



The Friendship Center

NEWSLETTER / FALL 2023



OUR WORK WITH STUDENT-ATHLETES

Learn about programs that engage student-athletes in building a culture of safety and respect as part of The Friendship Center's education services for Carroll College and local high schools.

The demand for The Friendship Center's services is higher than ever, and we work tirelessly to meet the needs of our community. Our work with those affected by violence and abuse will always be core to our mission. However, just as important as supporting those who are fleeing violence is empowering people to prevent it.

We all have a role to play in not just addressing violence but stopping it at its roots and actively building safe and healthy communities. It's a bold vision when you consider the saturation of violence in our culture. Nonetheless, one powerful tool we have for making that vision a reality is education.

Our team regularly presents to a variety of audiences and ages about key issues related to domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA). Some of our core content can be adapted for any audience and some

is for specific service providers who have close or frequent contact with survivors. But the majority is geared toward young people, and that's by design.

Equipping the next generation of leaders to recognize abuse and participate in healthy relationships is one of the most effective ways to shift our culture away from one that enables and sustains DVSA. That's why we want to highlight a few programs that our education team facilitates with a specific group of young people—student-athletes.

The direct services we provide survivors go hand-in-hand with our community education programming. While we address the immediate and long-term effects of interpersonal violence, we also empower our community to understand the culture of violence and work to

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WE ARE THE ONLY DVSA AGENCY IN LEWIS AND CLARK, BROADWATER, & JEFFERSON COUNTIES.



Our mission is to be a safe haven for those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and to empower our community to flourish in relationships free from violence.

Open to the Public: Monday – Friday 9AM – 4PM | Location: 1430 Sanders, Helena, MT 59601
24-Hour Hotline: 406-442-6800 | Email: officem@thefriendshipcenter.org | web: www.thefriendshipcenter.org



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change it. By working with community members and focusing on future generations to ensure that everyone has the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to form and maintain healthy relationships, we can reduce the need for our services.

As part of our education programming for high school and college communities, we facilitate Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes as Leaders, both of which are used to engage student-athletes. The two programs work in close collaboration across the country with the key difference being that Coaching Boys Into Men is designed for young male athletes while Athletes as Leaders is a gender-inclusive program for young female-identified athletes.

WHY ATHLETES?

This is a question that the Athletes as Leaders program answers quite effectively in their own background materials for advocates, so we'll paraphrase them here:

- Athletes have strong social networks that lend to spreading a positive message in a community. That's true of both high school and college athletes, but high school athletes are especially well-positioned to scale the impact. More than half of high-schoolers play at least one sport, rendering them a critical mass of any student body.
- The team environment is conducive to redefining social norms within a larger community. If an entire team unit lives out healthy social norms, that spreads outward to their friends and family.
- Because sports can reinforce harmful stereotypes—especially around masculinity—they are a critical space to start deconstructing gender stereotypes and setting a standard of respect.
- Sports at every level are still very binary. Athletes are strictly categorized as male or female based on social conditioning or perception regardless of how they identify. Moreover, the large inequities in pay and visibility of professional men's and women's teams make systemic inequity legible to a larger audience. Athletes have a long history of inspiring others in their advocacy for equal pay, human rights, and inclusion.

ABOUT COACHING BOYS INTO MEN & ATHLETES AS LEADERS

These multisession, team- and evidence-based programs leverage the influence we know athletes and teams can have by encouraging them to embrace a leadership role in creating a culture of safety and respect.

Since the sessions are facilitated with teams, these programs also engage coaches as allies in violence prevention. As nonparental adults in the lives of young people, coaches are in a unique position to be a positive influence—the value of their participation alongside athletes in these programs cannot be overstated. In fact, coaches are quite integral to the success and long-term adoption of Coaching Boys Into Men and Athletes as Leaders program objectives within a team.

Through conversations with teams about respect, accountability, consent, boundaries, equality, harmful stereotypes, and gender norms, participants are encouraged to work together to build a culture where gender-based violence and discrimination of any kind are not tolerated.

Setting a standard that rejects violence, abusive behavior, and harmful stereotypes within a team might sound like a small step, but the ripple effect can be substantial as young people take the knowledge and values instilled in them through school and sports into communities, careers, and future leadership roles.

