




COMMON THREADS

Spring 2023 

In this issue...

 *APRIL* is **Sexual Assault Awareness Month & National Child Abuse Prevention Month**

 *In MAY*, we show our appreciation to
School Nurses (May 10th)
Law Enforcement Officers (May 14th - 20th)
EMS Responders (May 21st - 27th)

 *MAY* is
Children's Mental Health Awareness Month

 *JUNE* is **LGBTQ Pride Month,**
Elder Abuse Awareness Month
& JUNETEENTH!



Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services for Potter County
24 Hour Helpline (814) 274-0240 or Toll free (877) 334-3136

www.myawayout.org



A WAY OUT



Mission Statement

The mission of **A Way Out** is to assist and support all victims, survivors, and families of domestic violence and sexual assault through ethical, culturally competent, and compassionate services.

We advocate for social change designed to end the cycle of abuse through dedication, community involvement and education.



Are you, or is someone you know, considering leaving an abusive situation, but not sure how? We can help.

Our advocates are here to help you begin a new life, free from abuse. We are just a phone call away, 24/7 at 814-274-0240 or toll free at 877-334-3136.

There is help and there is hope. You are not alone.

A friendly reminder...

WE HAVE MOVED!

360 East Second Street

Coudersport, PA 16915

(the former *bakertilly* building)



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month



Sexual Assault Awareness Month
DRAWING CONNECTIONS
 PREVENTION DEMANDS EQUITY
 #SAAM2023



Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) calls attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and impacts every person in the community. SAAM aims to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities about how to prevent it.

This year SAAM is focusing on **Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity**, calling on all individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions to change ourselves and the systems surrounding us to build racial equity and respect.

Last year, **A Way Out** served 71 victims of sexual assault in Potter County, 8.45% of which were minorities.

Estimated persons raped in lifetime by gender and race:

Women

- 17.7% of white women
- 18.8% of African-American women
- 6.8% of Asian / Pacific Islander women
- 34.1% of American Indian / Alaskan Native women
- 24.4% mixed race women
- 14.6% of Hispanic women

Men

- 2.8% of white men
- 3.3% of African-American men
- 4.4% of mixed-race men
- The sample size was too small to estimate for Asian/ Pacific Islander and American Indian / Alaskan Native men

Whether or not you are able to change the outcome of the situation, by stepping in you are helping change the way people think about their roles in preventing sexual violence. If you suspect that someone you know has been sexually assaulted, there are steps you can take to support that person.

- Learn more about steps you can take to prevent a sexual assault and show you care.
- Identify ways to help someone you care about.
- Learn more about how to respond when someone discloses sexual assault or abuse.
- For more information about how you can help, turn the page to TAKE THE PLEDGE!



Source: <https://www.rainn.org/>

NO MORE



“Together, we’re making a commitment. Take the pledge to KNOW MORE

On average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States. Silence and lack of knowledge about these problems play a large part in why domestic and sexual violence continue to persist. Understanding the warning signs or red flags for domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse is a critical first step in addressing and preventing these crimes.

STAND WITH SURVIVORS

Did you know that **65% of victims who come forward to someone say that no one helped them?** If someone discloses that they have or are being abused let them know that the abuse is not their fault. It may be difficult for them to talk about the abuse, but you don’t need to be an expert, you just need to be a friend. Reassure them that they are not alone, they are not to blame for what happened and that there is help and support out there. Help them find local resources to support their needs and safety, and provide them with the appropriate hotline info but ultimately, respect their decision and be patient. Healing from trauma is lifelong journey.”* **A Way Out’s 24/7 Helpline is 1-814-274-0240 or toll free at 1-877-334-3136**

SPEAK UP

“**Challenge yourself and others to not use** language or expressions that denigrate women and girls (“you throw like a girl”) or tease men and boys for not being “manly” enough (“man up”). Speak up to let others know that their comments are limiting and offensive and have no place on the playing field, in the classroom, at work or in our homes. **Challenge comments that blame the victim** for what has happened to them by letting your friends know that blaming the victim is inappropriate and offensive and encouraging them to consider why society questions the victim’s behavior rather than the perpetrator’s behavior. **Learn how you can safely step in** and speak up when you’re witnessing behavior that may put someone in danger.”*

You can sign up for the NO MORE pledge on their website at <https://nomore.org/take-action/pledge-driving-change-original/>

DONATE

Your donations allow us to continue our work as advocates for sexual assault victims in Potter County. Donations are gratefully accepted at **A Way Out**, P.O. Box 447, Coudersport, PA 16915 or online at www.myawayout.org. THANK YOU!



