



Annual Report

JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

Greetings

Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on yet another year of meaningful work, we do so with immense gratitude and pride. The survivors we serve amaze us every day with the incredible courage they display in their journeys, and thanks to you, we have been able to provide the vital resources needed to empower them. Your support allowed us to provide critical and comprehensive services to more than 3,500 survivors of intimate partner violence last year. Our mission to provide safety, shelter, and support for survivors in our community is only possible due to the generosity and kindness of our neighbors, and we are deeply grateful for each one of you.

Our essential programs have continued to thrive, thanks to the generous contributions of our donors, the hard work of our dedicated staff, and the invaluable time given by our volunteers. We are proud to share a few significant milestones from the past year:

- **Increased Outreach:** Our Outreach team exceeded annual goals- reaching well over 5,000 individuals, including nearly 700 individuals from Black Mountain and Fairview, areas where we focused our efforts this year. Educational materials were developed in Russian and Ukrainian to foster accessibility and meet a growing need in the region.
- **Community Partnerships:** The launch of the PorchLight Project, a collaboration between Helpmate, Our Voice, Buncombe County, and local businesses, extended our reach by allowing survivors to call for help from nearly 50 participating businesses across the community. Specialized training was provided to allied professionals, private businesses, and community organizations to facilitate safe and discreet connections between survivors and critical service providers, creating a stronger network of support for survivors.
- **Shelter Expansion:** Construction is officially underway on our new emergency shelter! This critical project has been in the works for several years and we are thrilled to keep moving forward. The new shelter will feature 43 beds designed specifically with the needs of survivors in mind.

As long as the need for our services remains steady in our community, we remain steadfast in our commitment to envision and establish a world free of abuse and violence. Thank you for walking with us on this journey towards a safer, brighter future for all of us.



April Burgess-Johnson

April Burgess-Johnson
Executive Director



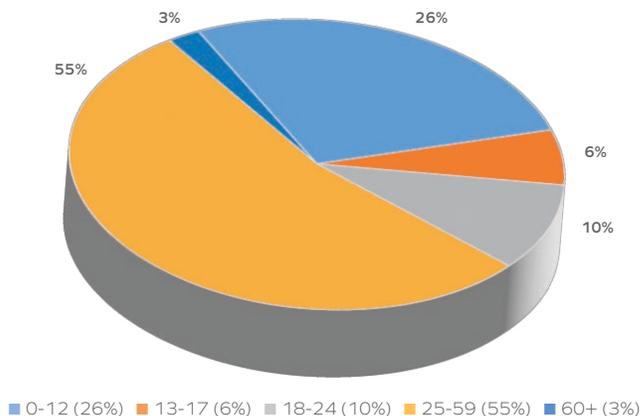
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R. Graham Reynolds
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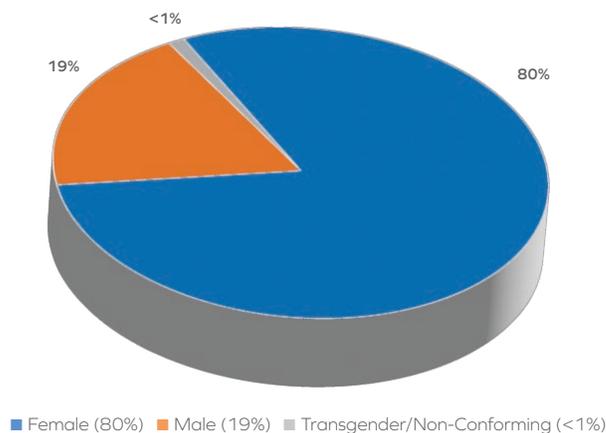
2023 - 2024 Year In Review

Thanks to your generous support, in the last year we...

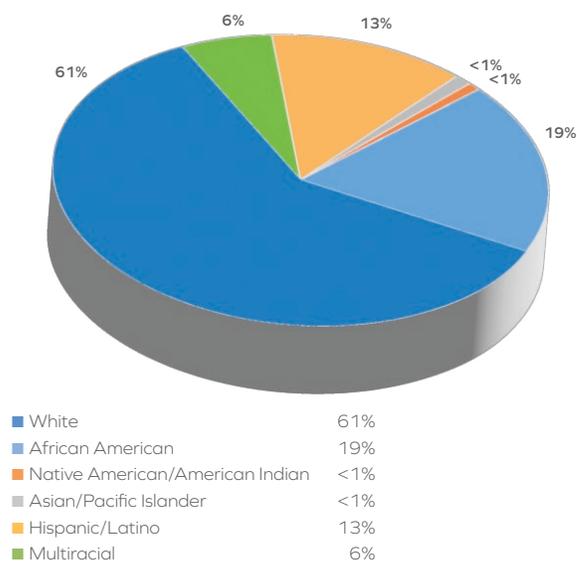
Age



Gender



Race



SAFETY

- Collaborated with law enforcement to provide **644** lethality assessments to survivors in crisis
- Provided **24/7** crisis line support **3,012** times to survivors in need
- Helped survivors form **15,438** safety plans
- **89%** of the survivors we served reported they had improved their safety strategies after engaging in services

