



# Annual Report

JULY 2024–JUNE 2025

# Greetings

## Friends and Supporters,

We once again find ourselves at the end of a year like no other. A year of challenges, uncertainty and loss. But also, a year of leaning into community more deeply than ever. A year of gratitude. Connection. Courage. Hope.

Our community, like many in the region, was deeply rocked by the arrival of Hurricane Helene in late September 2024. Survivors and staff alike lost their homes, vehicles, and valuables. Our shelter team worked days on end—with no ability to contact the outside world—to ensure residents had access to clean water, food, and support.

Survivors of intimate partner violence experienced several uniquely grim realities. The understandable broad diversion of emergency services to mitigate the natural disaster, increased isolation from support networks, lack of access to phone service and crisis hotlines, and competition for in-demand supplies and resources all contributed to an increase in violence and a decrease in access to critical services.

We stood fast in our mission to provide safety, shelter, and support to survivors, but our collective capacity and energy dwindled. It was hard not to feel as though the odds were stacked against us. But something else became increasingly apparent amid this crisis: the community we live in is incredibly resilient, generous, and kind. The support of friends, neighbors, and loved ones near and far has been truly heartwarming, and for this we are deeply grateful.

Even beyond the storm, you showed up for survivors of abuse in Buncombe County. May 2025 saw the launch of the public phase of fundraising for our much-needed shelter expansion project. We asked and you answered. Together, we exceeded our \$16 million goal and let survivors know they will always have a safe place in their home community.

Construction of the new emergency shelter is well underway and is projected to be completed by summer 2026. Thanks to your generous commitments, we will more than double our available bed space to meet the needs of our community and provide more than 10,000 safe nights for survivors fleeing violence every year. Lives will be saved and hope will be restored.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful, caring community. You make this work possible.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "April Burgess-Johnson".

April Burgess-Johnson  
*Executive Director, Helpmate*

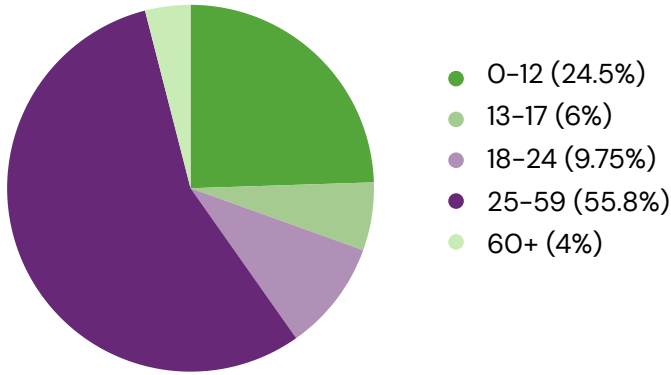


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Graham Reynolds".

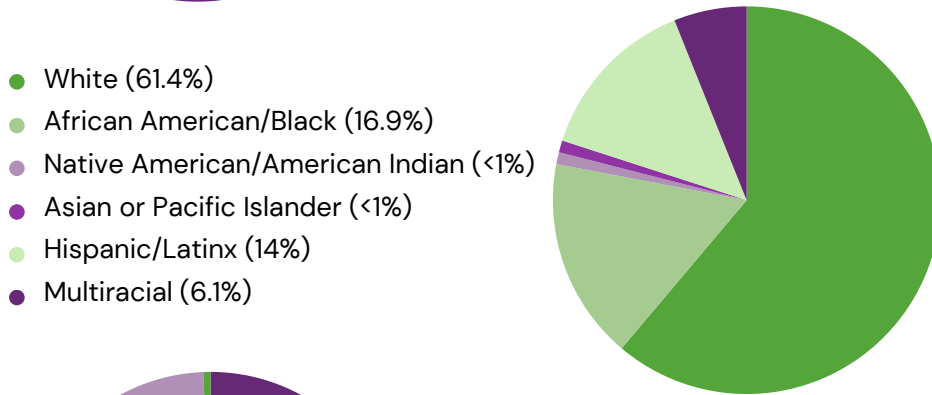
R. Graham Reynolds  
*Board Chair, Helpmate*

# 2024–2025 Year in Review

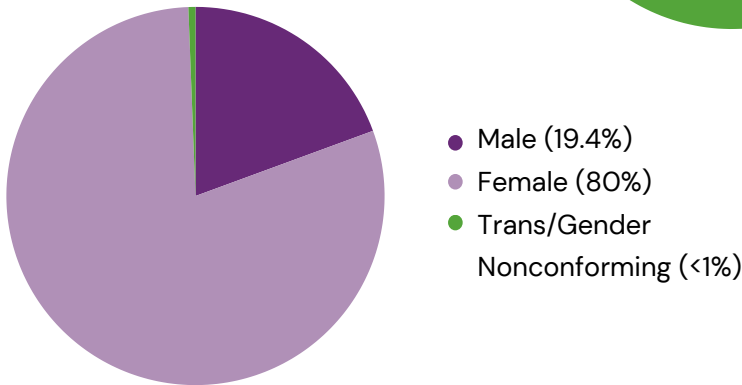
## AGE



## RACE



## GENDER



## Contents

- A Survivor’s Story
- Board of Directors
- 2024 Signature Event
- Financial Statements
- Community Impact
- Get Involved
- Ways to Give
- Programs and Services
  - Crisis Hotline
  - Emergency Shelter
  - Case Management
  - Outreach & Education
  - Counseling
  - Court Advocacy
  - Housing Supports
  - Children’s Services
- Donor Recognition
- Grantors 2024–2025
- Business Partners

In the 2024–2025 fiscal year, we provided direct services to **3,486** survivors.

