



COMMON THREADS

Winter 2023

In this issue...



*Happy New Year - **A WAY OUT** has MOVED!*



January is National Stalking Awareness Month and Human Trafficking Awareness Month.



February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and March is Brain Injury Awareness Month.



*Coming to a school near you...
our Education Specialist*



The Impact of Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI's)

All Are Welcome



Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services for Potter County

24 Hour Helpline (814) 274-0240 or Toll free (877) 334-3136

www.myawayout.org





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.

Our **Learning Center** at www.myawayout.org has a series of links and short presentations about how our counselors can help you petition for an order of protection from abuse, divorce and/or custody, how to protect your finances, and tech safety tips for your phone and computer.

Additionally, we have a page listing **Local Resources** as well as a **Survivor Online Support** page that lists a wide variety of nationwide online support groups and helplines offering anonymous forums for discussions with other abuse survivors, and support via live chats, phone or email.

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

A message from the Executive Director

Season's Greetings from all of us at A Way Out!

As the end of the year approaches, I find myself thankful for my first seven years serving as the Executive Director for A Way Out. Whether it has been collaborating with the board, staff, partners, or supporters, I am fortunate to be in an organization of such compassion and knowledge.

Even more inspiring is the energy each of you continue to give in the face of so many of the nation's current health, economic and social challenges. While the time has approached for many of us to pause and reconnect with family, friends, and most importantly... ourselves... I am encouraged at the prospects that 2023 will bring for A Way Out and the communities we serve. My enthusiasm is bolstered by all the life-changing work the organization does daily.

I would like to take this opportunity to share a few positive changes in the organization which will help to better serve victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. The organization recently moved to its new location at 360 East Second Street in Coudersport. The agency has recently added several new board members of whom have a clear understanding of the mission of the organization and will help to enhance the work already being done. The organization has recently hired a new Education Specialist, Cheyenne Wilson, who brings with her teaching and curriculum development. In the months to come, A Way Out will be adding two additional staff to continue to enhance the services offered by the organization. The current staff, which consists of Renee, Rachelle, Judy, Lucinda, and Ann being together many years of expertise and are all working on projects that will continue to enhance the mission of the organization.

A Way Out served 27 families this year with gifts, pajamas, and toys collected from community members. The organization, including myself, board, and staff, would like to send a heartfelt thank you to all the organizations, community supporters, and individuals who made this possible. The organization depends greatly on monetary donations and donated items to help assist the victims and survivors who come for services and without all of you in the communities the organization serves this would not at all be possible. So, I would like to thank you all very much.

As we close out 2022 and begin 2023 all of us at A Way Out would like to say without our communities and partners the organization would not be able to do the work it does daily, monthly, and yearly.

I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Holiday and, more importantly, a prosperous New Year.

Dr. Dave Hyde
Executive Director





WE HAVE MOVED!
360 East Second Street
Coudersport, PA 16915
(the former *bakertilly* building)



The Stalking Prevention, Awareness and Resource Center (**SPARC**) offers a wide range of resources including

- Victim Services
- Law Enforcement training
- Corrections / Probation training
- Prosecution training
- Awareness Education
- Campus Professionals training
- Judicial Officers training

For more information, visit their website at <https://www.stalkingawareness.org/resources/>



HOPE FOR JUSTICE is a non-profit organization working to bring an end to modern slavery and human trafficking, and to protect the human rights of victims and survivors. For more information, visit their website at <https://hopeforjustice.org/national-slavery-and-human-trafficking-prevention-month/>

To report a concern of human trafficking or modern slavery,
Email: help@hopeforjustice.org or contact our office in Nashville, TN at [1-615-356-0946](tel:1-615-356-0946)
Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm (Central Time)

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Dating violence is more common than you may think, especially among teens and young adults: **1 in 3 U.S. teens** will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from

someone they're in a relationship with before they become adults. And nearly half of U.S. college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating behaviors.



