

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

411 Butternut Dr.
Holland, MI 49424



A New Chapter of Leadership at Resilience

**We are thrilled to strengthen our staff
with three newly transitioned directors.**

Lesley Coghill, LMSW-Macro
*Director of Prevention & Organizational
Development*

Lesley (she/her) joined Resilience in 2000 as a Hope College intern and has since been a leader in advocacy, prevention, and community education. She has managed prevention programs, led outreach efforts, and supported initiatives like the Champions of Healthy Manhood Program. A member of multiple state and national violence prevention committees, Lesley has received several awards for her contributions. In her new role, she will develop agency-wide prevention strategies, enhance organizational capacity, and strengthen community partnerships.



Lesley Coghill, LMSW-Macro
Director of Prevention &
Organizational Development

Krystal Diel, LMSW-Clinical
Director of Survivor Services

Krystal (she/her) has supported survivors since 2013 in crisis lines, advocacy centers, emergency rooms, universities, and domestic violence agencies. An EMDR-certified clinician and certified yoga teacher, she integrates trauma-informed, survivor-centered care into her work. She also teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of Montana, helping shape future advocates. In her new role, Krystal will oversee direct service staff and programs, ensuring high-quality, ethical care for survivors. She will also assist with grant writing to expand resources and funding for survivor support. Her expertise and compassionate leadership will be instrumental in strengthening Resilience's services.



Krystal Diel, LMSW
Director of Survivor Services



Danielle Evans, MS
Director of Advancement

Danielle (she/her) joined Resilience in 2015, first as an advocate before transitioning to development in 2018. She has led key initiatives to expand Resilience's reach, strengthen donor relationships, and increase community engagement. A dedicated collaborator, Danielle has also served on internal committees and was recognized as an emerging leader by the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence. With degrees in Nonprofit Leadership, she applies her expertise to advancing Resilience's growth through innovative fundraising, meaningful donor engagement, and strategic partnerships—ensuring lasting impact.



Danielle Evans, MS
Director of Advancement

TRANSITIONS & UNCERTAINTY REQUIRE RESILIENCE

A letter from our Executive Director

These are exciting times for Resilience, with strong leadership transitions guiding us forward. **Yet, we also face uncertainty. A potential loss, reduction, or delay in federal funding threatens Resilience and our sister agencies, creating a very real and urgent challenge.**

Approximately 42% of our annual budget—about \$1.2 million—comes from federal grants, many funded through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). **These funds, sourced from criminal fines and penalties—not taxpayer dollars—ensure survivors can access critical advocacy and support without barriers.**

As you'll see throughout this newsletter, advocacy programs like ours are essential to a survivor's healing journey. Every day, survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking turn to us for help, and because of you, we are here to answer that call. But without sustainable funding, our ability to provide 24/7 services is at risk.

Now more than ever, your support ensures survivors have a safe place to turn. I encourage you to read these stories and see the impact of your generosity firsthand. And if you are able, **please consider making a meaningful gift** by returning the enclosed envelope or donating online.

No matter what challenges come our way, Resilience remains committed to being a lifeline and a safe space for anyone in need.

Thank you for standing with us.



Megan Hennessey, LMSW
Executive Director



Ensuring Survivor Voices Shape Our Work

SURVIVOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

Resilience believes **survivors should play a central role in shaping the programs and policies that support them.** That's the driving force behind the Survivor Advisory Council (SAC), a survivor-led subcommittee of our Board of Directors that provides critical insight into services, advocacy, and community engagement.

And the council is growing! Over the past six months, members have stepped up in powerful ways—volunteering, sharing their stories, and driving advocacy efforts. Each month, they connect via Zoom to collaborate and strengthen their impact.

The SAC is also a space for survivor fellowship and support. This past December, SAC members and their children gathered for a festive Holiday Celebration, featuring guided painting with local artist Carolyn Stich and ornament decorating. It was a special evening of creativity, connection, and community.

As SAC continues to grow, so does its influence. We are grateful for this incredible group of survivors using their voices to create meaningful change.