**88%** of survivors reported feeling less isolated after working with an advocate

**94%** felt better informed about domestic violence

**93%** improved their safety strategies

# Pearl's Story

I remember being distinctly and painfully aware at a young age that my childhood was not like other kids' childhoods. No one I knew had parents that fought like mine did. My childhood would shape how I saw myself and relationships for my teenage years and most of my adult life. I was 12 years old the first time I used drugs and alcohol and 13 years old the first time I overdosed on a combination of alcohol and narcotics.

As I grew into my teenage years, I quickly traded drugs and alcohol for bad relationships. I was 15 years old when I had my first abusive relationship. Six years and three kids later I was ready to start new.

And I was 30 years old when I almost lost my life to Intimate Partner Violence.

My then-partner really started to spiral when I was 3 months pregnant with our son. With rising family tensions with his own family and losing his job, he heavily started to turn to alcohol. I was 15 weeks pregnant with our son the first time he put his hands on me. He was so drunk at the time he didn't remember, and he also refused to believe me when I told him where the bruises came from once he was sober. He promised me then and there he would never touch another drop of alcohol.

My son was 4 months old the first time his dad was drunk and pushed me into a shelf while I held him. I begged him to seek help and he made endless false promises. He would do good for a while and then he would backslide. He tried therapy and medication to no avail.

I still remember the day he came home drunk from work and boldly declared he had found the solution to all our problems. That the only way he would ever be able to be happy and sober from alcohol was to start smoking methamphetamines. I could see the slow creep of darkness beginning to take him over. Like hell was slowly opening the abyss in putrid anticipation of him dragging us all down with him.

The energy in the house was so thick the he morning it all started that it startled me

awake out of a dead sleep, jolting my heart into running away like a warning bell to my system that danger was near. My son was still quietly sleeping beside me, blissfully unaware of the horrors that were about to take place. His dad was nowhere to be seen.

As I got up to investigate, my uneasiness grew heavier, and heavier with each agonizing step. I began a sort of mental checklist like it would help put everything in order. My phone was gone, and the keys for the car weren't where I left them the night before. As I swung the bathroom door open, nothing could have prepared me for what I saw or what was going to happen over the following weeks. In the middle of the bathroom floor was my then-husband, the one who was supposed to love me and protect me. The one person I was supposed to be able to trust above anybody else with a dope pipe in one hand, a torch in the other, and both of our phones, the car keys, and a pistol by his side.

He smiled that kind of sinister smile where your face is making the motions but it doesn't reach your eyes as he noticed me looking at the gun. He spoke so calmly, but his eyes held pure chaos. And I knew at that moment there was no reasoning with him. The person I once loved, so completely gone and utterly destroyed.

The following weeks played out like a sick and twisted movie plot. I did some of the craziest, and most utterly confounding things in pursuit of protecting my son. It was up to me whether we made it out of this alive, and it seemed like with the completion of each task he came up with for me, I marched silently closer and closer to my death. I wondered if there would be a way out of all this, or if I was just slowly helping him get away with murdering me.

One night, he brutally assaulted me for hours, telling me he was "Satan" and he had come to take my soul back to hell. He said he would only stop if I would rebuke Jesus, which I knew in my soul I couldn't do. At some point, the attack stopped and the following days were blissful compared to what had just happened. It was like he was trying to lull me into a sense of false complacency by being sickeningly sweet and over the top. Almost as if to try to

convince me he really did love me, and I was just being overly dramatic about the whole thing.

It wasn't until my son's 1st birthday that I would be able to try to get us free. My ex had found another seemingly mundane household object to turn into a weapon, this time in the form of an old wooden cane. When I put my hands up in self-defense, he was so angry that he bit me on the one closest to him. He then started to strangle me, screaming that he was going to kill me. Starbursts erupted in my vision as everything started turning sort of an orange color hue and the colors started to slowly fade from the outside in, slowly erupting into complete and utter darkness.

As the last bit of color started to fade and my body slowly started to still, my son started screaming and crying from his crib in the next room. My ex released me so quickly that the sudden onslaught of oxygen was overwhelmingly intoxicating as I lay on the kitchen floor gasping for air. He wanted me to go get my son, which took a moment for me to do as I was trying to recover. My body was slow to rise and increasingly tired from the constant onslaught of abuse I had endured.

The hours bled one into the next until he had decided he had his next task for me. Phone in hand, I knew who I had to call and what I was supposed to say. He wanted me to tell the police that armed trespassers had come to our home. He wanted a way out of this without having to take responsibility for his actions, and he wanted my help with the cover up.

But I don't think he anticipated what happened next. The police wouldn't just take a report over the phone. They wanted to send officers out to investigate the claim. The air became pregnant with heavy anticipation, and I swore he was just going to shoot me in the head and be done with it. With the cops showing up any minute, he gave me long sleeves and long pants to wear and makeup to hide in the bathroom and put on.

The cops were at our house for at least a good 20 to 30 minutes before they insisted on speaking to me and not just him. My ex came inside and told me to hurry up because they weren't going to leave until I went out there. I waited until he walked back outside and took my shot. I wasn't supposed to, but at this point I was completely desperate and knew we couldn't go on much longer like this. I grabbed my son from his crib and walked outside.

