

The VOICE



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.

Spring 2025



I came to Underground Railroad's shelter in 2023, started working with an Advocate, and was able to get an apartment voucher later that year. We've been in our home for over a year now, and I was recently able to set up some appointments with the staff therapist. I told her I wanted to do better for my son, and for me too. After all we've been through, I felt like we were worthy of more. She helped me make some goals and figure out the steps to reach them. Last March I completed a CNA program, passed the state boards, and got my CNA certification. Now I work full time at a nursing home and started college last Fall! I'm going to get my nursing degree!



Danielle, URR Client & Survivor



Dear Friends,

It's a brand new year, and we're gearing up! Moving into 2025, we are excited to launch new initiatives that will further strengthen our ability to serve survivors. This includes more fresh programming for children affected by violence, as well as the creation of new spaces that are designed with their needs in mind. In partnership with our regional DV/SA agencies, we look forward to hosting our first Survivor Art

Gallery starting this month, and moving into Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. With sponsorship from Women in Leadership Great Lakes Bay, we are proud to lift survivor voices in this way, and encourage collective empathy and understanding for survivor experiences throughout our community. Additionally, we are in the process of crafting a new three-year strategic plan that will help guide our efforts and shape our growth in the years to come. We are eager to build on our successes and continue providing critical services for those who need them most. Thank you, again, to each and every one of you who has supported us in these endeavors. Your involvement—whether through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word about our mission—helps make our work possible. Together, we are building a community where survivors can heal, rebuild, and thrive!

Sincerely, *Christi Birchmeier*

Christi Birchmeier, CEO

LEARN. DREAM. LIVE. RUN.

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

SPRING PROGRAM REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!

Heart & Sole (6th-8th grade) season begins March 31.

Girls on the Run (3rd-5th grade) season begins April 7.

Learn more and register your girl at

www.gotrgreatlakesbay.org.

NOW ACCEPTING FALL 2025 SITE APPLICATIONS!

Visit <https://www.gotrgreatlakesbay.org/start-team>

to learn more and sign up your location!

REGISTER NOW FOR THE GOTR 5K & REINDEER RUN!

Open to all community members of all ages.

Register now and join us on 11/22/25

for the most joyful day of the year!



GREAT LAKES BAY



UPCOMING *Events*

Survivor Art Exhibition

Sponsored by: **WIL** (Women in Leadership GLBR)

Logos: McDowell Healing Arts Center, Shelterhouse, Studio 23 THE ARTS CENTER, WOMEN'S CENTER, UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Date: Friday, March 21st 5pm-7pm
Location: Studio 23, 901 Water St, Bay City

Join us for the opening reception of this special exhibit, featuring survivor artwork and voices, and highlighting healing through art. The exhibit will run March 21st—May 17th, a collaboration between URR, Bay Area Women’s Center, Shelterhouse, Sexual Assault Center of Saginaw, McDowell Healing Arts Center & Studio 23. Sponsored in part by Women in Leadership GLBR. Free to attend.

EGG MY Yard

BENEFITTING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.

Date: Saturday, April 19th
Register by: Friday, April 11th at NOON

Let our volunteer bunnies do the work on Easter Eve, hiding eggs filled with small toys and candy in YOUR yard! Eggs will be delivered after 730pm, with a text notification when they’re on the way! Register now for this EGGcellent event! Register or volunteer at www.eggmyyard.org

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, INC.

Date: Thursday, May 8th
Location: Horizons Conference Center

Join us for an inspiring and impactful afternoon at the Annual Advocates for Change Luncheon! We will bring together a diverse group of passionate supporters to share their insights and experiences in the fight against domestic violence. The luncheon in complimentary, but we hope you will feel compelled to donate. **RSVP REQUIRED BY APRIL 25TH. Email ksova@urrinc.org**

ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE

Future Insurance: You create your future. We secure it.

