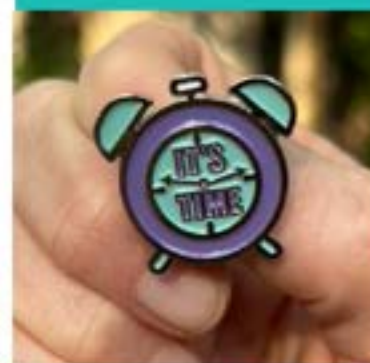


2024 ANNUAL REPORT



domestic & sexual violence
Prevention Coalition



It's Time

“When it’s time, it’s time... and it’s time.”
- Hall of Fame Coach Jim Leyland

The first state in the US to enact a law making it illegal for a man to beat his wife was Alabama in 1871. Nearly 100 years later, in the late 1960's, the ongoing movement to end domestic and sexual violence moved into mainstream discourse. It wasn't until 1994, through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), that federal protections were established for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Throughout the 150 years since the law's enactment, we have encountered incremental change, setbacks, piecemeal funding, exclusion of survivors of varying identities, and selective enforcement of laws. As a result, the national epidemic continues. Today, **1 in 3 women** and **1 in 10 men** in the US experience severe intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Rates against transgender and nonbinary individuals are estimated to be as high as 1 in 2. **Kentucky experiences higher rates of domestic and sexual violence than the national average.**

There is no acceptable justification for where we are now.

We press toward our goal of ending domestic and sexual violence in Fayette County with renewed hope. Building on a century and a half of progress, lessons learned, research, evidenced-based practices, expanded understanding of intersecting issues, and generations of role models, we have never been better positioned to achieve our goal.

We built the foundation for community involvement. **It's time** for a concerted, comprehensive, and collective movement to make our community safe for all survivors.

We cannot rely solely on government institutions, law enforcement, and service agencies to end this violence. Domestic and sexual violence are community problems requiring community solutions.

To be successful, the community must embrace two fundamental principles:

- It's time to be honest about why domestic and sexual violence continue to plague individuals, families, and communities; and
- No one must do everything, but everyone can do something to end domestic violence.

We must acknowledge and act on our collective responsibility toward fostering peaceful communities.

It's time.

In 2023, Mayor Linda Gorton and Lexington City Council prioritized a community-focused effort to end domestic violence by funding **It's Time**. What started as a small-scale effort in 2022 grew into a local movement in 2023.

From the beginning, **It's Time** focused on a community response to domestic violence, encouraging community members to:

- Know about domestic violence.
- Talk about domestic violence.
- Do something about domestic violence.

Recognizing that many individuals harbor a deep passion for preventing domestic violence but may be uncertain about how to discuss it and which actions to take, **It's Time** developed content that models conversations and offers suggestions for actions people can incorporate into their daily lives.



Know About it.



2,500

Wake Up! Lex coffee sleeves distributed

175

Purple Pumpkins placed throughout town with high visibility

200+

Participating businesses

Awareness serves as a reminder to survivors help is available and there are many people in Fayette County who support them.

- In honor of National Sexual Assault Prevention & Awareness Month, we conducted our 4th annual Wake Up! Lex event. 2023 saw record high participation levels with 25 cafes distributing 2,500 coffee sleeves with a message of hope and an opportunity to become part of the solution.
- In honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we distributed 175 purple peace pumpkins to local businesses to display. Each pumpkin held a card with links to resources for survivors and information for community members wanting to do more to support survivors.

Know About It.



Talk About It.



300+

Community pledges

15

Community
engagement events

4.5 M

TV, news, social
media impressions

- Over 300 civic leaders, elected officials, business owners, musicians, activists, chefs, and community members recorded pledges underscoring that domestic violence prevention is of universal concern.
- **It's Time** hosted an informational booth at 12 high visibility events in town including Railbird, PRIDE festival, Latino Fest, Woodland Art Fair, Farmers' Markets, Thursday Night Live, and more.
- We spread the message of **It's Time** through prominent local media outlets including news stations, radio stations, podcasts, digital media, and print media.

Talk About It: Community Pledges



Talk About It.

The “**It’s Time to Talk**” podcast series delves into how individuals in diverse roles, ranging from family and friends to religious leaders and employers, can contribute to ending domestic violence.



Leading with Love

Darlene Thomas, Director of GreenHouse17, and **LeTonia Jones**, writer and social justice advocate, discussed what to do when someone you love is causing harm.



Practice What You Preach

Father Jim Sichko and **Rev. Helen Van Koevering** addressed how the faith community can support survivors and make a tremendous impact on preventing domestic and sexual violence.