I so desperately hoped if I toed the line with my words, that by my actions I would be able to get help. I held my son in my arms, praying and hoping with silent desperation that the cops would pick up on my body language or the fact my face looked like a dented swollen pumpkin decorated with half a Walmart aisle of makeup. The cops didn't seem to be buying the story, but despite my best efforts, they didn't separate us or take my son into account at all. I felt like I'd just signed mine and my son's death warrants as I watched in silent anguish while the police cruisers backed out of our driveway slowly, taking all my hope, dreams, and chances of freedom with them.

I didn't know what to expect walking back into that house since I had openly defied my ex by taking our son outside. He stared out the window towards the road for a long time, determined the cops would be coming back and were just gathering reinforcements.

Later that night when he offered up the phone to call 911 for an ambulance, I just stared at him for a solid minute. At this point I fully believed it was a trick and as soon as I said yes and reached for the phone, he would start another onslaught of assault. I knew I wouldn't make it through another. He thought my fear was hilarious and felt confident I could get medical attention without making problems for him.

Little did he know, at this point I had pretty much accepted I was going to die. I was just trying to outrun the clock in the hopes my son would be safe with somebody else when I did finally pass.

The 5 minutes it took for the ambulance to be dispatched and many more that followed as I sat in the back of the ambulance in that driveway, waiting for the cops to show up, are still to this day the longest minutes of my life. I half expected them to kick me out of the ambulance for telling them for the 100th time I'd fallen down the stairs. I know I burnt that poor EMS guy's patience out.

But once I knew my son was safe, I didn't hold any qualms about spilling the proverbial beans. What followed was a whirlwind of activity: doctors, nurses, police, tests. And what seemed like 500 exams. I ultimately decided to follow through with pressing charges. It was there at the emergency room in the earliest hours of the morning that I first heard about Helpmate.

The first time I walked into the Helpmate office, I was a broken, damaged and shattered woman. I didn't have enough pieces of myself left to even have a void and I had no idea how to even begin to find or put the pieces back. With both my parents, brother, sister-in-law, and son in tow, we were welcomed with open arms, lots of water, and yummy snacks. It seems like such simple and trivial things. It seems like such a small act of kindness, offering someone a glass of water or a bag of chips, but it makes you feel human again when all your humanity has been stripped away.

I didn't know it at the time, but Helpmate and the people who work there would quickly become one of my favorite places to be and people to be around. I will never forget the woman who sat there with me that first day. She spent a good solid two hours helping me take those first steps to getting my life back. She showed me the restraining order paperwork for the first time and helped me fill out an application for getting an attorney through Pisgah Legal Services, to whom I will also be eternally grateful.

In the months that followed I spent a significant amount of time in that office coming and going for various court dates. And even though my physical wounds had healed by then, they never forgot who I was. They always met me with the same grace, kindness, and compassion as that first day. They've held my hand and probably seen me cry more than anyone else in my whole life. And I know I am just one of many.

The people who make up Helpmate are some of the most selfless, kind, compassionate, gentle, and beautiful people inside and out. They show up day in and day out for people who are having the worst days of their lives. Even now, almost 2.5 years later, they continue to show up for me in every way possible. I don't think they could ever fully

comprehend the blessing they have been to me and continue to be.

It is through this organization and the organizations that they partner with, along with my family and faith community, that I was able to slowly but surely put the pieces of myself back together and become the woman I am today.

In spite of everything that happened, I wouldn't change any of it. It strengthened my faith, made me stronger, a better person, a better mother, a better daughter. And as a result, I have gotten to meet some of the best people through Helpmate. The kind of people who restore your hope in humanity. They walk side by side with me on my journey to make as much good come from my story as I possibly can.



# 2024–2025 Board of Directors



**Graham Reynolds**  
*Chair*  
UNC Asheville



**Lauren Karlsson**  
*Chair-Elect*  
Community Volunteer



**Joni Lisenbee**  
*Treasurer*  
HCA Healthcare



**Fran Paschall**  
*Vice Treasurer*  
HCA Healthcare, Retired



**Beverly Brignolo**  
*Secretary*  
DWR Audio



**Ginny Raviotta**  
*Immediate Past Chair*  
Retired

**Duane Adams**  
A-B Tech, Small Business Center

**Jennifer Adams**  
Mercer Advisors

**Belinda Grant**  
Mt. Zion Community Development

**Joyce Greene**  
Hour Glass Cleaners

**Anna Grimes**  
Harry's on the Hill

**Cindy Holman**  
Attorney, Retired

**Frederick Hudson**  
US DOJ, Western NC

**Peter Kanipe**  
McGuire, Wood & Bissette

**Michael Lamb**  
Chief, Asheville Police

**Gail Sobel**  
Retired

**Lucy Wheeler**  
CarePartners

*Thank you to our dedicated staff and volunteers!*

## Our Generous Community

*Friends and Supporters,  
Your generosity saves lives. By supporting Helpmate, you let survivors know that they live in a community of care that values their safety. Together, we make hope, change, and healing a reality.*

*Thank you,*

**April Burgess-Johnson**  
Executive Director

### THE SAFE HAVEN SOCIETY

The Safe Haven Society was created to recognize those who support the work of Helpmate by giving \$1,000 or more annually. We are grateful to the 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 using a will, bequest, trust or other planned giving method.



# Hope Rising 2024



As part of our efforts to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM), Helpmate hosts a special event each October. This event helps raise awareness about domestic violence in our community and provides critical resources to help support our work.

This year, our Hope Rising breakfast was scheduled to take place on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The arrival of Hurricane Helene on September 27<sup>th</sup> disrupted this along with other planned DVAM events across the following weeks. Concurrent with the loss of our primary awareness and fundraising campaigns, the need for our services increased significantly.