All survivors are welcome to join the council, including the agency's former and current clients. No prior experience with policy advocacy is needed. If you are interested in learning more or becoming a member of the SAC, please reach out to Lesley at Prevention@ResilienceMI.org.

Strengthening Community Collaboration

VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE

Our local coordinating council has **rebranded as the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA)**. Formerly known as the Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (LAADSV), the task force originated in 1989 and has grown in scope and membership. Members include courts, prosecutors, law enforcement, local nonprofits, tribal service providers, survivors, and community partner organizations.

VPA is a coordinated community effort to prevent domestic and sexual violence through community education and collaboration, to promote safety for victims and families and to hold abusers and perpetrators accountable. The task force partners with Allegan County Coordinating Council on Domestic Violence (ACCCDV) to host the biennial Together We Can Appreciation Awards event.



The task force meets every other month, hosts speakers from local agencies and programs, and works together for the safety of our local communities. For more information or to join Violence Prevention Alliance, please reach out to VPA@ResilienceMI.org.

Resilience Leaders Nominated

TOGETHER WE CAN: APPRECIATION AWARDS

On October 16th, 2024, the Violence Prevention Alliance (formerly LAADSV) in Ottawa County and Allegan County Coordinating Council on Domestic Violence (ACCCDV) hosted the return of the Together We Can Appreciation Awards. **Four amazing members of our Resilience team were named as finalists, with Beth Curley winning the Agency Professional Award.** We're so proud of our incredible team!

Agency Professional Award Finalists:

Beth Curley

SANE Program Coordinator (finalist and **winner!**)

Brad Hieftje

Healthy Manhood Coordinator

Mari Martin Award Finalists:

Elissa Swihart

Survivor Advisory Council Member

Gabrielle Dunai

Survivor Advisory Council Member



Special thank you to Emily Christopher for volunteering her time to create our logos for the Violence Prevention Alliance and the Together We Can Awards.



Calling Men to the Cause

CHAMPIONS OF HEALTHY MANHOOD

Monthly Gatherings

Healthy manhood isn't just an idea—it's a lifestyle. And that kind of change doesn't happen alone. Resilience's Allyship Program, Champions of Healthy Manhood, meets the second Wednesday of every month to:

- + **Build real friendships**—because every man needs a space where he can be honest, vulnerable, and truly seen.
- + **Support each other's mental health and well-being**—breaking the silence around emotions and stress.
- + **Learn how to be true allies to women**—understanding how healthy masculinity can strengthen families, relationships, and communities.
- + **Take action**—our Champions lead workshops, mentor young men, and help change the narrative around masculinity.



If you're looking for a brotherhood with purpose, this is where you belong. Contact BradH@ResilienceMI.org to learn more.

NEW!

Introducing: CATAPULT

A Workshop to Meet The Urgent Need to Engage College Men

Nearly 1 in 5 women on college campuses will experience sexual assault. At the same time, many young men struggle with loneliness, poor mental health, and rigid masculinity norms that discourage vulnerability and connection. These issues are deeply linked, fueling harmful relationship dynamics, increased violence, and a culture of disconnection.

It's time for a change. CATAPULT: Campus Action for Healthy Manhood is a workshop series **designed to help college men break free from harmful gender norms, build stronger relationships, and take action for safer, healthier communities.**

Developed in partnership with 300+ campuses, CATAPULT equips men with tools to challenge unhealthy behaviors and become positive leaders.

Workshop topics include:

- + Expressing emotion and building deeper friendships
- + Becoming a positive bystander and stepping up for others
- + Understanding consent, sex, and power
- + Supporting survivors of abuse
- + Navigating alcohol, drugs, and relationships in healthy ways

Men must step up—not just to prevent harm, but to reshape masculinity for a healthier future.

Bring CATAPULT to your campus by contacting BradH@ResilienceMI.org.

NEW!