It’s Everyone’s Business

Kathy Love, former President of St. Joseph East, and **Rob Perez**, restaurateur and owner of DV8 Kitchen, explored how it’s in the best interest of employers to support survivors.



Man to Man

Dominick Norwood and **Scott Lancaster** of GreenHouse17 spoke with men about their role in perpetuating and preventing domestic and sexual violence.



The Kids are Not Alright, Part 1

Community therapist **Liz Epperson** and **Melissa Wallace**, GreenHouse17 Outreach Youth Advocate, discussed the experiences of children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence.



The Kids are Not Alright, Part 2

Rashmi Adi-Brown of CHES Solutions Group and **Jennifer Johnson** of the Children’s Advocacy Center had a conversation about youth and healthy relationships.

Do Something About It.

It's Time produced a series of videos created to showcase conversations and actions community members can take to help prevent domestic violence.



Conversation with Lexington Leadership

Mayor Linda Gorton, Vice Mayor Dan Wu, and Police Chief Lawrence Weathers discussed the responsibility of community members to lead the effort to end domestic violence.



It's Our Business

Local celebrity and restaurateur **Ouita Michel** announced the implementation of domestic violence policies in her businesses and encourages other employers to do the same.



Changing the Game

Sam Stockley, Sporting Director at Lexington Sporting Club, and **Coy Conner**, beloved community member and youth coach, modeled the positive role coaches can play in the lives of young people.

Do Something About It.



Green Dot Direct

Green Dot is an evidence-based prevention program focusing on different strategies bystanders can use to prevent violence.



Dear Diary

Children are exposed to and affected by domestic violence in multiple ways. Dear Diary gives a short glimpse into the emotions of one teenager.



Our Old KY Home Needs Help

The most dangerous place for women in their home. Our Old KY Home highlights the fear some women live with and provides audiences with opportunity to support survivors financially.

Green Dot Lexington

Green Dot Lexington empowers community members with small, actionable, and safe steps to intervene in and prevent intimate partner violence.

In 2023, Green Dot Lexington **conducted 23 trainings**, including its first ever in-person training at the Hartland Homeowners Association. There are now more than **500 community members** who have stepped up to make Lexington safer for everyone.

In August, Green Dot Lexington recognized National Bystander Awareness Month by celebrating bystanders doing their part to prevent violence. Our week of action events were supported by the generous donations of our community partners.

Lexington organizations continue accepting the challenge to become a **Green Dot Spot** by training a minimum of 15% of their staff. 6 new organization became Green Dot Spots in 2023:

- One Lexington
- Kentucky Refugee Ministries
- Rosa Parks Elementary School
- KAPAAW, Inc.
- Empowering Women Worldwide Ministries
- Audrey Grievous Center/Youth Services

Emmy-winning artist and activist Devine Carama released a new album "Voice for the Voiceless" which included a song dedicated to being an Active Bystander. The song speaks to the challenge of witnessing incidents of harm on the street, in nightclubs or in your home and how by intervening, one person can do something to stop the violence. We are so grateful to him for lending his voice to encourage others to help make our city safer for everyone.

Green Dot Lexington continues reaching more organizations that are the cornerstones of our community, like places of worship, beauty & barber salons, and social justice agencies. We invite you to contact us to provide this **FREE and VALUABLE** content to your staff or membership.

Contact Dawn Runyon at drunyon@lexingtonky.gov for more information.



Housing & Safety

Domestic and sexual violence both contribute to and stem from homelessness. Financial abuse, violent and criminal behaviors of perpetrators, and discriminatory laws and practices by some property owners can entrap survivors, forcing a choice between enduring abuse or being homeless, leaving them with the stark choice of enduring abuse or being unhoused.

Being unhoused increases risks of domestic and sexual violence, as well as new forms of violence. **90% of unhoused women have experienced severe physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.** The two issues are fundamentally linked. Neither can be solved without addressing the other.

Obtaining and maintaining safe, affordable housing is fundamental to safety for survivors and their children. The **Housing Stability Program**, funded through a Victims of Crime Act grant and Lexington Fayette Urban County Government,

provides funds for rent and security deposits for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Fayette County. With referrals from 11 community partner agencies, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition (DSVPC) provided \$60,000 in assistance to 247 adult and child survivors.

The **Safe Measures Program** assists survivors and their children to remain in their homes safely by providing critical safety enhancements. In 2023, DSVPC provided 98 services and pieces of safety equipment to 75 adult and child survivors.

322 adult & child survivors in Lexington received assistance to stabilize housing and increase safety.