April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

FIND TOOLS, TIPS, AND RESOURCES AT
[CHILDWELFARE.GOV/PREVENTIONMONTH](https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventionmonth)

As the weather starts to change and we see new plants bloom, we also spring into National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This is a time to recognize and remember that, despite our efforts, child abuse is something that continues to be a problem throughout the United States. It requires ongoing awareness and attention to reduce and prevent child abuse in our community.

On average, **1 in 7 children** experience child abuse or neglect in the United States and ***children that live in poverty are 5 times more likely*** to experience abuse or neglect than other children. *

Child abuse may present itself in a variety of ways on a case-by-case basis. Physical abuse refers to using physical force on a child that may cause physical injury. Emotional abuse refers to harming a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Sexual abuse refers to pressuring or forcing a child into sexual acts. All these forms of abuse are harmful to children. Child abuse also includes neglect. Neglect refers to the failure of a guardian to meet a child's physical and emotional needs.

Child Abuse Prevention Month reminds us that there are things we can do in the community to prevent child abuse and neglect. Job training and employment assistance programs help families gain a higher level of financial security. Family-friendly work policies in places of employment and quality childcare help relieve the stress too many families experience, especially in one parent families.

For ideas on what you can do in your community, you can find tools, tips and resources at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/>

*CDC.gov



In 1974, Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to honor the dedication and service they provide to our communities.

A Way Out, along with our local community and medical personnel, would like to thank our EMS professionals and crews.

Being in a rural area, where our first responders are almost all volunteers, we recognize the sacrifice, training, and time they give to help us at a moment's notice.

As first responders, our EMS personnel are one of the first lines of defense in the medical community. Whether it be a medical emergency, or arriving after a domestic situation to help a victim, they are first on scene when the call comes in.

This is a vital public service that deserves our recognition and praise. Emergency Medical Services include ambulance crews, EMT'S, emergency room nurses and doctors, medical dispatchers, firefighters, police officers, educators, and many more. Throughout the year, and especially during this week, give thanks to those that answer the call 24 hours a day. They truly are where emergency care begins.

Law enforcement officers play a crucial role in maintaining peace, order, and safety in our communities. They put their lives on the line every day to ensure that we can all live in a safe and secure environment.

National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day and **National Police Week** provide an opportunity for us to express our gratitude to law enforcement officers for their selfless service. It is also a time to remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Their dedication and commitment to their profession and community are truly remarkable.

A Way Out is grateful to all law enforcement officers who assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Their tireless efforts to help those in need are greatly appreciated, and we recognize their important role in helping to bring an end to these heinous crimes.

We thank and honor our law enforcement officers for their bravery, dedication, and sacrifice. They are the unsung heroes who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their service.

May is *Children's Mental Health Awareness Month*



The need for mental health services in the United States has become increasingly urgent as more and more people struggle with their mental health. When thinking about mental health, many relate the term only to adults. However, children suffer from mental health issues as well.

May 7th is Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. It's a time to recognize the struggle many children have with mental health issues. In the United States, 16.39% of children have a mental health disorder. Among all states, Pennsylvania is ranked 4th in the nation in children with mental health disorders. Of these, 14.04% of adolescents fall into this category. Pennsylvania is also ranked 4th in emotional disturbances in adolescents.

Research has shown that mental health plays a significant role in child development. Symptoms of undiagnosed mental health issues, such as lack of concentration or disruptive behaviors, often lead to poor grades, excessive absences, suspension, and even expulsion.

Additionally, mental health disorders in children have been linked to difficulty creating relationships and difficulties in their home lives. Considering the role that mental health plays in child development, it is crucial to provide intervention to help support those struggling with mental health disorders by teaching them skills that help them to cope with their disorder. Because half of all lifetime cases begin by age 14, early intervention can be crucial to their development into adults.

As this day approaches, let's look for ways to identify mental health issues in our children and provide mental health support to them, because their mental health matters. Together we can end the stigma.

For additional information, see The Mayo Clinic article, "**Mental Illness in Children: Know the Signs.**" at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/mental-illness-in-children/art-20046577>

June is LGBTQ Pride Month & Elder Abuse Awareness Month

What is PRIDE Month?

Awareness. Recognition. Equality.
Remembrance. Support. Celebration.

PRIDE Month is all of these! It's a time for LGBTQ individuals, their families and supporters to come together to

- Promote AWARENESS that LGBTQ individuals seek to be accepted and included in society, free from discrimination and violence.
- RECOGNIZE the accomplishments of those who have worked tirelessly for acceptance of all gender identities.
- Seek EQUAL justice and equal opportunities
- REMEMBER those LGBTQ individuals who have been lost to HIV/AIDS or violence
- SUPPORT each other in their efforts
- CELEBRATE the accomplishments and gains made by the LGBTQ community that make living their lives simpler and safer.

