

## Bridging The Gap

### Advocates support survivors with two new housing partnerships

The work of SafeHouse Denver doesn't stop when survivors leave abusive relationships. One of the greatest barriers for survivors of domestic violence to achieve self-sufficiency is stable housing. At both the Emergency Shelter and the Extended Stay Program (ESP), our Advocates and staff support survivors in the process of finding long-term solutions for their housing needs so they have somewhere safe and stable to go when they leave our buildings.

Cymoné Williams, Director of Shelter Services at SafeHouse Denver, described homelessness as a concern in "every single case" of a survivor entering our services, with many survivors just one resource away from not having a place to call home. "Homelessness is always in the back of survivors' minds, and for a service provider, it's at the front of our minds," Williams observed.

Housing is often a part of a survivor's goals, and SafeHouse Denver works diligently to support them through the process. However, survivors can make it through an entire application process - sometimes with wait times that last months - only to be told they're not approved. With half of homeless women in the Denver area reporting domestic violence as the primary cause of their lack of

housing, it's an issue that's front and center for SafeHouse, especially as the city attempts to address its current housing crisis. "For us to have other options to explore is pivotal, because it means that we don't have to rely on systems that we have no control over," Williams said. "How do we meet each other halfway to keep the human at the center of this conversation?"

Recently, the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) issued emergency housing vouchers in response to the ongoing pandemic, as well as the city's commitment to house as many people as possible.

DHA reached out to SafeHouse Denver to provide five expedited vouchers. Our Advocates worked with eligible survivors to compile the required documentation, complete the applications, and receive orientation resources for the voucher program. Happily, all five vouchers were successfully redeemed during December 2021 and January 2022, an achievement that puts the agency in a good position to potentially receive more vouchers in the future.



"Our fingers are crossed," Williams stated. "Our hope is that, because we're very intentional in the way that we support survivors, [DHA] can see us as a helpful option that they can trust moving forward."

Another partnership helping survivors access housing is the local arrival of Housing Connector. This nonprofit organization works with service providers like SafeHouse to

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## Celebrating 45 Years Of Hope & Healing

2022 marks SafeHouse Denver's 45th anniversary, and we want you to be among the first to see our special logo for this occasion!

Created in collaboration with marketing volunteers from Charles Schwab, this image captures familiar elements of our standard logo while adding a special flair.



We'll kick off this milestone year on **April 5** (4/5, to keep these important numbers). A variety of events and activities will culminate with the official celebration during our Hope Gala on October 15.

Thank you for participating this year and your continued support of survivors in our community!

## A Letter From Our CEO



Dear Friend,

2022 is certainly shaping up to be an exciting year here at SafeHouse Denver! As we continue to live within the “new normal,” support for survivors of domestic violence continues to be of the utmost importance. The housing barriers, pandemic-related challenges, and scarcity of resources make leaving an abusive relationship that much more difficult.

As the cover article shares, we are excited about new partnerships that will help with some of these obstacles. Through it all, I continue to be in awe of our Advocates who do this very difficult work - day in and day out, and I am appreciative of supporters like you who make the work possible.

This year marks SafeHouse Denver’s 45th anniversary. Since 1977, there have been many milestones: the growth of the Emergency Shelter; the addition of non-residential services and extended stay housing; the expansion of services to include people of all gender identities; and so much more. We are excited to celebrate all of it throughout the year, so stay tuned to our communications for the many ways that you can help us mark such a momentous occasion!

As you may have heard, this year will also be my last at SafeHouse Denver. After 14+ years as CEO here, I have formally given notice to our Board of Directors of my intent to retire in July. It is a bittersweet decision, but I have complete confidence in our CEO Selection Committee (led by Board Chair, Geralyn Gorshing), and know that I am leaving SafeHouse Denver in a very strong position to support survivors for years to come.

The new year always brings both a sense of reflection on the past and excitement for what is yet to come. We are all so grateful for your support of survivors in the past; yet we know there’s much more work to be done. In the coming year, we look forward to expanding our Youth Program to reach a greater number of women ages 16-24 (the group that is at highest risk of domestic violence), bringing both of our events - Sampling for Hope and the Hope Gala - back in-person, and ushering in a new era with a new CEO.

I hope you’ll continue to support survivors though all of it and celebrate this exciting year with us. **The enclosed envelope can be used to make a donation today if you’d like to show your support right away.** Whether this is your first year supporting survivors or you’ve been with us for decades, you are an important part of our community. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Staff and the survivors we serve - thank you!

With deep gratitude,

Victoria McVicker, CEO

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more easily unite clients with properties that eliminate barriers to safe, affordable housing. Survivors are often stigmatized by financial hardship, property damage or eviction due to the abuse they experience. Housing Connector works to educate property owners so that rental criteria that may exclude survivors is either reduced or waived altogether. Through the partnership with Housing Connector, SafeHouse Denver Advocates can help survivors navigate their unique situations and find a better housing match.

Financial stability is a key goal for many survivors to establish their independence. Being “rent-ready” with steady income is essential to a positive placement opportunity. In tandem with SafeHouse’s ongoing support, Housing Connector understands that the unexpected can disrupt this progress, and they offer their own case management assistance. Services include two years of eviction prevention as well as relocation support if safety becomes an issue due to the return of an abuser. After a successful test run in Seattle over the last two years, Denver is the first city in Housing Connector’s expansion. Since the platform became available to SafeHouse in December 2021, we have already successfully placed a survivor. “It is a tool that we plan to use at Shelter and ESP, so our hope is that we can continue to utilize that resource to help survivors find accessible, safe housing,” Williams said.