SHELTER

- Provided shelter to **157** adults and **81** children, yielding **6,827** nights of safety.
- Upon exiting shelter services, **89%** of survivors reported feeling safer, and **74%** of survivors reported feeling less isolation
- Permanently housed **47** adults and **64** children

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- Offered services to build resilience for **1,574** children in crisis
- Child and Family Advocates worked with **404** families dually involved with Child Protective Services

SUPPORT

- Provided **2,110** free counseling sessions
- Court advocates accompanied survivors who filed **351** protective orders
- Bilingual advocates served **261** survivors with limited English proficiency to support their access to safety. We have seen a **10%** increase in non-English speaking survivors over the past year alone!
- **85%** of survivors we served reported feeling less isolated after working with an advocate and **94%** felt better informed about domestic violence.

PREVENTION & OUTREACH

- Engaged **5,700** community members in **183** different prevention education and outreach events, including **662** from targeted communities.
- Across all quarters, attendees reported an impressive **97%** average knowledge gain.
- **55** volunteers gave a total of **4,909** hours of their time.

Julia's Story

My husband and I had been together seven years, off and on, and had three children together before I ever engaged with domestic violence services.

A veteran, he was charismatic and had a way of building easy rapport with others, but he also had a violent and controlling side that came out in private. He was very physically abusive, but he kept himself protected by virtue of his reputation and my isolation. He wore down my sense of trust in myself and others until I questioned everything, including whether I was responsible for his abuse.

One day, he pushed me to the ground of our rental home while I was holding our oldest child, slamming her head into the wall in the process. He began to kick me while I was on the floor before ultimately fleeing into the woods. I called the police, who came to our house, but no arrests were made.

I ended up in the Helpmate office in the courthouse filing a Domestic Violence Protective Order against my husband. The entire process was intimidating and overwhelming, but having a secure door between my abuser and me made me feel safer, and knowing I was supported by the advocates around me helped me begin to restore trust in myself.

My husband moved out of town but not out of our lives. We still needed to make arrangements regarding our children, so I ended up dropping my order of protection to sit with him in custody mediation. Looking back, it is easy to berate myself for choices I now see as naïve, but I also see more clearly now the extraordinary power of abusers' persuasive and manipulative tactics. I agreed to go out with him platonically one night after mediation, but he grew increasingly hostile throughout the evening. The night ended in a brutal rape that once again left me feeling powerless within the systems I thought were in place to protect me.

I reinstated my protective order and tried to keep moving forward, but my ex continued to exert power and control over me however he could — especially by manipulating and weaponizing our children. He even broke into my house more than once just to demonstrate that he could still violate me. Concerned about my kids' wellbeing and unsure what else to do, I returned to Helpmate for support.

I began to meet regularly with one of Helpmate's therapists. She never made me feel like I was a burden, crazy, overreacting, or any of the things my partner had convinced me of. The

nonjudgmental and unwavering support I received was truly lifechanging. It meant the world for my story to be believed at face value after a lifetime of men enacting harm and facing no consequences while I forever picked up the pieces.

While working with the counselor, I began to identify concerning behaviors in my current relationship. In the wake of the extreme violence I had endured from my husband, I had failed to register the more insidious kinds of abuse my children and I were currently experiencing. Inspired and empowered by my therapist, I ended up entering a graduate program for clinical mental health counseling which reinforced my concerns and made it clear I needed to end things.

I felt as though I didn't have any options — I had six kids, no job, and had just delved into grad school. I felt ashamed that I had somehow ended up here again.

Helpmate advocates worked with me to make a plan to leave my current partner and maintain my own and my children's safety. Unfortunately, my ex-husband used my separation to his advantage and began to make incessant false reports about my behavior and parenting capabilities. None of his claims were ever substantiated, but it took a lot of time, stress, and overwhelm to fight each one.

I am still actively battling my ex-husband in court. I am still fighting for my voice to be heard and my children to be protected, but now I am nearing the end of my graduate program and will soon be a licensed counselor.