Studies conducted on Coaching Boys Into Men participants since 2012 show evidence that the program has positive impacts on both athletes and coaches. After going through the program, past participants have been better at recognizing abuse, engaging more regularly in discussions about violence, and intervening as bystanders when they witness harmful behaviors. Consider that impact on an individual level multiplied by the number of athletes and coaches on every team, and you can start to imagine just how far-reaching these programs can be.

FRIENDSHIP CENTER EDUCATION SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Through our partnership with Carroll College, three teams (football, men's basketball, and women's basketball) currently participate in Coaching Boys Into Men and



Athletes as Leaders. We hope to expand that and engage more teams in the future in both the Carroll community and tri-county area high schools.

Our larger suite of education programming for Carroll students includes a DVSA basics presentation for all incoming freshmen and two special training courses—one for students acting as peer mentors in residence halls and another for nursing students. These two specialized trainings help prepare students to recognize signs of intimate partner/dating violence and abuse, understand confidentiality and safety considerations, and provide trauma-informed support to survivors.

Our presentations about healthy relationships, consent, and the culture of violence are appropriate for teens and adults. Our team is always happy to help educators meet their teaching goals around violence prevention and healthy relationships.

MORE RESOURCES

- Visit thefriendshipcenter.org/carroll to learn more about TFC’s services for Carroll College students, faculty, and staff.
- Visit athletesasleaders.org to learn more about Athletes as Leaders.
- Visit coachescorner.org to learn more about Coaching Boys Into Men.



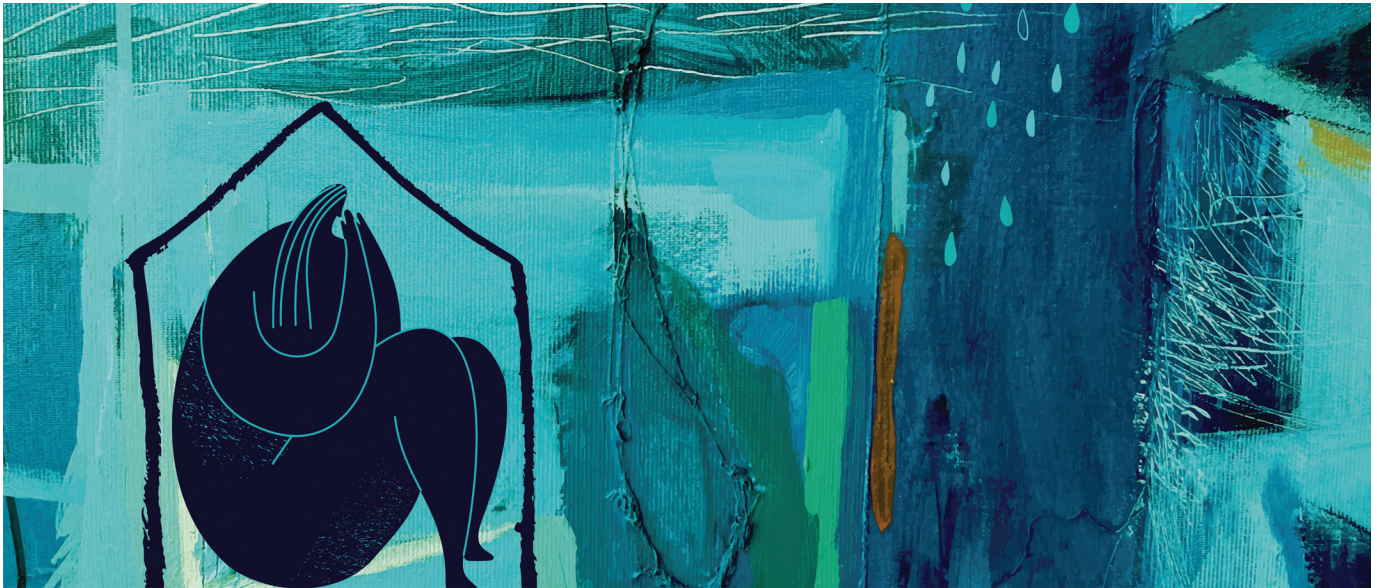
CULTIVATING A COMMUNITY FREE FROM VIOLENCE

An empowered community is one who cares about each other, offers support, intervenes in the face of violence, and challenges messages and systems that enable harm. In addition to being a resource for those affected by violence and abuse, we are committed to working with you—our community—to prevent DVSA and stalking. One way we can do that is by learning together!