How You Can Help

Everyone can do something to support survivors, even if that something is making a financial contribution. By giving to the **It's Time Lexington fund at Bluegrass Community Foundation**, you are part of creating a **new resource** for survivors fleeing domestic violence or at risk of further abuse. Funds will be distributed among DSVPC member agencies to directly support survivors with needs related to safety and stability.



Advocacy

Survivor-centered advocacy lies at the heart of DSVPC's mission and continues year-round. During sessions of the Kentucky General Assembly, we meticulously tracked 64 bills that could impact survivors and consistently provided our network of 140 subscribers with weekly updates.

In 2022, the **DSVPC Fatality Review Team** formulated recommendations aimed at establishing a coordinated response to children who witness and experience domestic and sexual violence. Through advocacy efforts, DSVPC secured funding from LFUCG to recruit staff dedicated to coordinating services for child survivors. Subsequently, in 2023, we initiated the hiring process, conducted interviews with numerous high-quality candidates, and made preparations for the new coordinator's arrival in early 2024.

To alleviate the numerous burdens faced by survivors due to systems and individuals causing harm, DSVPC convened meetings with Fayette Family Court Judges to deliberate on the statutory inclusion of child support in protective orders. The judges responded proactively, and advocates have observed an increase in the number of survivors receiving child support through the protective order process.

Recognizing that 98% of survivors endure financial abuse in relationships with abusive partners, DSVPC is steadfast in our commitment to fostering economic justice. Through grassroots advocacy, we

revitalized our campaign aimed at encouraging more employers to implement workplace policies supporting survivors. As part of this initiative, DSVPC developed a toolkit for local business owners, providing guidance on effective, low-cost strategies to enhance support for employees who have encountered domestic and sexual violence.

To review the **It's Time** toolkit for employers and model policies, visit: itstimelexington.org/do-something-about-it/workplace/



Scan the QR code or visit itstimelexington.org to learn more about the **It's Time** workplace initiative.

Appreciation & Awards

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition hosted its annual appreciation and awards event to recognize and thank those on the front lines of domestic and sexual violence prevention for their hard and often unrecognized works. In addition to our gratitude to everyone dedicating themselves to this work, the following people received special recognition.

Ally in Action

Nikki Hockaday received this award for responding to an employee and survivor with fairness and compassion. While the survivor had been fired from several prior jobs because of the abusive partner's intentional efforts to sabotage employment, Nikki vowed not to dismiss the employee based on someone else's abusive behavior. Without formal connection to domestic violence prevention, Nikki helped the employee create a safety plan, connected her to resources, and found other ways to support the survivor's physical and emotional safety. The survivor stated, "I honestly believe she empowered me to leave and most likely saved my life."



Shining Strength

Since surviving sexual violence and its aftermath at a young age, **Jenna Cassady** has been a warrior for other survivors. She has dedicated her career to this cause, first becoming a victim's advocate, becoming a lawyer to represent survivors, and now as a legal expert at KASAP. She developed and lobbied for a life-changing bill to create protection for young survivors when there was none before, an act that is now referred to as "Jenna's Law."



Spirit of Advocacy

For ongoing and effective efforts to rally others around supporting survivors, **Brittany Scordo** received the Advocacy in Action award. As Director of Victim Services at the Commonwealth Attorney's office, she continues to play a vital role in building support for KY's felony strangulation law, received grants to expand advocacy in that office, trained professionals on the dynamics of domestic violence and experiences of survivors, and helped revitalize the DSVPC Fatality Review Team.

Visionary Voice

Catherine DeFlorio received the Teri Faragher Visionary Voice award for lifelong support of survivors and their children. From establishing victim advocacy in the justice system to fearlessly defending survivors through Legal Aid of the Bluegrass, Catherine has long been the one the community turns to for compassionate legal expertise. This legal counsel paves the way toward safety and self-sufficiency. Thanks to Catherine's work and her willingness to share her vast knowledge, our community is more responsive to survivors.



Guiding Principles

Survivor-Centered:

Practices are centered on and responsive to survivors and those they care about. Practices are trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and nonjudgmental. Survivors are the experts in their unique experiences, providing the foundation for the practices and interventions they receive.

Community Accountability:

Survivors are never responsible for abuse. It is the responsibility of the community to change the culture of tolerance to intolerance of abuse and coercive control, to hold offenders accountable and focus on offender behavior rather than the behavior of the survivor.

Inter-Agency Collaboration

No single organization or system offers the solution to intimate partner and sexual violence. Fostering open communication, transparency, and respectful coordination across agencies increases our collective capacity to hold offenders accountable and serve survivors.