Activities include parades, workshops, concerts and other events held to show support for the LGBTQ community.

Why is PRIDE Month held in June? June is the anniversary of the 1969 uprising at the Stonewall Inn in New York City by LGBTQ patrons and their supporters against an episode of harassment and discrimination by local police.

For more information on how you can support LGBTQ individuals, go to <https://pflag.org/>



Elder Abuse Awareness Month

As we look at our older population, we often think they have achieved a certain level of contentment and are happy with their well-earned status. They have reached "The Golden Years" and are now "living the dream".

What we don't realize is **1 in 20 older adults are victims of abuse**. An older person can be the victim of physical abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or any other mistreatment. The abuser may be a spouse, an adult child who lives in the same household, a caregiver or anyone else who has access to an elderly individual.

Elder abuse can easily be hidden or disguised. Some red flags that may indicate abuse...

- BRUISES OR BROKEN BONES – If this is happening frequently and being blamed on falls, the real cause may be punching or beating.
- WEIGHT LOSS – A caregiver may blame illness or lack of appetite when the real cause may be starvation or neglect.
- DEMENTIA - Caregivers may blame "old age" when the real cause may be malnutrition or drug misuse.
- RECLUSIVENESS - An elderly neighbor no longer goes outside or never sees visitors.
- LARGE BANK WITHDRAWALS - An older customer or someone claiming to represent them withdraws large sums of money from their account.
- TITLE TRANSFERS An older person signs over their home or other large asset to someone else, especially a non-relative.

If you suspect elder abuse, contact **A Way Out** at 814-274-0368 or our 24/7 Helpline at 814-274-0240; or the Potter County Area Office on Aging at 1-800-800-2560

For more information on elder abuse and what you can do to help, check out the **The National Center on Law and Elder Rights (NCLER)** at their website at www.ncler.acl.gov.

June 19th is



JUNETEENTH is a celebration of independence for African Americans. Why June 19th? Here's a little history:

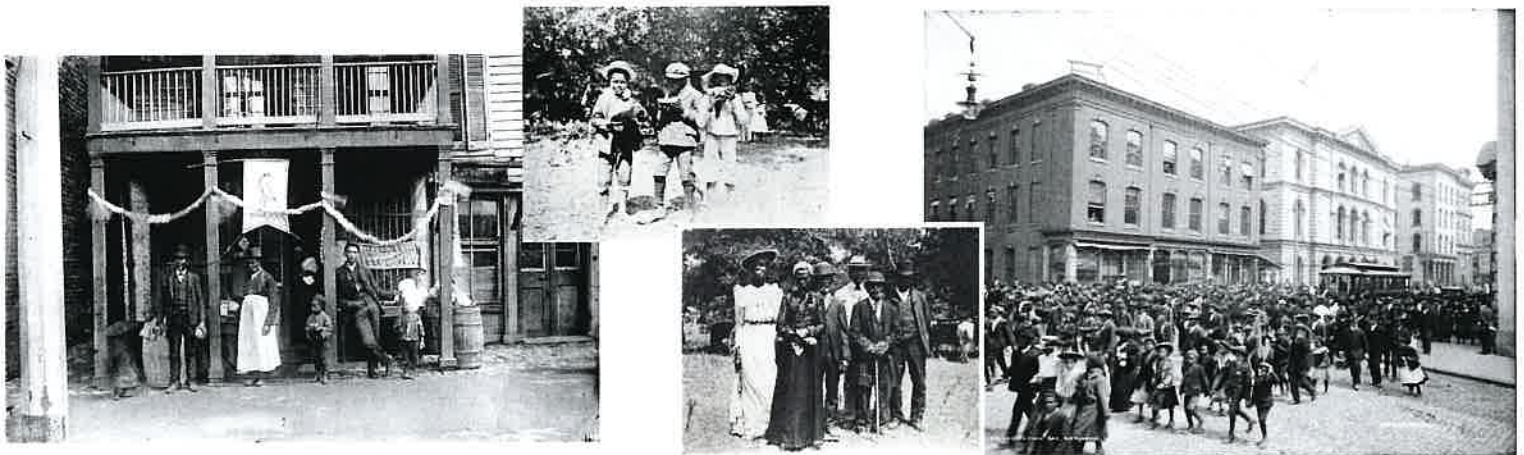
*"Even though the Emancipation Proclamation was made effective in 1863, it could not be implemented in places still under Confederate control. As a result, in the westernmost Confederate state of Texas, enslaved people would not be free until much later. Freedom finally came on June 19, 1865, when some 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. The army announced that the more than 250,000 enslaved black people in the state, were free by executive decree. This day came to be known as "Juneteenth," by the newly freed people in Texas." **

Although slavery was abolished in England in 1807, it took another 58 years for the United States to end the practice. Imagine the amazement and joy of these individuals at being freed after 200 years of being owned and used as livestock! Once freed, they began to build lives for themselves and their children, despite a host of lingering prejudices and limited opportunities.

