Dear Friends,

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services is a place healing and hope. Hope is listening to a victim when they feel they have nowhere else to turn.  Hope is sitting by their side during court proceedings when an abusive ex is just 15 feet away. Hope is an advocacy counselor reminding them “it’s not your fault.”  Hope is being there, 24 hours a day, to provide support, education, and healing when a person needs it most. In 2018, 113 volunteers, 16 board members, and 32 staff members worked together to provide hope to 2,017 people in every corner of Whatcom County.

You cultivate hope through volunteering, advocating, funding, and supporting DVSAS. Domestic and sexual violence are isolating and confusing experiences but you stabilize survivors by making sure that DVSAS is always available to help. Here are some of the ways you provided hope this year:

**Behavioral Health Program:** In 2018, we began serving survivors with mental health or substance abuse issues in a new way. The Behavioral Health Program helps clients access treatment and medications while providing them ongoing support like safety planning and crisis intervention. When we launched the program, we anticipated we would serve 45 clients in the first year but the need was so great, we actually served 105. Of the clients we served: 61 were homeless, 15 suffered from both mental health and substance abuse issues, and 18 clients were incarcerated.

**Elementary School Prevention Education:** We know that true safety will only be achieved by preventing gender-based violence before it starts. To that end, we have developed a new prevention curriculum for elementary school children that will be launched in Fall 2019. The curriculum focuses on creating cultures of consent both in and out of the classroom. When children grow up in a permission-based community and have the skills to recognize when someone is violating their boundaries, we can end gender-based violence.

Through our services, outreach, and prevention programs, we know we are making a difference, and creating hope for every client we serve. We are honored to work with you in making Whatcom County a safe, equitable community where all individuals feel valued and respected.

Sincerely,

Karen Burke, Executive Director
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Abby Yates
Have you ever wondered what a week at DVSAS looks like?

Rural Advocacy Counselor, Devin, attended Foothills Food Bank in Deming, Community Coffee and Tea in Kendall, and met with 1 rural client named Ashley*. Prevention Education Specialist, Blanca, presented “The Empowerment Project” 7 times to a total of 132 students.

DVSAS posted information about domestic violence incidents throughout Whatcom County on Facebook and local newspapers as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

14 new volunteers began Advocacy Counselor Training. The 53-hour course provides skills needed to help survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation heal from trauma.

*Names changed for confidentiality

Advocates served 137 individual clients, including 27 new clients.

Six support groups were held for domestic violence and sexual assault.

Advocates provided 150 hours of general advocacy and 35 hours of legal advocacy.

The helpline received 30 calls between the hours of 9am-5pm.

The Safe Housing Program sheltered 11 women and 17 children. 1 client exited into transitional housing.

3 staff participated in Nooksack Tribe’s Domestic Violence Walk.

Ashley and her daughter Hope
Volunteers

Abby M.
Aliza B.
Alyssa H.
Amanda O.
Amy R.
Ann B.
Annabelle W.
Anna-Marie B.
Ashley H.
Aurela S.
Bayley B.
Blair M.
Bri D.
Brittany N.
Britton T.
Broderick M.
Calista B.
Cass L.
Chantell C.
Cheyanna S.
Ciera J.
Cindy B.
Courtney A.
Cynthia M.
Dayna G.
Dominique K.
Dora K.
Elizabeth G.
Beth M.
Elsa B.
Emily Gr.
Emily Gl.
Emma J.
Emma P.
Esther F.
Evelyne M.
Gabby R.
Georgianna B.
Grace W.
Hailey C.
Hailey H-L.
Harold J.
Heather W.
Holly G.
Isabella B-C.
Izabella K.
Jacob D.
Jane S.
Janee V.
Janelle B.
Jen C.
Jennifer A.
Jessica K.
Kale H.
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Katherine A.
Kayla C.
Kayla D.
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Kristy G.
Kylie L.
Laura M.
Laura R.
Laura W.
Leah F.
Leia S.
Lily J.
Lisa S.
Lynne C.
Maddie R.
Maggie W.
Mara P.
Marion J.
Marla T.
Maya W.
McKenna M.
Megan S.
Melissa M.
Morgan S.
Nicole W.
Pam H.
Patty M.
Paula P.
Phoebe H.
Rachel L.
Rachel R.
Rachel T.
Rebecca O.
Samantha B.
Samantha S.
Samara S.
Samuel F.
Sam J.
Shannon J.
Sherri L.
Skye L.
Stephanie D.

A huge thank you to our volunteers who donated 12,958 hours to DVSAS.

Volunteers answer helpline calls, provide court support, attend forensic exams, and help at our fundraising events.
Thank you to everyone who made our 2018 events our most successful yet.

**Victory Over Violence Luncheon**
Net Revenue: $16,126

*New* Barkley Village Wine Walk
Net Revenue: $7,599

**Tournament of Hope Golf Classic**
Net Revenue: $20,390

**Hands for Hope Auction & Gala**
Net Revenue: $139,614

**Total: $183,729**
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Circle of Hope is a monthly promise of support to survivors across Whatcom County. Monthly donations provide DVSAS with a steady source of funding that is essential for planning ahead.

When you join Circle of Hope, you are committing to helping survivors find safety, healing, and HOPE. You are reminding the community that everyone deserves to be safe.

*indicates a monthly Circle of Hope supporter

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More fun at the Hands for Hope Gala photobooth!
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We support individuals affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation, and lead the community towards ending these abuses of power.