I don't know what I would have done if I had never heard of Helpmate. I see now how complacent and enabling the culture around us is to systems of power and control, and I cannot sit idly by while cycles of violence repeat. I hope to one day be for someone what my counselor was to me. The impact of treating someone with dignity and respect who has been made to feel utterly unworthy of either cannot be overstated. Everyone deserves to feel safe, supported, and empowered.



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**Thank you to our
dedicated staff
and volunteers!**

Our Generous Community

Friends and Supporters,

Hope is a priceless gift, and not one easily manufactured. Generosity like yours allows us to provide critical services for survivors in times of greatest need. Together, we can foster hope for a better future and safer community with every interaction.

Thank you,

April Burgess-Johnson
Executive Director

THE SAFE HAVEN SOCIETY

The Safe Haven Society was created as a way to recognize those who support the work of Helpmate by giving \$1,000 or more annually. We are grateful to these 150 families who provide a significant portion of our Annual Campaign funding each year.

Thank you to Jacqui Friedrich and Don Swaby for their leadership as co-chairs of the Safe Haven Society.

THE LEGACY GIVING SOCIETY

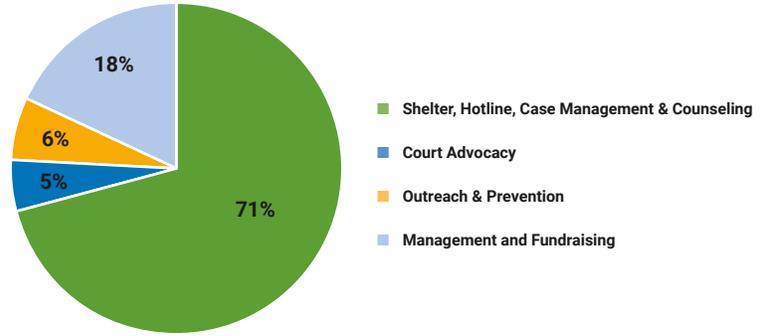
This Society is also chaired by Don Swaby and honors the generosity and foresight of our planned giving donors. We extend our heartfelt thank you to those who make the decision to support survivors long into the future by remembering using a will, bequest, trust or other planned giving method.



Financial Statements 2023-2024

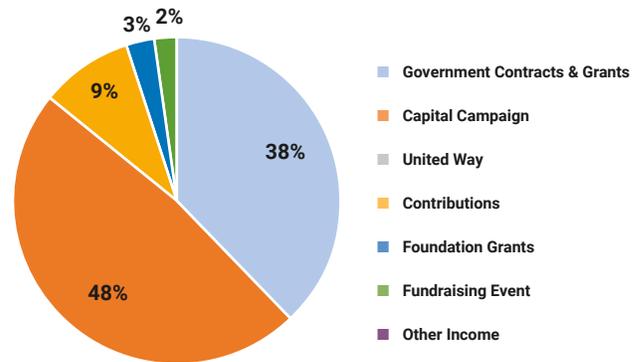
Expenses

Shelter, Hotline, Case Management & Counseling	\$2,680,376
Court Advocacy	201,155
Outreach & Prevention	238,028
Management and Fundraising	666,889
	\$3,786,448



Support and Revenue

Government Contracts and Grants	\$2,574,423
Capital Campaign	3,187,831
United Way	3,235
Contributions	589,972
Foundation Grants	225,731
Fundraising Event	112,835
Investment and Other Income	925
	\$6,694,952



Additional income due to new emergency shelter campaign

Get Involved

You can help create a safer future for survivors! There are many ways to contribute to this work.

Volunteer

- Answer calls to our hotline, bilingual volunteers welcome
- Provide administrative support
- Assist with shelter maintenance
- Represent Helpmate at community events
- Provide childcare during programs for survivors
- Join the Kind Team to help with in-kind supply donations
- Have special skills (cooking, IT, writing, etc.) you would like to share? Let us know!

Partner

- Encourage your employer to become a Business Partner
- Host a fundraiser or awareness event
- Coordinate a social media campaign to promote awareness of domestic violence and our services

Invite Us

- Present to your colleagues
- Meet with your social group or student organization
- Speak to youth with whom you are involved
- Speak to your faith community



Become a Porchlight Partner by receiving specialized training to facilitate safe and efficient connections between survivors and critical service providers. For more information, visit PorchlightProjectNC.org

2023 Hope Rising: Standing with Survivors

As part of our efforts to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Helpmate hosts a special event each October. This event helps raise awareness about domestic violence in our community and provides critical resources to support this work. We thank you deeply for joining us in taking a stand against domestic violence and helping survivors create lives free from violence.