Introducing: Faith and Healthy Masculinity

A Workshop for Faith Communities

What does it mean to be a man of faith? **Many men are taught masculinity is about strength, control, and leadership. But when we look to Jesus, we see a different model—grace, empathy, humility, and nonviolence.**

In our new 3-week church workshop, men explore a growth path rooted in faith. Sessions reflect on societal pressures, look to Jesus as a model of grace and compassion, and explore how embracing these values can strengthen relationships and deepen faith.

Brad Holehan, a Champion of Healthy Manhood since 2021, recently helped facilitate this workshop at Calvary on 8th in Holland. Reflecting on his journey, he shared:

“Through this work, I recognized my own loneliness and need for connection... I hope men in the church will experience Jesus in a way that leads to greater connection, vulnerability, love, empathy, and compassion.”

– Brad Holehan

We invite church leaders and congregation members to join us in encouraging men to step into a fuller, more faithful version of themselves.

To bring this workshop to your church, contact BradH@ResilienceMI.org.

SURVIVOR STORY

Reclaiming My Voice Through Advocacy

“[When abuse is present,] your life is in danger, no matter how much you love them. You might love them, but you need to love yourself more. There are people who can help —I’ll show you the way.”

—Alessandra*

**Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.*

“It can happen to anyone.”

“Alessandra” never imagined those words would become her reality. As someone who once worked in our shelter, she spent years helping survivors. But when abuse entered her own life, she found herself needing the very support she once provided.

Her journey with Resilience (then Center for Women in Transition) began with generosity. When United Way visited her workplace, she felt passionate about our mission and began donating and volunteering. **She never imagined she would one day seek safety within those same walls.** When her husband’s abuse became unbearable, she found refuge at our shelter—still donating when she could.



Leaving was just the beginning. After her divorce, Alessandra worked to rebuild her independence but found herself in another abusive relationship. At first, her new partner was charming, but soon, his true nature emerged—controlling and volatile. The abuse escalated until one terrifying night when

he threatened to kill her. **“His eyes went black, and I felt helpless,” she recalls. After multiple assaults, she made the life-changing decision to call the police.**

Her abuser was arrested, but the emotional battle continued. The legal system dismissed two of the assaults, leaving Alessandra consumed by doubt and guilt.

But this time, she wasn’t alone—her Resilience advocate stood by her side. With encouragement, she reinstated her no-contact order, navigated the court system, and reclaimed her voice. “It was a sad time, but empowering. My advocate truly cared and made it easier to move forward.”

Advocacy wasn’t just something Alessandra received—it became her path to healing. As she fought for herself, she realized she wanted to fight for others. But the trauma left deep wounds, leading her into another battle—alcohol addiction. Seeking healing, she turned to Alcoholics Anonymous, only to face another danger: the unspoken “13th step,” where predatory men target vulnerable women in recovery. Even in a space meant for healing, advocacy was needed. Once again, Alessandra refused to stay silent and took back control of her life.

Determined to help others, she joined Resilience’s Survivor

Advisory Council, using her voice to influence public policy and create change. She now speaks out about abuse, warning signs, and the power of seeking help. Grounded in faith and community, she emphasizes the importance of educating young people—because preventing abuse starts with awareness.



When asked what advice she would give to someone in an abusive relationship, she said:

“Your life is in danger, no matter how much you love them. You might love them, but you need to love yourself more. There are people who can help—I’ll show you the way.”

Advocacy is the bridge between survival and healing.

Alessandra’s journey proves that with the right support, survivors don’t just find safety—they find their voices, their power, and the strength to help others do the same.



Compassion in Action

The Vital Role of Volunteer Advocates

What if your presence could help a survivor take their first steps toward healing?

When a victim of sexual violence takes the courageous step to seek help, they are met by two vital sources of support: a **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)** and a **Volunteer Advocate**.

The SANE Program provides specialized medical care and forensic exams 24/7 for survivors of sexual assault where nurses offer compassionate, trauma-informed care while collecting evidence.

Volunteer Advocates ensure survivors have a voice in the process. They provide emotional support, explain rights and options, and help survivors regain a sense of control. Maria, a dedicated volunteer, knows firsthand how powerful it is to simply be there in a moment of need:



“I volunteer because no one should go through this alone. Being there to provide comfort and support in such a vulnerable moment is truly life-changing.”