If you want more information about our education services, we’re here to help with resources for all ages and audiences. Whether you’re involved with a team and want to implement violence prevention curriculum for student-athletes or just part of a group that wants to know more about recognizing the signs of violence and how to support survivors, we’d love to hear from you.

Visit thefriendshipcenter.org/education to learn about our core content and how to get in touch.





DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: IT CAN HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT

*Jaime Gabrielli (she/her),
Direct Services Advocate*

OUR PERCEPTIONS ABOUT domestic violence are often shaped by the media. These portrayals of intimate partner abuse are typically centered around graphic and salacious depictions of violence and abuse. The truth is there are no obvious answers to what domestic violence looks like because it is very complicated. Every story is unique with many facets.

At its core, domestic abuse is about gaining and maintaining power and control over a partner. The abuse often includes acts and threats of violence but sometimes does not. While punching, slapping, kicking, or harming someone with a weapon leaves physical proof of abuse, there are more covert aspects of domestic violence many do not recognize.

RECOGNIZING COERCIVE CONTROL

Coercive control is nearly always at the core of domestic abuse. **Coercive control refers to the way abusers non-violently manipulate, oppress, and intimidate their intimate partners.** It is part of a deliberate and systematic pattern of behavior used to limit a person's freedom and ability to act on their own behalf in conjunction with their personal needs and values.

The overarching goal of coercive control is to generate a threat that forces compliance and instill confusion that destabilizes the victim's belief in themselves. While violence and threats of physical harm are effective ways to intimidate and manipulate, they are not necessary if there are other ways an abuser can dominate without facing legal and social consequences. Abusers inflict coercive control over their partners (and sometimes other family members) in a variety of ways, diminishing their ability to live freely. These tactics can be just as effective as violence and cause even more psychological trauma.

Aspects of coercive control include:

- Isolation from friends and family
- Controlling daily behaviors
- Not allowing a victim to go to work or school
- Depriving a victim of basic needs and financial resources
- Spying, monitoring, and stalking
- Threatening to take away or harm children or pets
- Controlling aspects of a victim's health and body
- Intimidation, manipulation, and constant humiliation

Coercive control is a deceptive and powerful approach that is hidden in plain sight and happens behind closed

doors. While it leaves no telltale signs such as black eyes, broken bones, or marks on the victim's arms, it can be a steppingstone to physical violence, especially when a survivor is attempting to leave an abusive situation or after they have ended the relationship.

THE HIDDEN NATURE OF ABUSE

Abusive people live among us as our coworkers, neighbors, and sometimes even friends and family members. They do not appear as monsters to the outside world. In fact, they are often charming, charismatic, calm, and convincing. Abusers take control of the narrative and easily assume any given role that suits their needs, even pretending to be the victim.

People with controlling, unhealthy and abusive attitudes know their behavior is not okay. They don't show this side of themselves to most people in their lives or treat others the way they treat their partner. The hidden nature of coercive control creates additional obstacles for survivors because they fear they won't be believed or taken seriously if they do come forward or speak out about the abuse.

The absence of physical violence often pushes domestic abuse into a gray zone even victims sometimes fail to grasp. A person may not recognize they are being controlled or manipulated until their identity, self-esteem, sense of safety, and autonomy have been completely undermined. Civil legal and criminal justice systems also typically overlook aspects of coercive control as domestic violence, leaving victims without the protections and services they desperately need.

HOW TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

The person being abused is typically confused, ashamed, and takes on blame for what is happening to them. Further reinforcing their self-blame are those around them asking, "Why don't you just leave?" This type of victim blaming is not only unhelpful, but also perpetuates dangerous myths about domestic abuse.