In 2023, Helpmate hosted our second annual Hope Rising: Standing with Survivors Breakfast. We were honored to hear from Ron Kimble — co-founder with his wife, Jan, of the Jamie Kimble Foundation for Courage — as our keynote speaker. He shared the story of his daughter's murder by her former intimate partner and their foundation's mission to spearhead and support proactive prevention, awareness, education and research initiatives to help prevent interpersonal partner violence.

We are grateful to those who helped to organize this breakfast: Chair **Lauren Karlsson, Pam Bailey, Beverly Brignolo, Joyce Greene,** and **Ceil Sanow.**



Lauren Karlsson
Event Chair



Ron Kimble
Keynote Speaker

Thank you to our 2023 Hope Rising Sponsors

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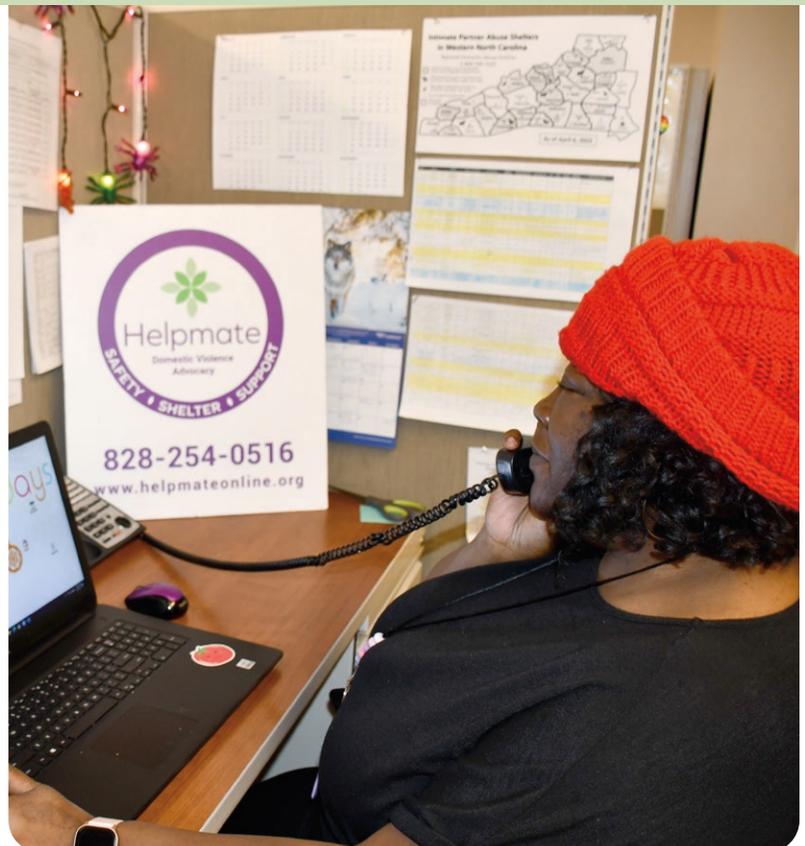
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24 Hour Hotline

Helpmate's emergency hotline operates 24/7/365 for immediate crisis intervention, danger assessment, and safety planning. This is often a survivor's first point of contact with Helpmate and calling represents a courageous moment for a survivor seeking help. Staff and volunteers who answer the hotline receive rigorous training on domestic violence, community resources, Helpmate's programs, safety planning and confidentiality. Whenever a survivor calls, we are prepared to respond with empathy, knowledge and hope. Helpmate implements the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) in partnership with all of the law enforcement agencies in Buncombe County. Through this LAP protocol, responding officers to domestic violence incidents call Helpmate's hotline on-scene and connect the victim directly with an advocate for safety planning, resources and support.

**Helpmate's Hotline
number is
828.254.0516**



Shelter

Helpmate's emergency shelter has 20 beds and offers a safe home to the highest-risk adults and children who must flee their homes to escape abuse. Placement in Helpmate's shelter is prioritized largely based on imminent risk of homicide through a research-based tool called the Danger Assessment. 91% of those sheltered by Helpmate are in the highest homicide risk category. Beyond the immediate safety provided by our shelter, survivors are also provided with basic necessities, counseling, support groups, and are assigned a case manager who meets with them at least weekly to work on their self-identified goals needed to establish a new life which is safe and free from violence. Shelter provides 24-hour staffing and security. Sadly, we receive many more requests for shelter each year than we can accommodate. We are working to address this issue by expanding our shelter programming, with a new and larger shelter scheduled to open in Spring 2026. Survivors who have just left an abusive relationship regularly rely on staff to ease their loneliness, validate their experiences, and help them find hope and see a way forward.



