

Nine Lives is Too Many: Remembering Billie Meadows & Addressing the Nebraska Domestic Violence Crisis

Written by Suzanne Smith, The Bridge Executive Director

Another young woman's life was tragically and violently taken recently in Nebraska. [Nine lives have been lost due to domestic violence in Nebraska so far in 2025, the latest tragedy happening in Dodge County.](#)

Domestic Violence is a serious crime that too often results in death. We know what it is! It is a violent crime that involves a pattern of behaviors used to maintain power and control over another partner in a relationship. Victims often know what their abuser is capable of, and many times can predict what they will do next. Countless survivors live in terror, believing any day could be their last.

Billie Meadows was only 24 years old. Young, beautiful, full of life and on April 12, 2025, was shot to death in Dodge County by her boyfriend. She leaves behind family, friends, co-workers, neighbors and a community that dearly loved and cherished her.

As a community we must continue the fight to prevent another precious life from being taken and another family shattered. The Bridge facilitates the Dodge County Domestic Violence Coordinated Response Team that brings together community partners such as domestic violence advocates, law enforcement, probation, our local emergency department, prosecutors and our county court judge. We believe that by coordinating a team approach and encouraging consistency of that approach, the result will increase the strength of the criminal justice system in responding to domestic violence and sexual assault so that victims and their children are safer, offenders are held more accountable and the responsibility for ending the violence is shifted from the victim to the community.

Personally, 3 out of 4 of us know someone who is currently in an abusive relationship. But many times, we don't know what to do. Here are some suggestions...

1. You are not alone. We are here to help. Know your resources so you can get them connected to an Advocate at The Bridge. We have a 24/7 Hotline 1-888-721-4340. Our services are all confidential.
2. Find a calm and safe time to talk, letting them know you care and want to help.
3. Believe them and don't pass judgement. Domestic Violence is personal. Never take it lightly when someone confides in you. Don't let not knowing what to say stand in the way. **Your conversation could save a life.**



Billie Meadows

"The Bridge gave 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. The Bridge saved my life." – Bridge Client/Survivor

Welcoming New Volunteers With A Shared Purpose

On April 2nd and 9th, our team met with a remarkable group of individuals interested in how they can use their skills to make a meaningful impact in the lives of survivors. Over the course of two volunteer training sessions, they demonstrated their passion, empathy, and strong commitment to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Our team met with Kim, Jackie, Carol, Dani, Marti and Brooke to learn more about the elements and signs of domestic violence and sexual assault, the services provided at The Bridge, and how our current volunteers provide support through our 24-hour Crisis Line. Each participant brought unique strengths to the training and actively participated in exercises to learn how to approach crisis calls for emergency shelter, crisis intervention, safety planning, and referrals.



Executive Director, Suzanne Smith, and Development Director, Christy Fiala, with new volunteers

Several individuals that went through Spring Volunteer Training have now joined our current team of 32 volunteers, all who play an essential role in our mission. Together, they help ensure our 24-hour Crisis Line remains as a lifeline for individuals in our 5-county service area. Thank you to our new and current volunteers for your time, commitment, and efforts to provide much needed advocacy and support to survivors in need.

Interested in Becoming a Volunteer? Begin your journey to making a meaningful impact in the lives of survivors and our mission to end domestic violence and sexual assault. Learn more about the volunteer experience at www.bridgefromviolence.com/volunteer or contact our office for more information at 402-721-4341 or email Info@BridgeFromViolence.com

Coffee & Awareness in Washington County

Leaders, community groups, and residents of Washington county came together on April 17th at Memorial Community Hospital for The Bridge's Washington County Chamber Coffee & Connections event. April marks Sexual Assault Awareness Month and we are grateful for the opportunity to engage with our Washington county community to highlight the importance of providing free and confidential support services to survivors of sexual assault.

This year's SAAM theme, "United for Change" reminds us that when we come together, we can create meaningful progress in the fight to end sexual assault and domestic violence. During our chamber coffee, attendees connected with one another to discuss the importance of education, awareness, and the need to show survivors that they are seen, heard, and supported. Our team also discussed our partnership with Memorial Community Hospital to serve survivors in Washington County and available opportunities for our community to get involved in our mission.