In the 150 years since, the African American community has contributed to the growth of our country as farmers, craftsmen/women, elected officials, entrepreneurs, factory workers, soldiers, educators and scientists, all the way to the Office of the President of the United States.

Juneteenth celebrates the day that every African American, whether brought here in chains or born into slavery, could begin a new life as a free citizen of our country. From *"The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth"* :

"The historical legacy of Juneteenth shows the value of never giving up hope in uncertain times." *



*Smithsonian - The National Museum of African American History and Culture - "The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth," .
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-legacy-juneteenth>



DONATION WISH LIST

Victims often go back to abusers because they lack resources to get even the basic household needs. Help them stay safe by donating any of these items:

Food Items (non-perishable)

Canned vegetables, soup, etc.

Mac and cheese

Pasta

Cereal

Instant oatmeal

Spaghetti sauce

Meal mixes

Pancake mix

Healthy snacks

Cleaning Supplies

Mop and Buckets

Brooms

Laundry pods/small bottles

Dryer Sheets

Dish Soap

Dish scrubbers

Baby Food

Juice

Crackers

Instant mashed potatoes

Peanut butter

Jellies and jams

Ramen noodles

Soup in a cup

Tuna or chicken, bagged or canned

Paper Towels

Disinfecting wipes

Bleach

Disinfectants

All purpose cleaner

Bathroom cleaner

Personal Care Items

Shampoo/Conditioner

Body wash

Tissues

Baby Wipes

Diaper Cream

Soap

Toilet Paper

Deodorant (men's and women's)

Sanitary Napkins/Tampons

Razors

Mouthwash

We also gratefully accept gently used clothing, linens, bedding and other household items. Donations are accepted at our office during regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Our office number is 814-274-0368.

Monetary donations are gratefully accepted...

- Online at www.myawayout.org
- By mail at A Way Out, P.O. Box 447, Coudersport, PA 16915 or...
- in any of our donation jars set up at these local businesses:
 - Fox's Pizza Den - Coudersport & Shinglehouse
 - Potter County Beverage
 - Ulysses General Store
 - Fezz's Diner
 - Robert Joseph Hair Design
 - The Corner Café in Ulysses

FOOD BANKS:

Coudersport / Alliance Church, – 3rd Thursday, 10:00am – 11:00pm, 814-274-8661

Austin / Austin Fire Hall, 42 W Main St, every 3rd Tues, 12:30-1:30pm, 814-647-8562

Roulette / Riverside Methodist Church, 4th Tuesday, 4:30-5:30pm, 814-544-7365

Ulysses / Zion Christian Assembly, 4th Thursday, 10-11am. 814-848-7407

Galeton / St. Paul Lutheran Church, 4th Friday, 10-11am. 814-435-2471

Shinglehouse / Methodist Church, 4th Saturday, 9-10am. 814-698-2144



MEETING GUIDE is a free app that helps you find meetings in any location!

<https://www.aa.org/meeting-guide-app>

A.A. MEETINGS:

TUESDAY 8pm @ Christ Episcopal Church, Coudersport

WEDNESDAY Noon @ St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Coudersport and
8 pm @ St. Eulalia's Catholic Church, Coudersport

THURSDAY *AL-ANON*, 6-7pm @ First Presbyterian Church,
Coudersport AA, 7pm @ Park United Methodist
Church, Coudersport

FRIDAY 8pm @ St. Augustine Rectory, Austin and
Noon @ First Presbyterian Church, Coudersport

SATURDAY 8pm @ Galeton Presbyterian Church



Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook and watch for upcoming events and fundraisers!



Did you know... we manage the FREE Child Car Safety Seat Program?

Call us at 814-274-0368 to schedule a time for you to view the 30-minute safety video and pick up your car seat(s).



Regular office hours:

Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

814-274-0368

www.myawayout.org



Closed Office Holidays :

April 7th – Good Friday

May 29th – Memorial Day

July 4th – Independence Day

September 4th – Labor Day

November 10th – Veterans Day

November 23rd & 24th – Thanksgiving

December 25th & 26th – Christmas

December 29th – New Year's Eve



If you need assistance outside of regular business hours or on a holiday, you can call the 24 hour Helpline at 814-274-0240 or toll free at 1-877-334-3136.