

# SAFE PASSAGE PROVIDES FREE, CONFIDENTIAL ADVOCACY, INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

— Sandy Conrad  
sconrad@fvshopper.com

Safe Passage, founded in 1981, provides confidential advocacy, intervention and prevention to victims of domestic and sexual violence as well as promoting the right of everyone to enjoy non-violent and abuse-free relationships.

A new member of the Sandwich Chamber of Commerce, this newspaper wants to make survivors aware that free services are available to all, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, immigration status or ability to pay.

Safe Passage is a 501c3 private not-for-profit organization that is a comprehensive human service agency located in DeKalb County. It serves not only victims, but also those convicted of domestic violence offenses.

It provides a 24-hour hotline, short and long term transitional housing (including all food and personal items), children's therapy, legal advocacy, 24 hour hospital response, prevention programs for both adults and children and assessments and educational groups for those arrested and referred by the court.

Sadly, it is known that over 90% of children that are sexually abused knew and trusted the person who abused them.

Domestic violence is a threat to the public and it is important to continue to encourage national attention of it. Many cases include harassment of family members and often murder, some of which sometimes evades law enforcement.

Abusive individuals who are not held accountable are a risk. Violence, stalking and controlling behavior should not and cannot be tolerated. Mass shootings are becoming all-too-common everyday occurrences. There must be discussion about the connections between toxic behavior and violence. People have the inalienable right to be safe.



Many do not recognize stalking behavior or know what to do about it. It could be by means of a vehicle which continuously follows another car, someone hiding in the bushes around a home or even a "peeping Tom." Many times it is simply found within the context of a dating situation where one person becomes uncomfortable with the nature of the relationship with another person who will not take "no" for an answer. Constant pressure is applied to be available and to spend more time together. Or, the stalker begins to show up unexpectedly or calls repeatedly. It can become an incredibly dangerous situation and is usually terrifying. It is strongly suggested that victims let friends and family know what is happening to make them feel unsafe.

For many the holiday season is a time of warmth, love and acceptance. But for others, it is a time of loneliness and the desire for a new beginning. Safe Passage can be the start that is needed, a place to re-learn what it means to be safe, whole and respected. For over 900 adults and children during 2018, it was the start of a new life filled with healing, hope and possibility.



Because of the donations and support of the community, shelter, counseling and crisis support have been provided for brave survivors of domestic violence. Help them by donating online at [www.safepassageadv.org](http://www.safepassageadv.org) or mail your check to POB 621, DeKalb, IL 60115.

Safe Passage has been awarded the Guidestar Gold Seal of Transparency in 2017 and the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce Non-profit Organization Award in 2018. They are extremely grateful for those across the country who are speaking out with strength, especially those who spoke at the annual Domestic Violence Vigil. They are grateful for every survivor who meets with a counselor and begins to process the trauma they've experienced. They are thankful for those who raise their voices in anger and celebration, those that matter and are becoming stronger. They love the opportunity to do the work that they do and, hopefully, that someday they won't be needed. The least any of us can do is to stay aware and stay involved. Together, the silence and stigma surrounding domestic and sexual abuse is being broken.

For further information, call Client Services at 815/756-5228 or 815/756-7930.