



the Bridge
VIOLENCE ENDS.
EMPOWERMENT BEINGS.

FALL 2023

Festival Of Hope Fuels Our Mission

In a world where hope often seems elusive, a beacon of light shines brightly in the form of the “Festival of Hope” silent auction. Hosted by The Bridge, this event aims to make a real difference in the lives of survivors.

The Festival of Hope is more than just a fundraising event; it’s a community coming together to support those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. The silent auction promises an array of incredible items, from family experiences to beautiful holiday gifts, all generously donated by individuals and businesses passionate about the cause.

Every dollar raised for this event goes directly to helping survivors rebuild their lives, providing safe shelters, counseling and education.

The Festival of Hope will begin **November 22nd until December 3rd**. Items will be cataloged online and on display at Abe Kransé’s Home Furnishings in downtown Fremont.

If you’d like to donate items for the auction, reach out to our team, 402.721.4340.

Your participation in the Festival of Hope brings us one step closer to creating a world free from violence and full of hope. Together, we can make a lasting impact.



Unified Forces: Collaborating With Saunders County Agencies

In a significant step toward combating domestic violence, The Bridge presented a training to several key Saunders County agencies including victim advocates, attorneys and law enforcement. The gathering aimed to foster collaboration, enhance communication and refine strategies to better support survivors of domestic violence within the community.

Stacey Lichtenberg, Community Education and Prevention Coordinator at The Bridge, began the meeting, “Everything we know has come from the thousands who have bravely trusted us to help them. It is their stories that teach us so we can better respond in the future.”

Two survivors, a mother and daughter, shared their 25-year story of abuse, noting milestones where law enforcement, medical personnel, judicial courts, family and friends missed opportunities to intervene to help them. Their experience made a real impact on those listening.

One key takeaway from the training was the importance of a coordinated response to domestic violence cases and connecting victims to advocates, creating a more robust safety net for survivors, a clearer path to justice, protection and recovery.

Another significant outcome was the improved referral procedures to The Bridge at the Saunders County Sheriff’s Department which will be more consistent, compassionate and effective from the moment survivors reach out for help.

This collaborative effort exemplifies the power of unity in addressing one of society’s most pressing issues, and it paves the way for a safer, more empathetic future for all survivors.



It Takes A Village: Community Compassion & Generosity Makes An Impact For Others

Fremont Alliance Church Paper Drive

We are so grateful that the Fremont Alliance Church and their Vacation Bible School for coordinating a paper drive that truly makes a difference. Literal carloads of paper towels, tissues and toilet paper will not only serve practical needs but also sends a powerful message to survivors - that they are surrounded by a caring community ready to stand with them through thick and thin.



American Baptist Women's Ministries Care Packs

The Bridge received an outpouring of support from the dedicated team at Fremont Baptist Church. The American Baptist Women's Ministries provided essential care packages filled with toiletries, clothing and comfort items that will have an immediate impact for survivors and their families. This gesture embodies the spirit of empathy and solidarity that is essential to our mission!



First Interstate Bank Grant Award

The Bridge was awarded a \$3,000 grant from First Interstate Bank (Fremont, Nebraska) to replace the 20-year old Silent Witness wooden silhouettes with updated banner stands.

This exhibit promises to be an educational and impactful tool, shedding light on the realities of domestic violence and sexual assault while also promoting awareness and prevention. With the generous support of this grant, we can now bring this vital project to life, ensuring that these victim's voices are heard and the community is better equipped to understand and combat violence.



Join Our Team: We're Hiring For Impactful Roles!

The Bridge has two compelling opportunities to make a meaningful impact in our community. These roles aren't merely jobs, they're chances to join a mission-driven community, combating domestic violence through strategic marketing and resource mobilization. Seize the chance to drive change and empower survivors!

Marketing Coordinator - Full-Time

This position is the linchpin of our operations that orchestrate seamless internal processes while extending impact into the community. It offers the opportunity to wield your creative prowess to amplify our message, utilizing digital platforms and innovative campaigns to raise awareness.

Development Director - Full-Time

The Development Director steers fundraising endeavors to sustain vital services and drives strategic planning for The Bridge for future growth. Collaborate with a dedicated team and shape narratives that resonate, attract prospective donors and fortify our mission.