However, we witnessed our community come together in a powerful way. As we adapted once again to unprecedented circumstances, our generous friends and neighbors stepped up to meet the developing needs of Helpmate and the survivors we serve. Though we were not able to host our signature event, we nearly bridged the fundraising gap thanks to the kindness of supporters from near and far. We thank you deeply for being part of a community dedicated to helping survivors create lives free from violence.

We are grateful to those who helped organize this event: **Chair Lauren Karlsson, Pam Bailey, Beverly Brignolo, Joyce Greene, Lynn Harmon, Angel Jones, Ceil Sanow and Kristy Wilson.**

## Thank you to our 2024 Hope Rising Sponsors

### Challenge Gift Sponsor

Starks Financial Group

### Lifesaving Sponsor

Kendall Wright Oliver

### Premier Sponsors

Jennifer and Nathan Adams

Don and Susannah Swaby

### Leadership Sponsors

Larry and Barbara Griswold

Art Mandler and Sarah Tambor

Jim and Pat Morris

Raymond and Sue McClinton

Graham and Jennifer Reynolds

Bill and Joyce Sederburg

### Supporting Sponsors

Gary Anderson

Diana Bilbrey

Donna and Curtis Ensley

Keith Hamby

Cindy and Tom Holman

Kimberly McGuire and James Samsel

Josh Mellon

Gail and Nelson Sobel

Bonnie and Tom Spradling

Gordon and Wendy Walton

### Community Sponsors

Pam Bailey

Elizabeth Boys

Al and Libby Campbell

Adair Caperton

John and Jeannie Davis

Miles and Millicent Elmore

Shirley and Ernest Ferguson

Steven Foster

Jim and Joyce Greene

Charles and Pat O'Cain

Dana and Jana Stonestreet

Ted and Terry Van Duyn

Lucy Wheeler and Ted White

### Personal Sponsors

April and Willow Burgess-Johnson

Debra and Ted Campbell

Gay Coleman

Margaret Dugan

Alan and Suzanne Escovitz

Lauren Flickinger

Kerry and Anna Friedman

Carol and Martin Gillen

Madeleine Griffin

Larry and Susan Harris

Smith and René Jackson

Angela and David Kemper

Marianne Kilkenny

Barbara Lewis

Christine McGuire

Merritt and Madeline Moseley

Stacy Mullins

Ginny Raviotta

Kay Nash Rogus

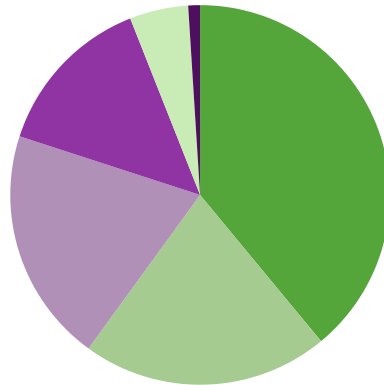
Ceil Sanow

Joe and Liza Stewart

# Financial Statements 2024-2025

## Expenses

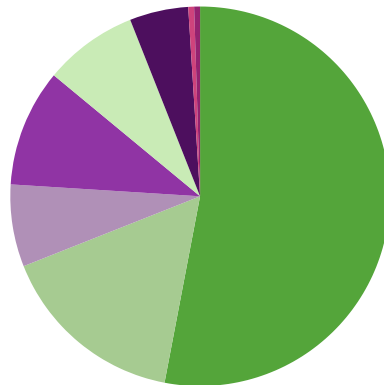
Community Based Services	\$1,423,887
Emergency Shelter	775,566
Housing Assistance	723,538
Management and Fundraising	511,883
Outreach and Prevention	199,372
Capital Campaign Costs	<u>40,390</u>
	<b>\$3,664,638</b>



- Community Based Services (39%)
- Emergency Shelter (21%)
- Housing Assistance (20%)
- Management and Fundraising (14%)
- Outreach and Prevention (5%)
- Capital Campaign Costs (1%)

## Support and Revenue

Capital Campaign	\$5,116,047
Government Grants	1,594,271
Housing Assistance (government grants)	722,274
Foundation Grants	1,007,403
Contributions	762,615
HOP	438,561
Fundraising Event	69,541
Investment and Other Income	<u>43,184</u>
	<b>\$9,753,895</b>



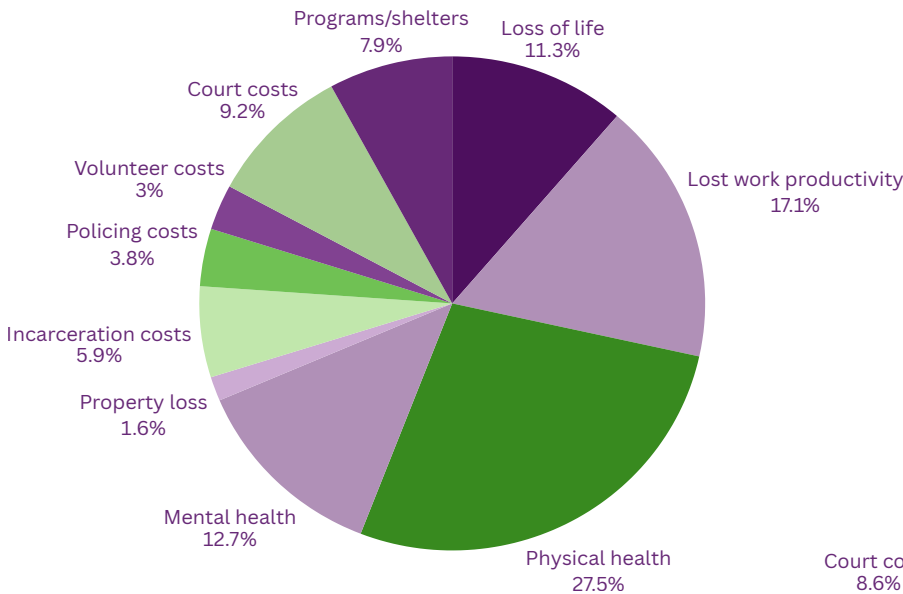
- Capital Campaign (53%)
- Government Grants (16%)
- Housing Assistance (7%)
- Foundation Grants (10%)
- Contributions (8%)
- HOP (5%)
- Fundraising Event (<1%)
- Investment/Other Income: (<1%)