Individuals living with domestic violence never have the luxury of simply "walking away." They know that no matter when or how they physically leave, the aftershocks will impact every part of their life. They also know that if they don't get out, they might end up dead—and removing themselves from the relationship will not guarantee a different outcome. The most dangerous time for someone fleeing an abusive relationship is when they are planning to leave and during the first year after separation.


Survivors deserve to be met with compassion, support, accurate information, and safe options. Sometimes, intimate partner violence does not appear the way we expect, but that doesn't make it less real. Instead of focusing on the victim's choices, which are severely limited, we must shift blame to the person who is in control and responsible for the abuse.

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, advocates at The Friendship Center are ready to help. Call 406.442.6800 to access our free and confidential services 24/7. Visit thefriendshipcenter.org/domestic-violence to explore resources for victims and advocates and learn more about our services. 

CLIENT IMPACT STORY:

Roseann

I was married for 15 years. At the end of our marriage, I was mentally and physically abused. That was when I got out of it. I know that God put the right people in my life when I was going through that time: Church family, family, friends, and police officers helped me out in getting away from my husband and getting me into The Friendship Center. That's when I knew it would be okay to keep moving forward, to keep growing and learning new things, and to get to know who I am.

I am thankful to The Friendship Center for helping me out. The workers there are pretty awesome. They are there if I need anything. When the holidays come around, they make it special for us. When I need to talk to someone, they are there for me and give me courage when I need it. 

FALL 2023 EVENTS

OCTOBER

Donor Appreciation Day | October 11, 7:30-10 AM

Sponsored by Sullivan Financial Group

Join us at Montago Coffee (317 N Cruse Ave in new Independent Building) for coffee and pastries on us! Stick around to chat with our staff or stop by to take some goodies to go. We want to thank our community for making it possible to provide vital services to hundreds of people each year.

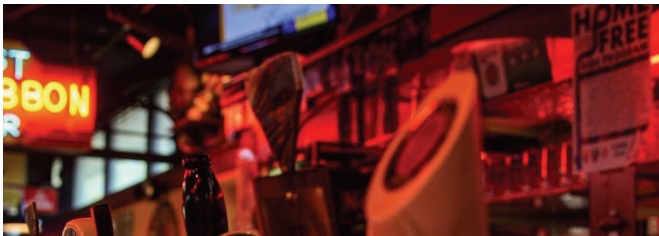
Friendship Friday | October 13, 12 PM

Join us to learn about our work addressing and preventing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson counties. Capacity is limited to 12 and lunch is provided. Visit our website or call to RSVP!



Just for the Helena of It | October 15

Organized by our friends at Treasure State Runners, all profits from this year's 5k, 10k, and half-marathon races benefit The Friendship Center in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Visit runhelena.com to learn more and sign up to run or volunteer.



Rotary Trivia Night | October 18, 6 PM

We're the beneficiary of this month's trivia fundraiser organized by Rotary Club of Helena Sunrise! Join us Downstairs at the Brewhouse for a night of food, beverages, and trivia! Cost to play is \$10 per person and teams can have up to eight people.

NOVEMBER

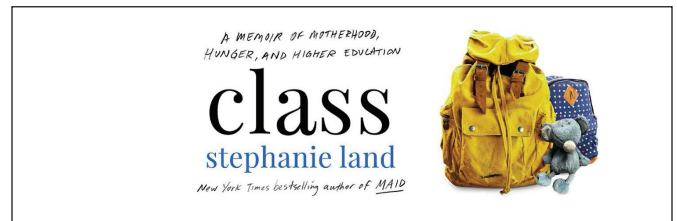


Crisis Line Training | November 2-11

Sign up for our next multi-day training to join the dedicated team of volunteers who help us provide vital 24/7 services. All crisis line volunteers are backed up by staff advocates and have an opportunity to shadow staff as part of this hybrid training. Email Sarah Kamis at sarah.k@thefriendshipcenter.org to learn more and sign up.


Friendship Friday | November 10, 12 PM

If you can't make the second Friday of October, join us for our last Friendship Friday of the year to learn more about our work. Capacity is limited to 12 and lunch is provided. Visit our website or call to RSVP!