Intentional Access:

All survivors deserve access to systems, services, and resources. Identifying and removing barriers that limit or deny access is critical to increasing safety for survivors.

IPV Informed:

Intervention and prevention practices are informed by the understanding that interpersonal violence is a pattern of purposeful behavior that includes coercion, intimidation, emotional harm, and assault that may vary in scope, severity, and duration. Establishing safety and accountability is an ongoing process.

Anti-Oppression:

We oppose all forms of oppression. While our work is rooted in the historical context of violence against women, oppressions such as racism, sexism, homophobia/heterosexism, classism, ableism, ageism, xenophobia, and others contribute to the perpetuation of interpersonal violence.

Mission

To create a culture of safety and empowered stakeholders through advocacy, education, collaboration, and service coordination for communities impacted by interpersonal violence.



Coalition Members

Executive Committee

Chair: Diane Fleet, GreenHouse17, Assistant Director

Vice Chair: Cynae Adams, Fayette County Public Schools, Violence Prevention Program Manager

Secretary: Sgt. Matthew Silver, Lexington Police Dept., Sergeant

Treasurer: Kacy Allen Bryant, Department of Social Services, Commissioner

Committee Chairs

Advocacy Committee: Aubrey Girouard, The Nest, Attorney, and Hilary Sykes, DSVPC Appointed Member

Best Practices Committee: Brittany Scordo, The Nest, Director of IPV and Parenting Programs

Outreach & Awareness Committee: Ashley Hill, DSVPC Appointed Member

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team: Sherry Currens, Ret. Director of the Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Ex-Officio

Rashmi Adi-Brown, CHES Solutions, Director of Div. of Family and Youth Services

Kacy Allen-Bryant, Dept. of Social Services, Commissioner

Ken Armstrong, Dept. of Public Safety, Commissioner

Hon. Traci Brislin, Family Court, Chair

April Davis, KY Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Service Region Admin.

Hon. Catherine DeFlorio, Legal Aid of the Bluegrass, VAWA Attorney

Lenzi Dodgen, UK Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, Interim Director

Demetrus Liggins, Fayette County Public Schools, Superintendent

Latisha Jackson, Ampersand Sexual Violence Resource Center, Director

Kama McKinney, Chrysalis House, Director

Chief Joe Monroe, UK Police Dept., Chief

Duane Osborne, Friend of the Court's Office, Friend of the Court

Kathy Plomin/Brenda Monnarez, City Council, Councilmember

Hon. Kimberly Baird, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Commonwealth Attorney

Vince Riggs, Circuit Court, Clerk

Hon. Angela Evans, County Attorney's Office, County Attorney

Shelia Horton-Holt, Family Care Center, Director

Alice Salyers, Nursing Home Ombudsman Agency of the Bluegrass, Ombudsman

Coalition Members

Danielle Sanders, Community and Resident Services, Director

Winn Stephens, Children's Advocacy Center, Director

Isabel Gereda Taylor, Global Lex, Multicultural Affairs Coordinator

Darlene Thomas, GreenHouse17, Director

Hon. Lindsay Hughes Thurston, District Court, Judge

Angela Wallace, SANE, Director

Chief Lawrence Weathers, Lexington Police Dept., Chief

Jeffery White, The Nest, Director

Sheriff Kathy Witt, Office of Fayette County Sheriff, Sheriff

Appointed Members

Rania Belmadani

Ashley Hill

Stephenie Hoelscher

Margaret McGladrey

Ashleigh McGuire

Emily McKenzie

Rujeko Machinga

Rana Rahman

Hilary Sykes

Tania Whitfield

Committee Members

Khadijah Ahmad

Christy Alfaro

Katelynn Arana

Sami Barefield

Trisha Bernard

Paige Blevins

Trina Brown

Zanyla Brown

Carly Buchanan

Jessica Castleberry

Holly Davis

Lelia Gillespie

Debbie Goonan

Olivia Grigsby

Crystal Happy-Clay

Cometta Harris

Kim Harrison

Kathleen Hartig

Jennifer Johnson Koch

Casey Lyons

Katrina Martik

Evan Mason

Stephanie Mersch

Katie Mooney

Jarrett Murphy

Natalie Painter

Emily Bonistall Postel

Sandra Rodriguez

Lillie Ruschell

Gaston Sankayi

Alex Smith

Amy Smith

Whitney Turner

Kelly Wells

Kristen Wilson

Staff

Stephanie Theakston, Coordinator

Dawn Runyon, Green Dot Specialist

Stephanie Mersch, Intern

Alex Smith, Intern