Each February, young adults and their loved ones across the nation raise awareness about the issue of teen dating violence through **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM)**. This annual, month-long effort focuses on advocacy and education to stop dating abuse before it starts. This year's theme for TDVAM is "**Be About It**".

Additional information and tools to promote TDVAM are available at the *Love Is Respect* website: <https://www.loveisrespect.org/get-involved/tdvam/>

Education From **A Way Out** On The Rise

Starting with the organization this fall, our Education Specialist, Cheyenne Wilson, has been working to bring prevention education to all schools in Potter County. As an organization our goal is to prevent and aid those who have experienced or have been affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. The objective is to educate youth on the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as help them develop healthy skills they can bring to relationships for the rest of their lives.



With a background working with children, Ms. Wilson has observed educational needs up close. She is currently working on the Healthy Relationships curriculum, adapting it to fit the needs of the various districts in the county. In addition, Ms. Wilson is working with the Interact Club at Coudersport High School to educate the students on teen dating violence and is assisting them in the preparation of a presentation for their school in the spring.

By starting with children when they are a young, she has high hopes for helping children easily identify abusive vs healthy behaviors, and for developing skills they can use to build positive relationships in the future. If you are interested in having a presentation done for your group, contact **A Way Out** at 814-274-0368



MANY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS HAVE UNRECOGNIZED TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

Survivors of intimate partner violence often experience blows to the head, choking, and loss of consciousness. However, they don't always realize they could have a concussion or traumatic brain injury (TBI). This may also be true of the people working with, and trying to help, them.

A new study shows that more than 4 in 5 domestic violence survivors have been hit in the head or strangled by their abusers, often multiple times, and may have undiagnosed traumatic brain injuries

In a recent study on the risk of TBIs in domestic violence encounters, it was reported by almost half of the 45 survivors studied, that they had been hit in the head or had their head slammed into an object "more times than they could remember." One in 5 said the same thing about being strangled. Caseworkers, in the same group, were unaware of the possibility of TBIs because of the lack of a diagnosis. Survivors, themselves, don't realize that the violence they have sustained can lead to unseen brain injuries and may think their symptoms are from trauma and other mental health issues.

Patients and providers need to be aware that a TBI can affect a survivor's ability to think clearly and rationally, navigate paperwork, stay on task, or participate rationally in court appearances to get services or protection from an abuser. It is important to recognize and investigate, with a health care provider, any blow to the head or any restriction of air to the brain, no matter how mild or limited it may seem. TBIs can cause lasting disabilities.....if not now, in years to come.

Additional information can be found at

<https://www.brainline.org/article/9-12-need-know-facts-about-traumatic-brain-injury>



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.	Baby Food
Mac and cheese	Juice
Pasta	Crackers
Cereal	Instant mashed potatoes
Instant oatmeal	Peanut butter
Spaghetti sauce	Jellies and jams
Meal mixes	Ramen noodles
Pancake mix	Soup in a cup
Healthy snacks	Tuna, bagged or canned chicken

Cleaning Supplies

Mop and Buckets	Paper Towels
Brooms	Disinfecting wipes
Laundry pods/small bottles	Bleach
Dryer Sheets	Disinfectants
Dish Soap	All purpose cleaner
Dish scrubbers	Bathroom cleaner

Personal Care Items

Shampoo/Conditioner	Soap
Body wash	Toilet Paper
Tissues	Deodorant (men's and women's)
Baby Wipes	Sanitary Napkins/Tampons
Diaper Cream	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 via Paypal using our "Donate" button at the top of the page
- 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, – 7 Alliance Ave, every Tues & Thurs, 10:30am – 1:30pm, 814-274-8661

Austin / Austin Fire Hall, 42 W Main St, every 3rd Tues, Check Austin Food Pantry FB page for time(s), 814-647-8562

Roulette / Firehall, Times TBD monthly, 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

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 :



December 30th & January 2nd – New Years
January 16th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 20th – Presidents Day
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.