*In fiscal year 24-25 Helpmate successfully completed its capital campaign to build a new expanded emergency shelter. Construction on the shelter is scheduled to be complete by the summer of 2026, and we are looking forward to having sufficient space to not have to refer victims to out of the area shelters. Government grant revenue for core services continues to decline, so we were thankful to receive a \$600K three-year grant from the Dogwood foundation in FY24-25. We also were a participant in the Healthy Opportunities Pilot (HOP) program in FY24-25, and are sorry to see that program end. Our annual Hope Rising fundraising event was canceled as it was scheduled for the week after hurricane Helene, and we are truly grateful to our donors who contributed despite its cancelation. Housing grants provided funds to house 45 adults and 80 children and provided financial stabilization to 28 survivors to prevent homelessness.*

# Community Impact

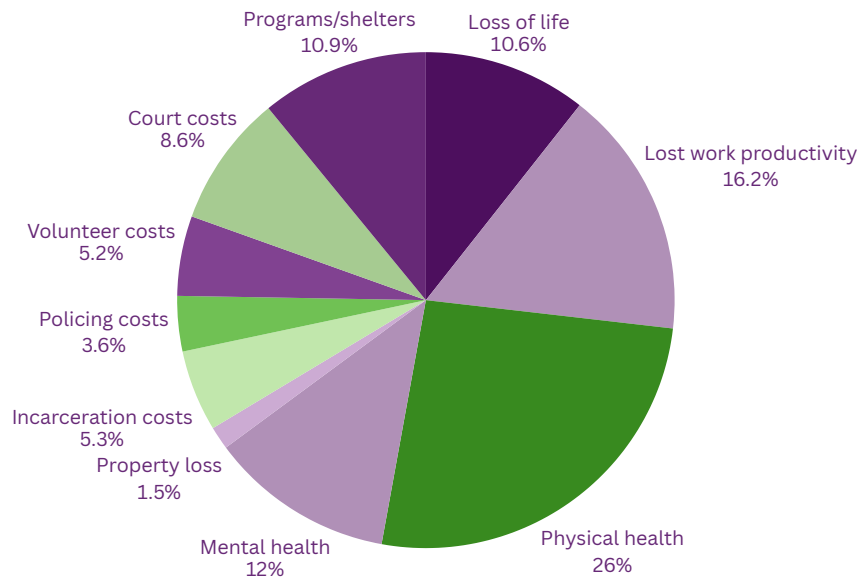
Domestic violence carries an enormous financial toll, not only for survivors but for entire communities. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the lifetime cost of intimate partner violence **exceeds \$3.6 trillion**, including medical and mental health care, lost productivity at work, law enforcement, and social services. For employers, domestic violence translates into absenteeism, decreased productivity, and higher health care costs. Locally, the impact is compounded by Buncombe County's high cost of living and limited housing availability, which make it especially difficult for survivors to regain stability.

Every incident of violence ripples outward—draining public resources, straining businesses, and destabilizing families. **By investing in prevention and support services through Helpmate, our community can reduce these costs and, more importantly, break the cycle of abuse.**



The annual cost of IPV in North Carolina is **more than \$500,000,000**

In Buncombe County alone, that cost is **more than \$13,500,000**



That's about **\$52 per person** in the county.

# Get Involved

## Volunteer

- Answer calls to our crisis hotline, bilingual volunteers encouraged!
- 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!

## 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 group

## Partner

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



### Manage a Business?

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](http://PorchlightProjectNC.org)

## In Their Own Words

*"I felt safe, heard, and understood...I'm just grateful there's a place like this available to get help."*

*"They helped me out in words I cannot express."*

*"Honestly, I don't know what the outcome of my situation would have been without Helpmate's resources and amazing staff. This agency is very needed and appreciated in our community to overcome the frightening darkness of abuse."*

*"Thankful of y'all for everything. I truly have never been to a shelter so supportive."*

*"I felt **heard** and **validated** and **hopeful** for the first time in a long time."*

*"I feel **empowered** and **less alone**."*

***"Helpmate saved my life."***

# Ways to Give

## One-Time Gifts

A one-time donation is a simple way to make an immediate impact. Whether large or small, your contribution directly supports programs and services right now, helping us meet urgent needs for survivors.

## Monthly Giving

Monthly giving provides steady, reliable support that sustains our work year-round. Even modest monthly gifts add up to significant impact, allowing us to plan ahead and ensure services are always available when people need them most.

## Tribute or Memorial Gifts

Honor someone special by making a gift in their name. Tribute or memorial donations celebrate loved ones, mark important milestones, or carry on someone's legacy while making a difference in the lives of others.

