Mary Damuth
Leslie & Terry Duperon
Linda & Howard Hollingshead
Jami & Matthew Kelly
George Moylan
Dave & Gretchen Nall
Sally Quaderer
Annette Rao
Arleen Schrank
Joyce Van-Ochten
Edwin & Jill Wetmore
Arthur Winterstein
Gretchen & Gregory Witherspoon
David & Michelle Youngstrom
Scott & Dawn Zimmer

Partner Level \$750—\$999

Janice Hennessy
Dimitrios & Jamie Nisidis
Frederick & Sue Tobin

Advocate Level \$500—\$749

Joseph Adel
Paul Albosta
Margaret & Gene Beitz
Lynda Bickel
Scott & Tammy Boehler
Brittany Dicken
Daniel Garant
Todd & Lumpeny Hall
Sharon Hopper & Lee Latocki
Michele Hutchinson
Eve James
RJ Paullin & Shari Kennett
Annette & Kevin Lange
Barbara Mahar-Lincoln
Christina Maser
Marcia Michael
Janet & Jack Nash
Marcia Pahr
Jay & Denise Peplinski
Jon & Samantha Pickelman
Susan & Robert Piesko
John & Elizabeth Polzin
Toby Robertson
David & Kristine Schaeffer
Anna Schaenzer
Stuart Sherry
Charles & Judith Stuart
Lisa & Michael Sullivan
Jeannie Talbot
Pat & Katharine Tessin
Marcia & Darryl Thomas
Carrie & Mark Thompson
Mark Turpin
Michael & Marcia Wolohan
Judy Zehnder
Michael & Kimberly Zehnder



Ally Level

\$250-\$499

Sherry Beyer
 Carol Champagne
 Jaime Cramer
 Larry & Terri Daly
 Helen Egleston
 Tara Frank
 Sarge & Renee Harvey
 Jason Holyszko
 Cheryl Howell
 John & Martha Kaczynski
 Carl King
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 Kay & Steve List
 Iris Marteja & Alan Manlapit
 Barbara McDonald
 Katie McDonald
 Mari McKenzie
 Janice & Michael McMeans
 Katilyn Mcmillan
 Margaret Mosqueda
 Joanna Nelson
 Eric & Carli Neumeyer
 Kailen & Mitch Piper
 James & Beth Reindel
 Tom & Beth Rohde
 Vicki Rupp
 Vickie Schmitzer
 Caroline Scott
 Susan Scott
 Joseph Sienko & Joan Hirschenberger
 Kathleen Snook
 Sheldon & Carole Spencer
 Mike Stodolak

Ally Level cont.

\$250-\$499

McKenzie Stone
 Sue Sulfridge
 Ryan Sullivan
 William & Karen Zehnder
 Thomas & Frances Zuzula

Friend Level

\$150-\$249

James Borchard
 Kim & Christine Braeutigam
 Joseph Parker Day
 Ruth Ann Delude
 Annie & Auldon Dugalech
 Michael & Patricia Forster
 Marie Guimond & David Tuskey
 Dawn Haefele
 Alexis Horton
 Kate Jankens
 Beth & Allan Kawiecki
 Alyssa Kelly
 Dana & Irene Kilts
 Timothy & Linda Lou Kreager
 Betty Lou Marx
 Thomas & Patricia Middleton
 Kerry & Cynthia Novak
 Kathy Renee
 Ed & Connie Schneller
 Patty Shaheen
 Kathi & Herb Spence
 Jen Wysong
 Andrew Zeek
 Alisa Divine Zehnder
 Drew & Tracy Zehnder



EXPENSES

PROGRAMS/SERVICES

\$3,538,292



Shelter & Services	\$1,318,229	37.26%
Court Support Programs	\$431,902	12.21%
Transitional Housing	\$1,055,928	29.84%
Sexual Assault	\$63,979	1.81%
Fundraising	\$104,130	2.94%
Education/Outreach	\$139,909	3.95%
Management/General	\$197,298	5.58%
Resale Store	\$226,917	6.41%

OPERATING EXPENSES

\$3,538,292



Personnel	\$2,312,766	65.36%
Occupancy	\$253,531	7.17%
Office Expenses	\$188,347	5.32%
Specific Assistance	\$450,402	12.73%
Miscellaneous	\$31,296	0.88%
Interest	\$15,973	0.45%
Travel & Conferences	\$75,522	2.13%
Advertising & Recruitment	\$22,602	0.64%
Depreciation	\$177,860	5.03%
Membership Dues	\$9,993	0.28%

REVENUE



COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

\$423,422

Businesses	\$42,432	10.02%
Churches	\$18,311	4.32%
Clubs / Groups	\$12,160	2.87%
Foundations	\$165,851	39.17%
Individuals	\$95,629	22.58%
In Kind	\$27,629	6.52%
United Way	\$61,430	14.51%



INCOME

\$3,305,967

Contributions	\$423,442	12.81%
Rent & Fees	\$37,381	1.13%
Grants	\$2,653,499	80.26%
Interest	\$4,352	0.13%
Special Events	\$83,624	2.53%
Store Sales	\$98,521	2.98%
Miscellaneous	\$5,148	0.16%

