



## **THIRD AVENUE PLAYWORKS | Q&A for HELP of Door County**

### **1. What is the mission of the HELP of Door County?**

The mission of HELP of Door County is to eliminate domestic violence through intervention and prevention services and to advocate social change.

### **2. What are some of the main programs or services offered by the organization?**

- a. Crisis and Emotional Support advocacy
- b. 24hr hotline for domestic violence crisis
- c. Emergency short term safe home
- d. Transitional Housing Program
- e. Basic needs
- f. Transportation assistance
- g. Legal advocacy/restraining order advocacy
- h. Support Groups
- i. Supervised visitations and exchanges
- j. Domestic Violence intervention program

### **3. Can you share a meaningful or inspiring story from the past year highlighting your community work?**

My client is a loving mother of three and was living the life as a stay-at-home mom, though it was far from the scenario one might imagine. She was in a cycle of physical, emotional, and financial abuse inflicted by her intimate partner. The barriers to escape seemed impossible. She had no income, no vehicle, and no safe place to go. He was constantly threatening her, which made her fear leaving her children alone with him.

When I first met her, she was desperate, on the verge of giving up, and unsure of her next steps. We started with a safety plan, breaking down the overwhelming process into baby steps. She needed to feel secure and that began with finding a safe place for her and her children to stay. Initially, I provided her with a safe home. It wasn't an ideal solution but a more stable environment for the time being.

Within weeks, I collaborated with a domestic violence shelter which gave her a more permanent place to stay. This provided her with safety but also access to more resources, including transportation. This gave her the opportunity to take her children to school and search for employment.

Finding a job was a huge step for her. For years her partner didn't allow her to work, stripping away her confidence and financial independence. With the support from the shelter and I she secured a position that allowed her to start saving money. Every paycheck mattered; it was a step closer to reclaiming her life.

Just as things began to look up and she was ready to get the rest of her belongings, disaster struck. In a final act of retaliation, he set their house on fire. The smoke destroyed almost everything she owned—Clothes, toys, shoes, and household items. Yet in this act of destruction, she escaped with her children, unharmed with nothing left but each other.

This was very devastating but with the help of our community we donated clothing, toys, basic needs, and everything she needed to give her a fresh start. Within a few months she accomplished what once felt impossible. She gained full custody of her children, moved into a home secured through Door County Housing Authority, and continues to work providing a stable, violence-free environment for her family.

Her journey was full of challenges, yet she was determined. The strength she had, lies within all survivors of domestic violence. Today she is living a life free from fear and she inspires people to believe in the possibility of a brighter future.

**4. What are some of the challenges HELP of Door County faces in carrying out its mission, and how are they addressed?**

Currently one of our greatest struggles is finding affordable housing for our clients fleeing domestic violence. Many people end up being forced to stay with their abusers longer than they want to or go back because of the lack of housing opportunities or shelters available to them. We are having to look further outside the county and extend our Transitional living program for our clients that have to move outside the county because they can not find housing.

**5. Looking ahead, what are some of the organization's goals or priorities for the future?**

HELP of Door County aims to secure funding to expand our transitional living program from four months of assistance to twelve months. We are also focused on increasing our prevention education and awareness presentations, with the goal of collaborating with all Door County School Districts. In the future, we hope HELP becomes a widely recognized name in the community, ensuring that everyone knows about the support available to them. Additionally, we are seeking to increase funding to provide greater financial assistance to clients who are starting over.

**6. What is the best way for the community to support these efforts?**

The community can best support our efforts by continuing to donate to HELP of Door County, whether through basic needs items or monetary contributions. Additionally, spreading the word about our existence and the services we offer is crucial. Statistically, one in four individuals is a victim of domestic abuse, meaning someone you know might be struggling in a relationship and may not be aware of the available resources and support.



*The Community Partner for No Wake is HELP of Door County. All proceeds from the Pay-What-You-Will performance on September 25 go towards our Community Partner. HELP of Door County will have a table in the box office during the run of the show with more information and a place for donations.*

*The Community Partner Program at TAP is an initiative that seeks to engage with the local community by forming partnerships with local non-profit organizations and businesses. The program aims to foster a sense of community through collaborations that promote the arts and enrich the cultural landscape of the area.*