## Workplace Giving & Matching Gifts

Many employers offer payroll deduction or gift-matching programs, doubling the impact of your donation. Workplace giving makes it easy to support causes you care about directly through your paycheck, often with added benefits from your employer.

## Legacy Giving

Planned gifts, such as including the nonprofit in your will, trust, or estate plan, create a lasting legacy. These gifts ensure your values live on by strengthening the organization's future and making a difference for generations to come.

## In-Kind Donations

Non-monetary gifts, like clothing, food, or professional services, can directly benefit those we serve or reduce expenses for the organization. In-kind donations are a practical and meaningful way to contribute to our mission.

## Stock and Asset Gifts

Donating stocks, bonds, or other appreciated assets can be a tax-efficient way to support our mission. By giving securities directly, donors may avoid capital gains taxes while receiving a charitable deduction, maximizing both the impact of the gift and the donor's benefits.

# Programs & Services: Hotline

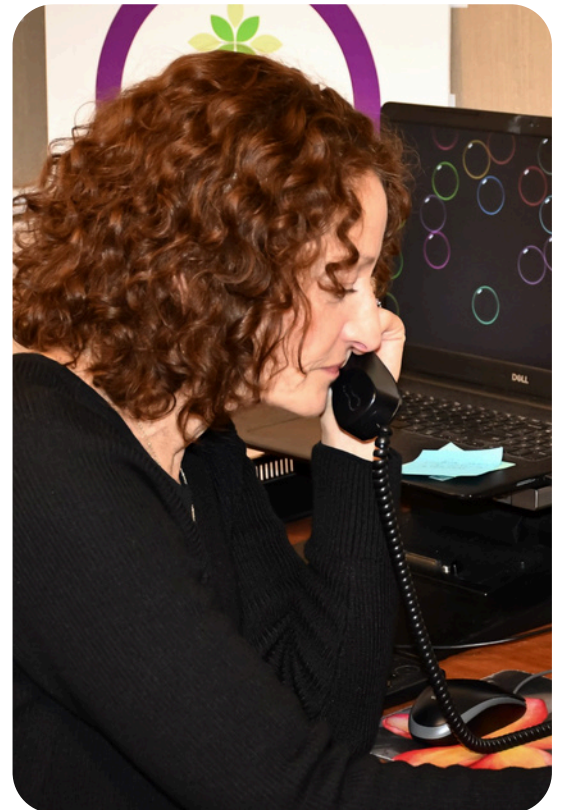
Helpmate's emergency hotline operates 24/7/365 for immediate crisis intervention, danger assessment, and safety planning. This is often a survivor's first point of contact with Helpmate and calling represents a courageous moment for a survivor seeking help. Staff and volunteers who answer the hotline 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, officers responding to domestic violence incidents call Helpmate's hotline on-scene and connect the victim directly with an advocate for safety planning, resources and support.

## In the 2024–2025 year:

- We answered **3,185** calls on our crisis hotline
- **617** calls were made by law enforcement administering the Lethality Assessment Protocol from the scene of a domestic violence-related incident



Helpmate's Hotline  
number is  
**828.254.0516**



# Programs & Services: Shelter

Helpmate's emergency shelter remains the cornerstone of our work to protect and empower survivors of domestic violence. With only 20 beds, the need for shelter space far outpaces our current capacity. Admissions are prioritized using the Danger Assessment, a research-based tool that identifies those at the greatest risk of homicide, meaning that the vast majority of those who find refuge at Helpmate are facing the most severe and imminent threats to their lives. Once admitted, survivors are welcomed into a supportive environment that is staffed around the clock, where basic needs are met and healing can begin. Each survivor is connected with a case manager who meets with them regularly to set self-identified goals and build pathways to safety, stability, and independence. Sadly, we must turn away more survivors each year than we are able to shelter. To meet this reality, Helpmate has launched the most significant expansion in our history: the construction of Joy's House. This new and larger shelter, currently well underway and scheduled to open in Fall 2026, will more than double our capacity and allow us to provide safe refuge to far more survivors and their children. Joy's House represents both a practical solution to an urgent community need and a powerful symbol of our ongoing commitment—that no survivor should have to face abuse alone, and every survivor deserves safety, dignity, and the chance to rebuild their life.

## In the 2024–2025 year:

- We provided emergency shelter to **142** adults and **68** children, for **6,248** nights of safety
- **91%** of survivors residing in Helpmate's emergency shelter fell into the "**extreme risk**" category on the Danger Assessment, which measures homicide risk