– Maria, Resilience Volunteer Advocate

Put your gifts of compassion and support in action!

**We have immediate openings for
SANE Program Volunteer Advocates.**

Training provided. For details, scan the QR code or visit

ResilienceMI.org/Volunteer today.



Congratulations, Beth Curley!

ADVANCING FORENSIC NURSE EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN

Recently, Resilience's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program Coordinator, **Beth Curley**, was elected **Board President of the Michigan Great Lakes Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses**. Beth previously served as the Chair of the Education Committee and Journal Club.

As a board member, she looks forward to providing educational opportunities to nurses statewide and collaborating with other board members nationwide. Congratulations, Beth!



Horses, Healing, and Growth

EXPANDING EQUINE THERAPY TO CHILDREN

Resilience is committed to finding innovative ways to support survivors on their healing journey. We're honored to expand our partnership with **Renew Therapeutic Riding Center** to offer a specialized therapy group incorporating



equine-assisted therapy for children who have been exposed to violence.

Equine-assisted therapy provides a unique setting for survivors to experience both vulnerability and empowerment in a safe, supportive environment. The gentle presence of horses helps participants practice trust, strengthen emotional awareness, and reconnect with themselves and the world around them.

While we have been offering this group to adult survivors of sexual assault, we are excited to welcome children into this amazing program.

Learn more about equine therapy and its impact from Resilience's Trauma Therapist, **Tori Conner**, on our blog: ResilienceMI.org/Blog.

Join Us Wednesday, April 16, 2025

6:00-9:00pm | Boatwerks Waterfront Restaurant, Holland

Come together for a fun and meaningful evening with a wandering dinner, decadent desserts, drinks, games, and a live auction. Emcee Jim Babcock will host alongside survivor and advocate Karah Ruczynski, who will share her powerful story.

denim & desserts

For details and tickets, visit ResilienceMI.org/events.

WHY DENIM?
scan to find out



Looking ahead...

You won't want to miss our next big event!

For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, visit ResilienceMI.org/Events



Mark Your Calendar

- FOURTH ANNUAL BLUE STAR BASH -

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Ivy House, Saugatuck

DETAILS COMING SOON!

NEW!

Reimagined: Supporting Survivors with the Gift of Choice

MAY BASKETS

We've reimagined our May Baskets Campaign to better empower survivors in meeting their everyday needs. Instead of pre-assembled baskets, our **NEW May Baskets Shop** allows those using our services to personally select essential items not covered by state assistance.



Get involved: We're actively collecting new cleaning supplies and personal care products—including

items for men, BIPOC individuals, and those with sensitivities to scents and allergens.

Donations can be dropped off at 411 Butternut Dr, Holland, MI, Monday–Friday, 9 AM–5 PM.

To contribute via our Walmart Wishlist or learn more, visit ResilienceMI.org/May-Baskets.

HOLIDAY GIVING

Last year, we put a fresh spin on our holiday program to give survivors greater autonomy and dignity. Formerly Adopt-a-Family, the **NEW Holiday Gift Shop** allowed survivors to personally select gifts for their children. Families could either submit a wish list to be matched with a donor or visit the shop to choose from donated gifts, household items, and wrapping supplies.

With the support of 80+ donors, we provided gifts to 105 families in 2024! Thanks to our generous community, survivors celebrated the season in a way that best fit their families.



Shown here: volunteers from Holland Junior Welfare League helped out at our 2024 Holiday Gift Shop

Find Strength Together

Explore support groups and webinars on self-care, embodied healing, legal rights, and more.

Whether you're seeking community, practical guidance, or a safe space to grow, Resilience offers opportunities to connect and learn.

Visit ResilienceMI.org/Support-Groups to find the right fit for you.



The True Value of Your Gift

Leaving an abusive situation is not only emotionally devastating, it can also be financially overwhelming. From securing safe housing to rebuilding a life free from fear, the costs can feel insurmountable. Resilience walks alongside survivors, providing the critical support they need to overcome these challenges and begin their journey of healing.