DUPERON

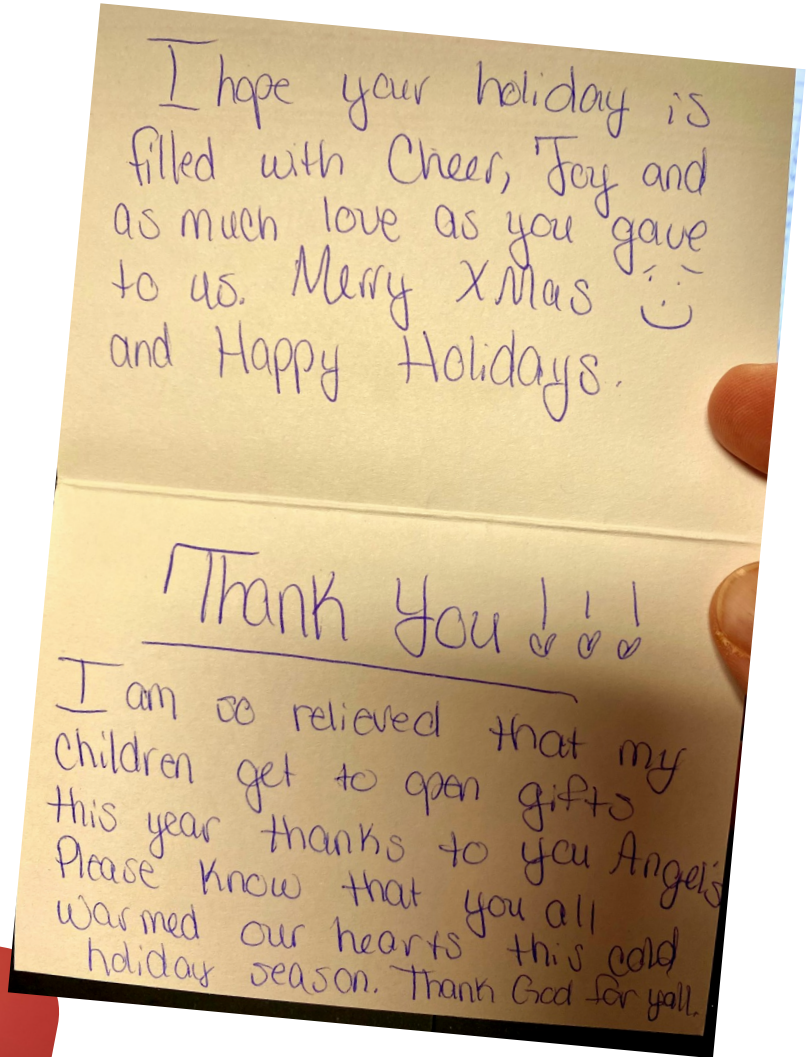
MEMBERS CREDIT FIRST UNION

MANNOR GROUP: INSURANCE - BENEFITS - INVESTMENTS

THE STATE BANK



With your help, 71 families, and 211 adults and children were adopted for the holiday season! Even more survivors will receive help throughout the year thanks to donations from the Adopt the Shelter and Giving Tree programs. Thanks to everyone who participated in making spirits bright! We couldn't do it without you!



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CELEBRATES

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



The Fight for Women's Rights

The fight for women's rights has always been about more than just equality. It has been about safety, autonomy, and the ability to live free from violence. Throughout history, women have fought for the right to vote, to work, to be heard, and to be protected under the law. These struggles have paved the way for modern efforts to address domestic violence, promote healthy relationships, and create a society where empowerment and safety go hand in hand.

From Past to Present

From the suffragettes of the early 20th century to the leaders of the modern #MeToo movement, women have fought tirelessly to make their voices heard. The right to vote, workplace protections, and more have played a role in securing autonomy and safety for women. But these battles are more than just legal victories. They're about changing perceptions and challenging systems. The same courage that fueled the fight for equal rights also fuels the movement to end domestic violence. This ensures that survivors have access to support, legal protection, and a path to safety.

Ongoing Struggles

Despite progress, our fight is far from over. Domestic violence still affects people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities. The push for legal protections, such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), is a direct continuation of past struggles for women's rights. These laws, along with education and advocacy efforts, help us recognize abuse, seek help, and support one another. Empowerment is not just about knowing your rights—it is about having the tools, resources, and community support to exercise them. Survivors of domestic violence need legal protections, safe housing, financial independence, and access to supportive services to rebuild their lives.

What to Do

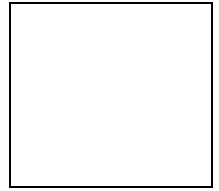
- **Education is essential.** Raising awareness about healthy relationships and warning signs of abuse can empower individuals to protect themselves and others.
- **Advocacy creates change.** Just as past leaders fought for women's rights, we must continue to push for policies and programs that support survivors and prevent abuse.
- **Community matters.** Domestic violence thrives in silence. By fostering a culture of support, we can ensure that survivors feel safe seeking help.
- **Legal & social protection is crucial.** Rights and protections must be continuously defended and strengthened to create lasting safety for all.

This Women's History Month, let's recommit ourselves to the ongoing fight for safety and empowerment. We all have a role to play in ending abuse and creating a world where everyone can live free from violence and fear!



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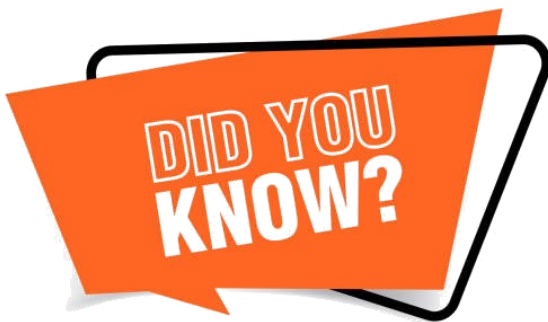
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www.undergroundrailroadinc.org



A United Way of
Saginaw County
Partner Agency



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help URR with just a few clicks
on your phone!



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see our ongoing shelter needs

Check out our volunteer
opportunities or sign up to help



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