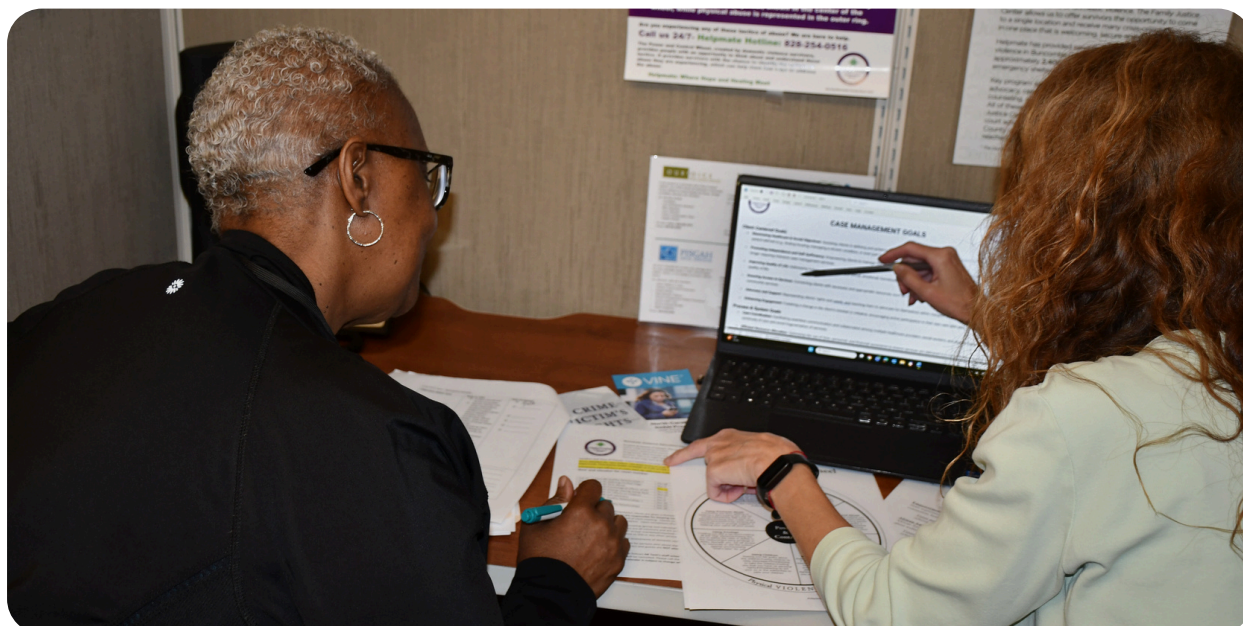
See the latest updates about Joy's House at [shelter.helpmateonline.org](https://shelter.helpmateonline.org)

# Programs & Services: Case Management

Helpmate Case Managers work with survivors staying in our emergency shelter and those receiving services at the Family Justice Center to create and enact personalized plans to foster safety, stability, and support in their lives. Case Managers facilitate connections and provide advocacy with other community resources to support survivors in achieving self-identified, practical needs and goals. These may take the form of safety planning, addressing transportation needs, obtaining and maintaining safe housing, securing employment, and locating childcare. Survivors often lose critical documentation or medication while fleeing abuse, so Case Managers work quickly to connect them with relevant service providers or government agencies as needed. At the Family Justice Center, Case Managers assist survivors in accessing on-site community partners including law enforcement, Our Voice, Pisgah Legal Services, and Forensic Nurse Examiners. Case Managers forge supportive and enduring relationships with survivors as they empower them to rebuild their lives without violence.

## In the 2024-2025 year:

- We provided case management services to **1,284** unique survivors
- We assisted **123** survivors in applying for the Address Confidentiality Program to stay safe from their abusers in their new homes
- We facilitated **807** referrals to Pisgah Legal Services
- We helped survivors form **15,893** tailored plans to keep themselves and their families safe



# Programs & Services: Outreach

Helpmate's Outreach Team provides educational workshops designed to raise awareness about domestic violence and available resources, focusing on high-risk groups such as youth, young adults, pregnant women, and individuals in recovery. Youth programming builds skills for healthy relationships, non-violent conflict resolution, and respecting boundaries to reduce rates of perpetration. Helpmate partners with schools, employers, faith communities, first responders, healthcare providers, and community organizations to deliver trauma-informed trainings that deepen understanding of intimate partner violence, equip participants to support survivors, and help break generational cycles of harm. Outreach also manages the PorchLight Project, now active at more than 40 community sites, expanding safe access points for survivors 24/7. These efforts offer awareness-building, equip community members with tools to support survivors, break generational cycles, and promote safety in our communities by advancing long-term cultural change toward equity and nonviolence.

## In the 2024–2025 year:

- We provided **217** outreach and community education events
- These events reached a total of **6,228** people
- **70** volunteers gave **6,298** hours of their time



# Programs & Services: Counseling

Helpmate's counseling program provides free, confidential 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 classes and several specialized Empowerment support groups. The Helpmate counseling program receives a high number of inquiries and referrals for services. Because of the high demand for DV-informed counseling in Buncombe County, there is often a waitlist for individual counseling at Helpmate. This was especially true during the months that followed the region-wide devastation of Hurricane Helene. Individual and group counseling services are provided by a team of licensed mental health professionals and graduate-level clinical interns.

## In the 2024–2025 year:

- Licensed therapists provided **1,613** individual counseling sessions
- Counseling staff and graduate interns facilitated **5** different recurring support groups, reaching **203** survivors
- Licensed therapists provided field instruction to **4** graduate interns hailing from Columbia University, Lenoir Rhyne University, Tulane University, and Western Carolina University

*“Having a counselor who is knowledgeable on intimate partner abuse and covert, coercive control was the most helpful part of my experience with Helpmate's counseling service. I had been to several counselors in the past, and none of them understood abuse the way my Helpmate counselor did. It is SO important for survivors of abuse to have someone who knows specifically about the nuances of abusive relationships. I am so thankful for Helpmate and for the support, compassion, guidance, and encouragement I received from her. Thank you.”*

- Helpmate Counseling Client

# Programs & Services: Court Advocacy

Helpmate operates a satellite office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Buncombe County Judicial Complex, providing essential Court Advocacy services for domestic violence survivors throughout each business day. Whether survivors are filing for Domestic Violence Protective Orders, custody, divorce, or criminal charges, Court Advocates and trained volunteers offer information about the process and accompany survivors to court dates. Bilingual staff also assist clients with translation and navigating language barriers. Victims establish plans for personal safety, gain an understanding of their legal rights, and receive assistance navigating the court process. Additionally, Court Advocates support survivors facing criminal charges related to their experiences of domestic violence, meeting with them both in and out of sheriff's department custody. By collaborating with court personnel, attorneys, and community partners, these advocates ensure survivors are well-informed, connected to the right resources, and empowered to have their voices heard in the often daunting legal proceedings they face.

