



**Media Contact:**

Rena Lee  
Marketing, Communication & Events Director  
A Safe Place  
2710 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Zion, IL 60099  
Office: 847-731-7165, ext. 104  
Cell: 224-565-2982  
Email: [rlee@asafeplaceforhelp.org](mailto:rlee@asafeplaceforhelp.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 24, 2018

**A Safe Place Celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Raises \$248,000 Toward Services for Families of Domestic Violence**

**LAKE COUNTY, IL** – More than 300 guests walked past 25 powerful, soul-stirring images created by survivors of domestic violence expressing their personal healing journeys as they entered the “Unmask the Violence: Empowered Voices” Gala to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of A Safe Place on October 6 at the Chicago Marriott Lincolnshire.

Along with the art exhibit, cocktail reception, dinner, fabulous live and silent auction, opportunity drawing, raffle prizes, and awards, the event raised over \$250,000 for programs and services for victims of domestic violence that include the emergency shelter, permanent housing, legal advocacy, support groups, prevention and education outreach, and more.

The evening began with a cocktail reception and silent auction with unique experiences and luxury items, a fun photo booth, whiskey tasting, cigars, a wine pull, and live music by Pat McKillen, a Chicago folk, pop, rock singer-songwriter.

“This event is critical in raising funds to help give families of domestic violence a better life,” said Gala Co-Chair Andrea Rosengarden. “Abuse affects so many people in our communities, from our own family, coworkers, and neighbors to people we would never even suspect. It is vital that we continue to advocate for victims and open the community’s eyes, so we can end violence once and for all.”

To celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the agency, survivors in the A Safe Place women's support groups throughout the county expressed their hope, empowerment, and determination with paint, ink, and glue on canvas and paper with artwork that contained messages such as, "I am Brave, Fearless, Bold & Strong", "Be a friend, not a foe", and "The journey to healing began when I experienced the horror of living in darkness and chose to fight for the light". Each piece of artwork revealed a vulnerable window into the life of the adult or child victim and how they are healing from feelings of betrayal, confusion, fear, and despair.

During the program, keynote speaker Pastor Neil Schori told his passionate story of counseling Stacy Peterson, wife of Drew Peterson, just months before her disappearance over ten years ago. "I didn't know what to do to help Stacy Peterson...and it grieves me each time I think of it...but one key thing all of us can do that will take us beyond the emotion of this beautiful evening is to continue supporting the work of A Safe Place, as volunteers or as advocates. Stacy is gone, but there are a lot of other Stacy Petersons out there who need the same kind of help that Stacy did."

During the presentation, two worthy community advocates were honored for their ongoing leadership and true spirit of volunteerism that advances the rights of victims of domestic violence. Annick Deubler, creator of the Hermitage Foundation, who has supported A Safe Place every year since 1995, was given the Betty Toser "Angel" Award. The Honorable Veronica M. O'Malley, judge of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court of Lake County was awarded the Joyce Fitzgerald Award.

"It was inspiring to see the efforts of so many come together to create such a successful gala and we were amazed at the generosity of the people who attended and participated," said A Safe Place Board Member and Gala Co-Chair Michael Strauss. "I know that the words of the speakers and victims resonated with everyone in attendance, and it is my hope that this annual gala will help to end the epidemic that is domestic violence."

The Unmask the Violence Gala is the largest fundraiser of the year for A Safe Place, Lake County's sole provider of services exclusively addressing domestic violence in the Chicagoland area. All proceeds support the organization's lifesaving programs and services for victims of domestic violence and their children, including crisis support, housing, legal advocacy, counseling, community outreach, and education to prevent future abuse. Last year, A Safe Place served over 16,000 of our neighbors.

Generous sponsors of the event included Autohaus on Edens, Michael & Andrea Rosengarden, Abbvie, the Steve & Barbara Anderson Family Charitable Fund, Melinda & Andrew Bush, The Chicago Bears, Northwestern Memorial Healthcare, Schlesinger & Strauss LLC, Victoria Trauscht, David & Patty Anderskow, AON, Mary Kay Foy & Tim Vezeau, Nancy & Marvin Himmelstein, IRON HORSE Seating, Libertyville Bank and Trust Company, Bonnie & Gene Minsky, Ernie & Dawn Rogers, and Rust-Oleum.

Learn more about A Safe Place at [www.asafeplaceforhelp.org](http://www.asafeplaceforhelp.org).

Photo 1:

Pat Davenport, CEO of A Safe Place, welcomes over 300 guests to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of A Safe Place and 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Unmask the Violence Gala held at the Chicago Marriott Lincolnshire. Photo by Colleen Gallagher, Lifetime Treasures.



Photo 2:  
Anniversary Cake to celebrate 40 years of services and programs in Lake County donated by the Bent Fork Bakery in Highwood. Photo by Colleen Gallagher, Lifetime Treasures.



Photo 3:  
The Journey of Healing art exhibit created by domestic violence survivors in A Safe Place support groups.  
Photo by Colleen Gallagher, Lifetime Treasures.



Photo 4:

The Honorable Veronica M. O'Malley received the Joyce Fitzgerald Award for her dedication to advancing the rights of victims of domestic violence. From left to right: A Safe Place Board Vice-President Michael Strauss, The Honorable Veronica M. O'Malley, Legal Advocacy Coordinator Damaris Lorta, A Safe Place Board President Kathryn Johnson, A Safe Place CEO Pat Davenport. Photo by Colleen Gallagher, Lifetime Treasures.



Photo 5:  
Pastor Neil Schori told his passionate story of counseling Stacy Peterson, wife of Drew Peterson, just months before her disappearance over ten years ago. Photo by Colleen Gallagher, Lifetime Treasures.





#####

*Founded in 1978, A Safe Place is the leading advocate for eliminating domestic violence in northern Illinois, and is Lake County, Illinois' only provider of services exclusively for victims of domestic violence. A Safe Place provides emergency shelter, permanent housing, a 24-hour crisis line (847-249-4450), court and non-legal advocacy, individual, group, and children's counseling, art therapy, family visitation services, batterer intervention services; and community outreach, prevention education, and professional training. Our service area includes Lake, McHenry, and northern Cook counties in Illinois; however, our clients come to us from across the state, region, and country.*

*For more information about A Safe Place, visit [www.asafeplaceforhelp.org](http://www.asafeplaceforhelp.org), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).*