



With Survivors, Always: Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October marks not only a time of change in the color of the leaves and cooler temperatures, but also a time dedicated to creating change within our community. Every year during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, communities across the country unite to eliminate the ongoing threat of domestic violence and to support survivors. This remains a pervasive issue, with an estimated 1.4 million Nebraskans experiencing intimate partner violence during their lifetime. To brighten the spotlight on this issue, our team continues to raise awareness with events like Purple Thursday, the Silent Witness Tour, and our upcoming annual Night of Hope.

Purple Thursday

On Thursday, October 16th, individuals and groups across our 5-county area joined one another in wearing purple for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Together, our community wore purple as a symbol of courage, survival, honor, and dedication to eliminating domestic violence. We wore purple to remember those who we have lost due to this violence, and we wore purple to send the message that there is no place for domestic violence in our community.



Nebraska Eastern Star Hooper Friendship Chapter



Fremont / Dodge County 911



Silent Witness Display at St. Patrick's Catholic Church

Silent Witness Tour

To kick off Domestic Violence Awareness Month, our Silent Witnesses began their annual tour around our 5-county area. At each stop, visitors read about the mothers, daughters, friends, and loved ones that we have lost in our community due to domestic violence. After reading the stories of Stacey, Katie, Kayla, Tessi Jo, and Sandy, visitors learned more about available resources and support at The Bridge and had the option of taking a purple ribbon to show their support. Thank you to Wahoo Library, St. Patrick's Church, Lyons Library, First Baptist Church, Keene Memorial Library, Lotus Behavioral Health, Methodist Fremont Health, Memorial Community Hospital, and Midland University for providing spaces for the Silent Witness Tour.

Join Us for the Annual Night of Hope

Mark your calendar for our annual Night of Hope candlelight vigil on October 30th! From 6:30 PM to 7 PM at Midland University's Olson Student Center, join us for an evening featuring a local survivor recounting her journey to safety and a performance by the Fremont Middle School Choir as we light purple glow sticks in honor of those who have lost their lives to domestic violence. Silent Witness banners and silhouettes will also be in attendance for our community to view before and after the event.



Meet Rossana: The Bridge's Spanish Speaking Services Coordinator

My first contact with The Bridge was around 2006 when I became involved in supporting the Spanish-speaking group. At that time, my life was not entirely settled in Fremont; however, it was a rewarding experience being involved with The Bridge. The experience allowed me to see the great need for our Spanish-speaking community to access support in their own language during difficult times such as experiencing domestic violence. Life's twists and turns eventually put me back on the path with an opportunity to collaborate with The Bridge's novel cause, with which I have a great passion for.

Fremont welcomed my family over 20 years ago; it was my parents who chose to call Fremont our second home after emigrating from Mexico. It wasn't until several years later that my son and I reunited with my parents to be closer to them and strengthen our bonds.

Since I became part of the Fremont community, I have actively participated in efforts to help support our Spanish-speaking community. Perhaps the most important reason that motivates me to do this work is my son Ignacio; I want him to grow up feeling like part of a community that accepts and protects him. This is another part of why I do this work. I'm committed to helping the members of our Spanish-speaking community who have every right to feel accepted without judgment or exclusion.



Rossana, Spanish Speaking Services Coordinator

Our Mission to Meet a Growing Need

While our Advocates, volunteers, and overall community continue to make strides in the effort to eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault, we have seen a significant increase in the need for our services. The numbers below reflect our 5-county services area's need for crisis intervention and support throughout September 2025.



**Responded to
382 Calls to
Our 24 - Hour
Crisis Line**



**Provided Crisis
Intervention &
Support to
87 Individuals...**



**...With 88 Children
Involved in Crisis
Intervention
Support**



**Provided
Emergency
Shelter to
2 Families**



**Provided
Assistance with
9 Protection
Orders**

Our resources are stretched but our dedication never wavers. The support of our community continues to strengthen the foundation of our mission and ensures survivors have access to life-saving resources. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing commitment to preventing domestic violence and ensuring survivors have access to vital services and support.

The Lester A. Walker Fund Fosters Hope During Nonprofit Funding Reductions

The Bridge wishes to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the recent grant award of \$40,000 received from the Lester A. Walker Fund of the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Lester A. Walker was a visionary, an astute businessman and community leader who had always been interested and supportive of the Fremont Area Community Foundation.



FREMONT AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.