If you or someone you know would be interested in either position, view job descriptions to learn more and apply online at [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) or email your resume to Info@BridgeFromViolence.com.

Thank You

We extend our deepest gratitude to the incredible individuals and organizations who have generously contributed to our cause in the fight against domestic violence. Your kindness, whether in the form of financial donations, resources, or time, is a testament to the strength of our community, and we couldn't do it without you.

CIRCLE OF HONOR

Patricia Bentsen

Salem Covenant Sunday School

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Trinity Lutheran Church

First Lutheran - Christian Growth

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Jessica Reed

Kathy Murphy

St. Patrick Catholic Church

First Lutheran Church

Jan Jordan

Wendy Schleis

First Baptist Church - ABWM

Kathy Howerton

"I cannot express the feelings I have toward The Bridge and all the people I have been blessed to meet over the years. The Bridge has given me hope when I thought there was none, encouragement when I thought I was alone, pride when I thought I wasn't worth it and love when I thought I was unlovable."

-- Former Bridge Client



UPCOMING EVENTS



Friday, October 6

Chamber Coffee

The Bridge - Fremont Office

9:00 - 10:00 AM



Thursday, October 26

Candlelight Vigil

Midland University - Student Center

6:30 - 7:00 PM



Wednesday, November 1

Volunteer Training

The Bridge - Fremont

5:30 - 8:00 PM



Wednesday, November 8

Volunteer Training

The Bridge - Fremont

5:30 - 8:00 PM



November 22 - December 3

Festival of Hope Silent Auction

Items displayed online and at

Abe Krasne's Downtown Fremont

From The Director's Desk

The Crucial Role Of The Survivor's Voice

There seems to be an awesome theme happening throughout this newsletter and it makes my heart happy! 25 years ago, The Bridge held its first Candlelight Vigil in October, creating a safe space for survivors to share their stories. The following year we began the Silent Witness Project for those who have lost their lives due to violence and they have been present at every vigil since.

Last month, we collaborated with Saunders County Law Enforcement - and it was another significant milestone at The Bridge. It was our first victim-centered meeting that also included survivors, their story guided the training. During the presentation, I was struck by a comment made by a previous client about the importance of listening to victim's stories:

*"I wanted to protect my family, my friends. I wanted to live in peace, and quiet. I protected my family from being injured, and killed, but couldn't stop their hearts from being hurt in every way, and **we all learned together that silence can be very loud.**"*

By sharing their experiences, survivors offer invaluable insights to law enforcement, first responders and county attorney's. This firsthand perspective fosters empathy, understanding and informs more effective responses.

The survivors involved in the training were grateful for the opportunity to give back in such a meaningful way. They will be speaking again at our **Candlelight Vigil on October 26th at Midland University**. Put it on your calendar and join us - we'd love to see you there!

As always thank you for your invaluable support in our mission to eliminate domestic violence. Together, we are making great progress!

Suzanne Smith
Executive Director, The Bridge

Our Mission

The mission of The Bridge is the prevention and elimination of domestic violence and sexual assault. We work to enhance safety and to promote equality in relationships. We are opposed of the use of violence to control the lives of others. The Bridge is committed to eliminating violence in the lives of women, children and men through empowerment, education and social change.

Our Staff

Suzanne Smith
Executive Director

Jody Bykerk
Shelter Program Manager

Stacey Lichtenberg
Community Education Coordinator

Jody Koziol
Washington County Outreach
Coordinator

Jennifer Thomason
Advocacy Program Manager

Kylie Kampschneider
Sexual Assault Services Coordinator

Luisa Soto
Crisis Intervention & Bilingual Advocate

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Becky Novacek

Stephanie Scheer

Kylee Stanley, M.D.

Claire Eckhardt

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

On a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide.



Contact

Serving Burt, Cuming, Dodge, Saunders & Washington Counties

Fremont Office
402.721.4340
141 S Union Street
Fremont, NE 68025

Blair Office
402.533.4411
810 N 22nd Street
Blair, NE 68008

24-Hour Crisis Line
402.727.7777
888.721.4340 (toll free)

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