Thank you to everyone that joined us for a morning of coffee and conversation and to the Washington County Chamber for helping us host this event.



Hope Shines Bright at the Take Back the Night Event

On a powerful and hopeful evening, our community gathered together for The Bridge's first annual Take Back the Night—an event aimed to shine a light on the strength of survivors and to remind us all of the critical need to address and prevent sexual assault.

Surrounded by an atmosphere of courage, compassion, and unity, attendees came together at AZ+ Co. on April 24th for an evening featuring a wine tasting sponsored by Wine Experience, an event raffle, presentation from The Bridge, and a survivor speaker's journey toward healing and safety. Her story touched the hearts of every person in the room and provided a closer look at the challenges survivors face as they seek safety. Her story of strength and courage served as a reminder of the critical need for survivor-centered services and prevention efforts.

We are proud to share that participants in the event raffle raised more than \$10,000 to directly support vital resources and services for survivors and their children across our 5-county service area. Our team is profoundly grateful for our community's generosity and commitment to ensuring every survivor is believed, supported, and empowered. A big thank you to our event sponsors for helping make the event a success: AZ + Co. , Fremont Wine Experience, Methodist Fremont Health, RVR Bank, Lincoln Premium Poultry, Valmont Industries, Pinnacle Bank, Nye Health Services, Nye Technology Solutions, Memorial Community Hospital, Fremont Family YMCA, and Sid Dillon Chevrolet - Fremont



Fremont Big Give Breaks Records for Survivor Support

Because of you, this year's Fremont Area Big Give raised more support for survivors than ever before! On May 8th, individuals and groups across our service area celebrated the power of philanthropy by making a gift to feed a family in emergency shelter, pay for classroom prevention supplies, provide a safe night of shelter for a survivor and their children, and much more. Each gift has double the impact thanks to the generosity of an anonymous matching donor. Together, we surpassed last year's total and raised more than \$51,000 from 83 donors, the second highest amount raised of all participating non-profits!

The support shown by our Fremont community and surrounding areas continues to bring us closer to a future free from domestic violence and sexual assault. We are beyond grateful for everyone that participated in the Big Give by donating, raising awareness, and learning more about ways to get involved with our mission. THANK YOU!



The Bridge Staff Members: Jennifer, Christy, Jody, Madison, & Kylie

Thank You

We extend our deepest gratitude to the remarkable individuals and organizations who have generously contributed to our mission this past January - April. 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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Merri Misfeldt	Rebecca Winterfeld	NE Quilt Company	
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From The Board Treasurer's Desk

Reflecting on the First Annual Take Back the Night Event

Thank you to everyone who attended our 1st Annual Take Back the Night Event! It was an emotional evening as one of our survivors had the courage to stand up in front of a room full of strangers to share her story & the impact that The Bridge has made in her life along with her children's lives. Many of us left the event reminded of how incredibly important the services that The Bridge provides are to our communities. Without the generous support of our donors, The Bridge would not be able to support these survivors.

When asked to join the Board of Directors, I jumped at the opportunity to support an amazing team of staff & volunteers who work tirelessly supporting individuals & families find the strength needed to move forward. This team works 24/7 to support victims of domestic violence & sexual assault. Their compassion & dedication is one of the many reasons why we are able to share survivor stories.

Once again, thank you to those who attended our Take Back the Night Event. And a big thank you to all our wonderful sponsors! Especially RVR Bank, who not only supports The Bridge financially but also supports me as a Board Member by giving me the time to attend meetings & events. I hope to see you all next year at our 2nd Annual Take Back the Night Event!



Nikki Beatty
Treasurer, 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

Christy Fiala
Development Director

Kylie Kampschneider
Criminal Justice Services Coordinator

Jody Bykerk
Shelter Program Manager

Madison Laake
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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)



BridgeFromViolence.com



Info@BridgeFromViolence.com



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