"We appreciate this community, and everyone involved with the Fremont Area Community Foundation and of course the Lester A. Walker Fund. We are so very grateful to receive this grant award, which will help us address our budget shortfall,"

Suzanne Smith, The Bridge Executive Director

The Bridge, along with many other non-profits are facing challenges unlike any before. In the past year, The Bridge has experienced unprecedented federal funding reductions, which our programming and this community depend on for us to provide 24-hour crisis intervention services. This is happening at a time when The Bridge is seeing an increased need in our 24-hour services. From July to September 2025, we responded to 910 crisis calls, which is a 35% increase in the number of calls on our 24-hour crisis line over the same time last year and a 52% increase over this last past quarter.

The Bridge pledges to continue our efforts to keep our friends and neighbors safe from violence and to offer hope, strength and support. Thank you again for your support.

Your Gifts in Action: Finding a Phone & a Path to Safety

Last month, we worked with a woman who had been terribly assaulted by her boyfriend. He fractured her arm, covered the side of her face with purple bruises, and her eye was so swollen she could barely see. During the assault he broke her phone, but she was able to get away by running for the bathroom. As she ran for the bathroom, she grabbed his tablet, locked the bathroom door, and began messaging people asking them to send the police. Someone who received her message called for help, but when the police arrived her boyfriend had fled.

She was taken to the hospital where she connected with our team through The Bridge's 24-hour Crisis Line. We placed her in safe shelter and as we started talking about a safety plan, we quickly realized she had no way to contact anyone. She panicked. Without her phone, she had no way to contact any of her family or friends. She moved here to be with him and didn't know anyone in the area. Using the phone at the hospital, she tried to call the only numbers she had memorized. No one picked up and since her phone was broken, she had no number for them to call back. She felt lost, exhausted, and defeated.

Access to a phone is a lifesaver and it is one of the first things batterers destroy.

Thanks to our donors, The Bridge was able to give her a Tracfone with minutes and she messaged someone who connected her to her family. Once she arrived at her family's home, she called us and expressed her gratitude for the hospital calling our crisis line.

"I know I left with literally nothing but the phone you gave me, but I also left with my life, and I can live with that. I won't forget your kindness."



Thank You

We extend our deepest gratitude to the remarkable individuals and organizations who have generously contributed to our mission this past *July - September*. Your unwavering support illuminates the strength and compassion within our community. We couldn't achieve our goals without you.

CIRCLE OF HONOR

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Brewer Family Foundation
Fremont Area Community Foundation

Lester A. Walker Fund
Fremont Roofing Company
The Further Foundation

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Calvary United Methodist Church

From The Board President's Desk

Lighting the Path of Hope Together

Each year, our community comes together to honor lives impacted by domestic violence and to renew our shared commitment to hope, healing, and change. The Bridge's annual Night of Hope and Festival of Hope unite our mission and remind us that, together, we are stronger than the violence that divides.

On October 30th, we will gather for the Night of Hope at Midland University's Olson Student Center from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM. This event provides a moment of reflection and unity as we honor those who have lost their lives to domestic violence and celebrate those who have survived. This year's program features a local survivor speaker whose courage and story illuminate the realities of domestic violence. The Fremont Middle School Choir will fill the room with music as we shine glowsticks in a shared moment of remembrance. Surrounding the event will be Silent Witness banners and silhouettes, each representing the stories of individuals whose voices continue to inspire our mission to end domestic violence.

As we move into the holiday season, hope continues to shine through the Festival of Hope, taking place from November 26 to December 7. All funds raised will directly support the critical services provided by The Bridge to survivors across our 5-county area. From handcrafted gifts to family outings, every item reflects the generosity of those who believe in creating a safer future.

As President of the Board, I am deeply grateful to everyone who participates, donates, and attends our events. Your support keeps the light of hope burning brightly in our community. Together, we affirm that hope lives here — and that change begins with all of us.



Cathi Sampson
President, The Bridge
Board of Directors

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

Jennifer Thomason
Advocacy Program Manager

Jody Bykerk
Shelter Program Manager

Kylie Kampschneider
Criminal Justice Advocacy Coordinator

Stacey Lichtenberg
Community Education Coordinator

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Rossana Jaeger
Spanish Speaking Services Coordinator

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FESTIVAL OF HOPE

NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 7

QTEGO.US/QLINK/BRIDGEFROMVIOLENCE.COM

Contact

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