## In the 2024–2025 year:

- We supported **1,115** survivors interacting with the civil and criminal justice systems
- We provided advocacy for **433** survivors who received emergency protective orders

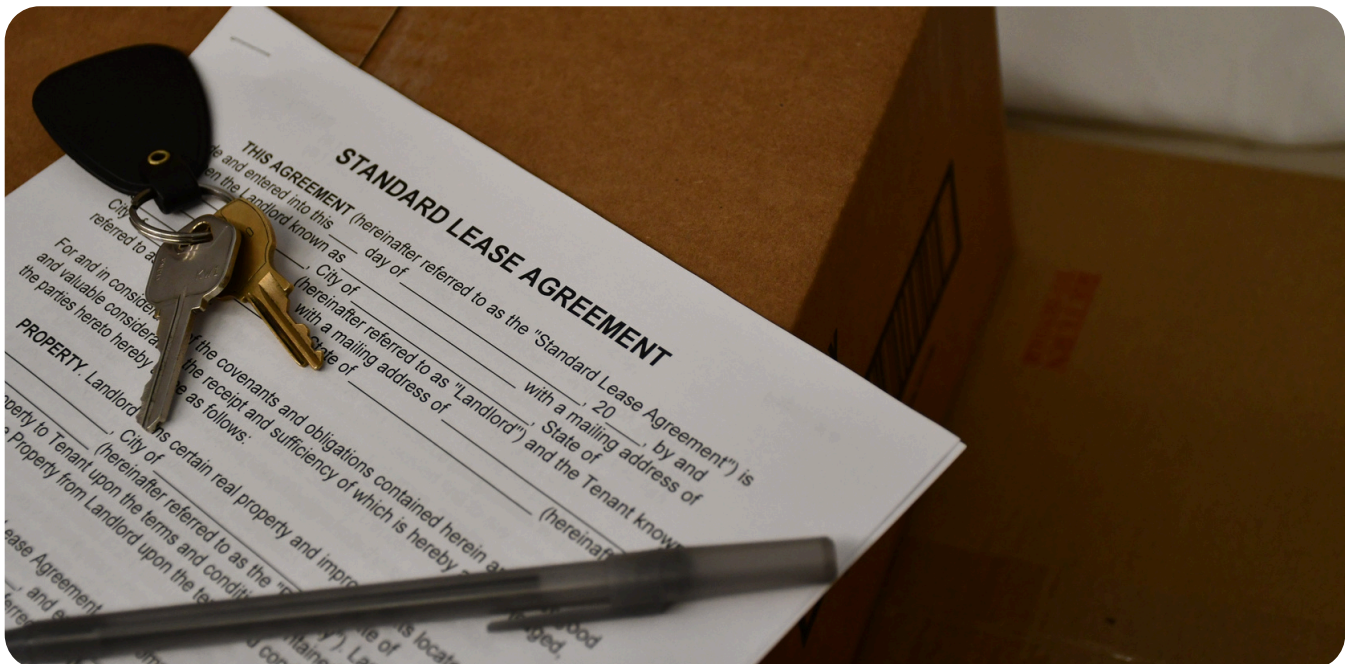


# Programs & Services: Housing

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 individuals and families in need of housing stabilization services and work with them to create case plans. We assist survivors to identify, obtain and maintain 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 available 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, an intensive case management program that offers wrap around services related to housing, including rental assistance to survivors and supports for survivors who experienced childhood trauma, have barriers to tenancy, and have high lethality indicators for domestic violence.

## In the 2024-2025 year:

- We permanently housed **45** families, including **80** children
- **23** local landlords participated in our rehousing program with a total of **41** housing units
- We provided financial stabilization to **28** survivors to prevent homelessness



# Programs & Services: Children's Services

Helpmate's Child and Family Advocacy Program is dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic violence by providing essential services, supports, and resources for survivors and their children who have been impacted by domestic violence. Our advocates work closely with survivors to navigate complex systems related to their experiences, offering case management, crisis services, and specialized in-shelter children's services. We believe that no child should live in a home where violence is present, and we emphasize early intervention to prevent life-long impacts of trauma. Our team also provides training and consultation for professionals serving children experiencing domestic abuse and assists survivors in accessing reproductive health and pre- and post-natal care, ensuring the best start possible for their children. Additionally, we advocate with Child Protective Services and Juvenile/Family Courts when needed, aiming to keep children safe and interrupt the intergenerational cycle of violence. Through our comprehensive services and referrals to community resources, we foster resilience in children and families as they work towards regaining stability and a brighter future.

## In the 2024–2025 year:

- We provided services to **1,233** children
- **68** children stayed in our emergency shelter with their families
- Child and Family Advocates provided DSS advocacy for **242** families involved with Child Protective Services
- We provided advocacy and accompaniment to **124** families engaging with the family court system
- We accompanied **89** survivors to **144** Child and Family Team meetings



*This art was created by children attending Helpmate's Peaceful Families support group*

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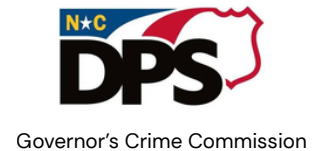
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