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*No interviews available at this time*

## **Gabby Petito Foundation Partners with Organizations Supporting Survivors**

*National Domestic Violence Hotline, SafeSpace and The AWARE Foundation to receive donations*

NEW YORK – [The Gabby Petito Foundation](#), started by the family of Gabby Petito, is on a mission to support organizations assisting families in locating missing persons, and to provide support to organizations that assist survivors of domestic violence through education, awareness and prevention.

Since Gabby's disappearance and her tragic death, thousands of people have reached out to the foundation to share their stories, seek support and connect with fellow survivors. The Petito family wish to turn their personal tragedy into positive change by supporting those on the front lines doing critical and lifesaving work.

"We want to honor Gabby's memory and life by ensuring that no one ever has to experience what she did. We want survivors to know that they aren't alone and that there are amazing organizations ready to help," said **Nichole Schmidt, Gabby Petito Foundation co-founder and Gabby's mother.**

The foundation, which has received generous contributions from people around the world, is giving three significant donations this month to the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) (The Hotline), [SafeSpace](#), and [The AWARE Foundation](#).

"These three organizations are doing incredible work on the front lines of missing persons and responding to those impacted by abuse," said **Joe Petito, Gabby Petito Foundation co-founder and Gabby's father.** "Our foundation is honored to present them with this support."

According to The Hotline, domestic violence is often misinterpreted as a private issue. It is, in fact, a long-running public health crisis that affects the safety of families and communities across the country. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey conducted in 2010 by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that one in four women and one in seven men aged 18 and older in the United States will experience severe physical violence in their lifetime. The CDC also found that nearly half of all female homicide victims are killed by a current or former dating partner. The Gabby Petito Foundation has featured information on how to contact The Hotline on their website, so that those reaching out to share their stories could access support and resources. To date, more than 300 people have reached out to The Hotline from the foundation's website.

"We know that survivors are extremely strong and resourceful. We are amazed every day by their bravery," said **Katie Ray-Jones CEO of the National Domestic Violence Hotline.** "The Hotline is here to support them 24/7 and this contribution from the Gabby Petito Foundation will allow us to continue our critical services during a time when those impacted by domestic violence are at increased risk of abuse."

In October 2021, The Hotline experienced one of the highest contact volumes in a single month in their 25-year history and will answer their 6 millionth call in early 2022.

SafeSpace's mission is to empower adult victims of domestic violence and their children through intervention, prevention and advocacy services. Since its founding in 1979, SafeSpace has provided nearly half a million safe nights of shelter to more than 40,000 victims and children throughout the Treasure Coast of Florida.

"We are grateful to be partnering with the Gabby Petito Foundation in providing life-saving programs and services, and bringing heightened awareness to the worldwide epidemic of intimate partner violence," said **SafeSpace CEO Teresa Albizu,** "We will continue working to deliver quality programs and services to adult victims of domestic violence and

their children on the Treasure Coast of Florida. The unfortunate reality is that COVID-19 continues to increase the risks for those impacted by domestic abuse.”

This grant award will be used to support SafeSpace opening a 19-bed emergency shelter in Indian River County early in 2022.

The AWARE Foundation (AWARE), started in 2016, assists families of missing persons to raise awareness by distributing flyers, securing billboards, working with media and holding events. This organization supports families with their most critical needs when a loved one is missing. Gabby’s parents first turned to AWARE for help to get the word out that Gabby was missing.

“Gabby's family decided to make a difference. They could have grieved in silence, and everyone would have understood, but instead they chose to help other families and survivors through the Gabby Petito Foundation,” said **Kenny Jarels of AWARE**. AWARE worked closely with the Petito family during the search for Gabby and was named an "Everyday Hero" by the Investigation Discovery Network in 2020.

*If you or someone you know is experiencing relationship abuse in any form, help is available. The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides free, confidential support 24/7/365. Text START to 88788, call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), or chat online at TheHotline.org. You are not alone.*

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National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

Safe Space shelter [www.safespacefl.org](http://www.safespacefl.org)

The Aware Foundation [www.theawarefoundationofvirginia.com](http://www.theawarefoundationofvirginia.com)