A Conversation with Stephanie Land | November 20, 6 PM

The best-selling author of *Maid* is back with a new memoir this November! Don't miss this discussion with Land about her forthcoming book, *Class: A Memoir of Motherhood, Hunger, and Higher Education*, hosted by Montana Book Company at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Helena.

Visit thefriendshipcenter.org/events to learn more about all upcoming events. 



WE'VE GOT NEW PAINT & FLOORS!

NOW 16 YEARS old, The Friendship Center's onsite shelter facility continues to provide services to hundreds of people every year, including more than 6,300 nights of safe shelter in 2022. As with any property, there comes a time when we need to address the wear and tear that comes with years of use. We're able to do that this fall thanks to funding from a Lowe's Hometown grant.

We are so grateful to our Helena Lowe's store for nominating The Friendship Center for this program that's helping us bring new interior paint and flooring to our facility. In addition to the funding, Lowe's employees participate on Red Vest Days, volunteering their time to help us complete the project.

Our 13-room onsite shelter includes two communal living areas that encompass a living room, dining room, kitchen,

and pantry on each floor, six bathrooms, and a laundry room. TFC's administrative offices are attached to our shelter and will also be getting a facelift by mid-November as part of the project.



Ours is one of 100 projects selected for funding from 94 communities across 41 states and Washington, DC.

If you would like to see the new and improved space and learn more about our work addressing and preventing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in our community, join us for an upcoming Friendship Friday! Space is limited, so be sure to RSVP. Visit thefriendship-center.org/events to save your spot for a Friendship Friday and learn more about all our upcoming events. 🐾

MEET MAGGIE HANZEL, *Direct Services Advocate*

Originally from Colorado, my goal after finishing my graduate studies in criminology in North Carolina was to put down roots somewhere close to the mountains and home. The focus of my master's thesis was understanding how social services and law enforcement work together to assist victims of sex trafficking. While researching this topic and interviewing key stakeholders, I became particularly interested in how social service leaders and advocates empower and assist those affected by interpersonal violence and human trafficking. Along the way, I found a growing passion for empowering victims and assisting them in taking back control of their own lives.

I was extremely excited when I was offered a position at The Friendship Center and joined the team of direct services advocates in June. As an advocate, I work closely with individuals who have been affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. I strive to

use the empowerment model and a strengths-based approach in my work with clients. In other words, I believe that our clients are the experts on their own lives, and I try to interact with them in a way that honors that—recognizing their personal strengths and following their lead. As I am relatively new to this work, I look forward to learning more from my direct services team and getting more involved in the organization.

In my free time I enjoy camping with my fiancé and two cairn terriers, hiking, and cooking. Since I'm new to this area, I have enjoyed exploring new hiking trails and all the beautiful things this state has to offer. 🐾





to support ending domestic and sexual violence in our community

Visit thefriendshipcenter.org to give online

Join the Empowerment Club by making a **RECURRING GIFT**

Make a **PLANNED GIFT** to invest in a future free from violence

If you are 70.5 years or older, talk to your financial adviser to donate your **REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION**

Give through **SECGC to #3707** if you're a Montana state employee

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READING RECOMMENDATION / A STEPHANIE LAND DOUBLE FEATURE

In her 2019 memoir *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will*, Stephanie Land took readers on her journey as a single mother living below the poverty line. While cleaning the houses of upper-middle-class clients, navigating a maze of government assistance, and escaping an abusive relationship, Land worked relentlessly to carve out a better life for herself and her child. What she wrote about her experiences would become not just a best-selling book but the inspiration for an acclaimed 2021 Netflix series of the same name.

Stephanie's escape out of poverty and abuse in search of a better life inspired millions. It was the story of a housecleaner, but also the story of a woman with a dream. Continuing where *Maid* left off, Stephanie's forthcoming memoir, *Class*, takes us with her as she finishes college and pursues her writing career. Ahead of Stephanie's Helena visit this November, you can get your copies of both books from Montana Book Company!

Maid is available in both paperback and hardcover and *Class*, coming November 7, is available for preorder now. Visit mtbookco.indielite.org/event to learn more about Stephanie's November event and order either of her books. If you're reading for a book club, email montanabookco@gmail.com to get 10% off your purchase. 🐦