Case Management

Case management is the practical and informed support provided to address a survivor's self-identified needs and goals. Survivors in shelter and from the community are provided a case manager to bring Helpmate's and other community resources to bear in addressing their needs. These needs may take the form of safety planning, addressing transportation needs, obtaining and maintain housing, securing employment, locating childcare, and advocacy with other partner agencies. At the Family Justice Center, survivors seeking services for the first time are assisted by Intake Specialists to access the many community partners on-site, such as Helpmate case managers, law enforcement, Pisgah Legal Services, and Forensic Nurse Examiners. Case managers forge supportive and enduring relationships with survivors.



Survivor Outreach and Prevention Education

Helpmate provides educational workshops designed to raise awareness about available resources for individuals at high risk of domestic violence, including youth and young adults, pregnant women, and individuals in substance use recovery. Our youth-focused programming emphasizes building skills for healthy relationships, non-violent conflict resolution, and respecting personal boundaries, aiming to reduce domestic violence perpetration rates. As part of our outreach, Helpmate's prevention educators collaborate with schools, employers, faith communities, first responders, healthcare professionals, and community organizations to deliver trauma-informed training on the dynamics and impacts of intimate partner violence. These efforts foster a deeper understanding of domestic violence while equipping participants with tools to support survivors and promote safety in their communities.



Counseling

Helpmate's counseling program provides group and individual counseling services, as well as consultation and training across other programs at Helpmate. Survivors receive trauma-informed and domestic violence-informed counseling aimed at healing the emotional, psychological, and behavioral effects of domestic violence and intimate partner abuse. Weekly groups include: Domestic Violence Education Class, Empowerment Group, and Latina Support Group. Helpmate counseling staff also partner with other programs at Helpmate to provide a series of support groups for families who have experienced domestic violence. The Helpmate counseling program receives a high number of inquiries and referrals for services. Because of the high demand for domestic violence-informed counseling in Buncombe County, there is often a waitlist for individual counseling at Helpmate. Individual and group counseling services are provided by a team of licensed mental health professionals and graduate-level clinical interns.



Court Advocacy

Helpmate has an office on the 2nd floor of the Buncombe County Judicial Complex. Having advocates on site for the entirety of the business day helps ensure survivors always have access to supportive services when they enter the courthouse. Court advocates assist survivors who are seeking both civil and criminal remedies. Whether survivors are filing for Domestic Violence Protective Orders, custody, divorce or criminal charges, Court Advocates offer information about the processes and accompany survivors to court dates. Bilingual staff assist clients with translation and navigating language barriers. Court Advocates also assist survivors who have criminal charges that are a result of their experiences with domestic violence. Advocates meet with survivor defendants both in and out of the custody of the Sheriff's Department. Liaising with numerous court personnel, attorneys, and community partners, Court Advocates ensure that survivors are informed, connected to appropriate resources, and that their voices are heard in the often overwhelming and triggering legal proceedings in which they participate.



Housing Supports

Housing case managers work with some of the most vulnerable survivors who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness due to the abuse they have suffered. Our case managers receive referrals for folks in need of housing stabilization services and work with them to create case plans. We assist survivors in identify, obtaining and maintaining safe housing. We collaborate with other agencies and landlords to educate our community about our housing program and, in doing so, increase the number of units for survivors to rent. We offer rental assistance for survivors accepted into our housing programs and prioritize entry into those programs based on level of danger the survivor is experiencing. In addition, we have a transitional housing program called iRise. This is an intensive case management program that offers wrap around services related to housing, including rental assistance to survivors and supports survivors who experienced childhood trauma, have barriers to tenancy and high lethality indicators for domestic violence.



Children's Services

Helpmate's Child and Family Advocates work with survivors to identify and access services, supports, and resources for their children who have been impacted by domestic violence. We offer training and consultation for professionals in the community who serve children experiencing domestic abuse. The team helps survivors address their reproductive health and to access pre- and post-natal care to give their children the best start possible. We support survivors by advocating with Child Protective Services and Juvenile/Family Courts when necessary to help keep children safe and interrupt the inter-generational cycle of violence. We believe that no child should have to live in a home where there is violence and that early intervention is the key to preventing life-long impacts of trauma exposure.



Thanks to All Our Donors!

This list includes all gifts between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024.

Members of the 2023-2024 Safe Haven Society have been bolded. Thank you for your leadership gifts.

Members of the 2023-2024 Legacy Giving Society are noted by asterisks.

Individuals who made gifts to the Emergency Shelter Campaign are italicized.

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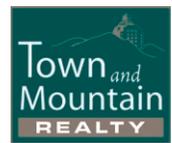


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