Your donation ensures survivors never have to choose between safety and survival. With your support, we can continue to provide free, confidential help 24/7, offering resources and advocacy to those who need it most.

Together, we empower survivors to reclaim their future.

Visit ResilienceMI.org/donate to learn the various ways you can support our work.

We'd love to meet you
and show you first hand the power of your gift.

Schedule a tour with Danielle Evans, Director of Advancement:
DanielleE@ResilienceMI.org or 616-494-1721.

Thank You!

Groups and individuals listed on this page have recently
partnered with or donated to Resilience.

Allegan County Community Foundation

Allendale Community Foundation

Christian Brothers Automotive

Cityside Middle School – Ms. Arens Class

Community Share: A Gentex Charitable
Fund

Coopersville Area Community Foundation

DTE Foundation

Emily Christopher

Falcon Woods Apartments

Fellowship Reformed Church

Heart of West Michigan United Way

Allegan & Ottawa

HHI Management Company

Holiday Program Donors & Volunteers

Holly Palmer Foundation

Homeless Prevention Partners

Hope College's Sigma Sigma Sorority

Jim Babcock

Louis & Helen Padnos Foundation

Mariah & Miller

Michigan Asset Group, LLC

Resilience Interns

Resilience Volunteers

Sam's Club- Holland

Sunshine Properties

TEGNA Foundation

The Little Red Barn in Nunica

Two Men and a Truck

Woodward Charitable Fund

Women@Gentex

XL Property Management LLC



Stay informed

Learn more about how to end violence and support survivors and get notified of opportunities, events, and programs by:

- + Subscribing to our **monthly e-newsletters** and **bi-annual newsletter** on our website.
- + **Visiting our Blog** at ResilienceMI.org/blog
- + **Following @ResilienceMI** on social media



Welcome New Staff

India Ambrose
Advancement Manager

Deisy Calderon
Shelter Assistant

Resilience Board of Directors

Ortencia Bos
Board President

Shannon Garrett
Vice President

Dr. Lana Zarlenga
Secretary

Tina Fierro
Treasurer

Dr. Laurie Birkholz
Medical Director

Blake Andrea

Dr. Kevin Carmody

Katy Gibson

Aida Tanaka

Det. Sgt. Jason Valenzuela

It's not your fault. You are not alone.

If you or someone you know has been affected by domestic or sexual violence, **help is available 24/7.**



Help Line: 1-800-848-5991

Toll-Free: 616-392-1970

Spanish: 1-866-728-2131

E-mail: GinnyP411@gmail.com



24-hour Help Line

For immediate support, call
616.392.1970 or 800.848.5991
En Español 616.355.9755
or 866.728.2131

**SAFE SPACE
FOR EVERYONE**

www.ResilienceMI.org
On social media @ResilienceMI

THE POWER OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy services empower survivors of domestic or sexual violence to move forward in their healing journey.



ENHANCED SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Survivors who work with Advocates are better equipped to develop personalized safety plans and take proactive steps to significantly reduce the risk of future harm.



INCREASED ACCESS TO RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

Advocates help survivors navigate complex systems and successfully obtain critical resources.



IMPROVED LEGAL OUTCOMES

Advocacy increases survivor engagement in the criminal justice process and builds confidence in legal systems through personalized support and guidance.



REDUCED PTSD & DEPRESSION

Advocates offer emotional support and connect survivors with mental health resources, significantly reducing PTSD and depression throughout the healing journey.

“ My Advocate was very helpful, and when I felt anxiety over different things, she helped walk me through options. [She was] super supportive. ”

- Advocacy Service Participant

Your Support is Critical!

Thank you!

Give to Resilience to provide crucial services to survivors > ResilienceMI.org/Donate

Donate like-new or gently-used clothing, toiletries, and non-perishable food items at **411 Butternut Dr. in Holland.**

Volunteer your time to help survivors directly or indirectly > ResilienceMI.org/Volunteer

Spread the word about supporting survivors of sexual assault, and encourage others to get involved.