Working in conjunction with these types of community resources better equips SafeHouse to be responsive to the varying experiences of survivors. These options represent a safe, stable possibility for survivors’ futures: one that offers the opportunity for the healing and empowerment that can take place when survivors start to feel comfortable in their own surroundings. “I really enjoy being able to see that sense of hope come back to survivors [...] to regain control of their own lives,” Valeria Rocha, ESP Case Manager, said. All in a day’s work at SafeHouse Denver. 🏠

# News & Notes

## Gratitude For Alpha Chi



We are grateful to the sisters of **Alpha Chi Omega's** Nu Chapter at CU Boulder for their dedication to supporting survivors of domestic violence. The sorority's philanthropic focus is DV awareness, and they held two events in 2021 that had a major impact on survivors at SafeHouse.

In April, "Donut" Let Love Hurt found the group selling special Krispy Kreme donut packages bundled with a sticker to show support for survivors. This sweet event raised \$11,681.

In October, a talent competition between the Greek houses included an interview portion focused on healthy relationship questions. This inspiring event raised \$19,211.

Stay tuned to see how Alpha Chi Omega supports survivors this year!

### 2022/2023 Board of Directors

**Geralyn Gorshing**, *CPS HR Consulting*,  
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**Dayle Cedars**, *Community Volunteer*

**Susan Noble**, *Community Volunteer*

**Carol & Paul Rose**, *Community Volunteers*

**Karen Wolfe**, *Community Volunteer*

## Survivors Share At Open Mic Night

A new monthly event is raising funds for survivors while also giving them a safe, welcoming space to share their stories and their art.

Throughout 2022, join us at **Infinite Monkey Theorem** on the last Saturday of every month at 7 p.m.

Admission is a suggested \$15 donation, with the net proceeds benefitting survivors at SafeHouse Denver.

## Hope Gala Returns In October



Save the date for **Saturday, Oct. 15!** Our signature annual event, the **Hope Gala**, is a cornerstone of our efforts to support survivors.

After last year's return to a safe, in-person format, we will gather once again at the Ritz-Carlton Denver. You can look forward to a delicious dinner, exciting silent and live auctions, and a survivor speaker who embodies our mission of hope and healing.

Interested in sponsoring this event? Call Shannon Boltz at 303-302-6116.

## Real Estate Makes Real Difference

If you're planning to buy or sell a home, consider partnering with **Cassidy Bednark** at **360dwellings**.

Cassidy, an Honorary Board Member and longtime supporter of survivors, has committed to donating \$500 to SafeHouse Denver at each closing. To date, he and his clients have given enough to provide 34 individual nights of safe shelter!

## Do We Owe You A Thank You?



If you've already designated SafeHouse Denver in your estate plans, please call Shannon Boltz at 303-302-6116. We'd like to recognize you in our Legacy Of Hope Society. Members receive special invitations to exclusive events and are recognized for their commitment to survivors.

If you're not a current Member but would like to learn more, you can also contact Shannon. When you make a planned gift through your will, trust, charitable distribution or stocks, you make a lasting investment in safety for survivors of domestic violence.

## DV Prevention Starts With Education

Does your office or community group want to learn more about the complexities of domestic violence?

We are honored to provide presentations to increase awareness, encourage prevention and develop effective responses. Presentations are tailored to your group's knowledge, schedule and goals. Request details at [communityed@safefhouse-denver.org](mailto:communityed@safefhouse-denver.org).

*Read our blog or follow us on social media for all the latest news!*



# SafeHouse Denver

1649 Downing Street  
Denver, CO 80218

Admin: 303-318-9959  
Crisis Line: 303-318-9989  
www.safehouse-denver.org

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## SAVE THE DATE

For Our Signature Tasting  
Event To Support Survivors

Thursday, June 9 · 6:00-9:00 p.m.

*Sampling for*



**Mile High Station  
2027 W. Colfax Ave.**

**REGISTRATION  
OPENS APRIL 5!**

*You won't want to miss delicious samples from restaurant partners, a silent auction and a brief, mission-focused program we have planned!*

## SafeHouse Denver Programs & Services

We offer comprehensive services in English and Spanish at our Emergency Shelter, non-residential Counseling & Advocacy Center and Extended Stay Program.

### SERVICES INCLUDE:

- 24-Hour Crisis & Information Line
- Secure Emergency Housing
- Extended Stay Housing
- Counseling and Advocacy Services
- Support Groups
- Referrals to Community Resources
- Teen Dating Violence Intervention & Prevention
- Family and Children's Services
- Community Education and Outreach

Crisis & Information Line ..... 303-318-9989  
 Administration..... 303-318-9959  
 Community Education ..... 303-302-6125  
 Development Department ..... 303-302-6126

## Ways to Support SafeHouse Denver

The generosity of our donors, sponsors, funders and friends is essential to our work. Every gift is important, so please consider making a donation in one of these ways.

- **Make** a financial contribution by mailing a check using the enclosed giving envelope; calling 303-302-6126; or donating online at safehouse-denver.org.
- **Become** a Sustainer of Hope by committing to a monthly gift. Select the option on the enclosed giving envelope or use the online form at safehouse-denver.org.
- **Plan** alternate methods of giving through stocks, IRA disbursements, charitable trusts, wills or estate plans. For more information, please contact Shannon Boltz at 303-302-6116 or sboltz@safehouse-denver.org.
- **Designate** SafeHouse Denver as your charity of choice during your employer's workplace giving campaign. Simply note SafeHouse Denver on the pledge form, or ask your employer to match your contribution.
- **Donate** in-kind goods. Visit our website and click on 'Support' to view our current Wish List.
- **Earn** even greater tax relief on a donation of \$100 or more. Write 'Enterprise Zone' on your check or make a note in the comments field of your online donation.