



# ANNUAL REPORT

## Fiscal Year 2024-2025



**Creating Hope  
Healing Lives  
Changing Community**

# Change Leaders



After five years I continue to be honored to be serving as Safelight's CEO. I am so grateful to have such an incredible team and community. We live our mission of "Creating Hope, Healing Lives, and Changing Community." Safelight is essential to Henderson County, bringing together our county's experts to link services and create safety. Together we break barriers, lose the labels, and help all survivors who have experienced any violence, abuse, or exploitation.

This year Safelight turned 41, having assisted over 47,000 survivors to date. Last year alone, we helped 1,312 survivors, of which 525 were children. In the past year we filled over 22,800 beds, provided prevention education with nearly 11,000 of our neighbors, conducted over 1,500 counseling services, connected 287 survivors with legal support, helped 276 children with telling their story through our Child Advocacy Center and much more.

Because of you, this past year we

- Survived Hurricane Helene with power outages, building damages, closures, losses
- Became Debt Free! No mortgage, a 3-year goal done.
- Received a New Client Van & Generator
- Became a living wage certified agency
- Added another Outreach, accounting and community relations positions
- Did advocacy work with 2 trips to Washington DC and 1 trip to Raleigh
- Acute Forensics program started with Blue Ridge Health
- Renovated shelter with new lighting, floors and bathroom upgrades.
- Renovated our Dandelion Cafe to add in a new Job Training Expansion with sales of our new product line

And we are not finished, our neighbors still need our help now more than ever. Next year we plan to

- Grow our shelter from 13 to 20 rooms to help more adults and families fleeing violence and abuse
- Increase children able to attend Camp Hope America, our year-round program and overnight camp week
- Increase job trainees paid to learn marketing, product development and other job skills in our new dry mix product line in our Dandelion Cafe
- Grow our new acute forensic program, NC's first community-based option for evidence collection from abuse or violence, a partnership with Blue Ridge Health

Thank you to our incredible staff, we help people in some of their darkest hours. Your passion is why we continue saving lives in our community with safe, full-service programs. Thank you to our incredible board members, donors, volunteers, partners, and community leaders. Thank you for believing in the importance of the work we all do together. Thank you for supporting Safelight and saving survivors with us.

By partnering with us, you help save lives in Henderson County. You are all a part of this journey helping us change over 46,000 people's lives since 1984. Your support has helped us as we together celebrate 41 years serving Henderson County! Please continue to tell people you meet about Safelight. Volunteer, eat at our café, and shop at our store supporting our mission! Visit and tour with me and Michael to see what we are creating.

Thank you for your support,

**LAUREN WILKIE**  
*Safelight CEO*





# Board of Directors

Rafe Westbook, President

Marilee Arnold

Ruth Simons

Joe Fishleigh, Vice President

Sheriff Lowell Griffin

Christy Sneller

Anna Conner, Treasurer

Paul Purfield

Cheryl Stuller

Mariah Cassum, Secretary

Lisa Rothman



Creating hope, healing lives, changing community. Statements and actions that Safelight has lived up to this past year, despite the devastation brought on by Hurricane Helene. Through careful stewardship and unwavering community support we served Henderson County by providing support to over 1312 individuals including shelter to 273 survivors. Our Family Advocacy Center helped 287 survivors, and our Child Advocacy Center assisted 276 children. These accomplishments not only reflect our resilience but also ensure that our organization remains a dependable haven for the clients we serve. I am proud to be part of Safelight’s journey to create a safer Henderson County.

Rafe Westbrook, *Safelight Board President*



2025 to 2026

**Safelight  
Board of  
Directors**



# Safelight's New Dandelion Cafe Product Line!

We sponsored to be a part of an exciting new venture that promotes job training for women and stability for families moving forward to a new future. Our Company wants to invest in the future for women and children and services to support stability, safety, and education.

Thank you, Cheryl Stuller  
Stuller Power Solutions





# Safelight's Timeline

- 1983:** Henderson County Child Abuse Task Force formed (later became FOCUS).
- 1984:** The Women's Crisis Ministry starts in a church basement in Hendersonville to serve women dealing with crises such as divorce and widowhood.  
Mainstay is formed with the mission of helping battered women.
- 1985:** Women's Crisis Ministry becomes a part of Mainstay and operates from county donated space in the old Henderson County Courthouse. Started the Batterers Intervention Program, later to be called Domestic Violence Intervention Program.
- 1986:** Mainstay purchases and moves shelter into a house off Haywood Road.  
Henderson County Rape Crisis Center as part of Buncombe County (later renamed The Healing Place) opened and provided services for adults who experienced sexual assault.
- 1988:** A building adjacent to the Mainstay shelter is purchased for moving administration.
- 1990:** FOCUS "Friends of Children United Services" (later The Healing Place) began accepting children as the first accredited CAC in North Carolina. Mainstay opens the first resale store in Henderson County on Barnwell Street.
- 1995:** Mainstay Shelter is destroyed by fire, and a temporary Shelter is set up downtown.
- 1996:** The Henderson County Rape Crisis Center merges with FOCUS "Friends of Children United Services" and change their name to The Healing Place, Inc. Mainstay moves into a new facility at 125 South Main Street opens April 21, 1996  
Administrative offices, the resale store and shelter are located under one roof.
- 2008:** Mainstay shelter and resale store moves to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, current location.
- 2004:** Transitional House opened for up to two years of housing support for survivors (closed 2017).
- 2013:** Mainstay opens the Dandelion Café at 127 Fifth Avenue West, starting paid onsite Job Training.
- 2014:** Mainstay opens the Family Advocacy (Justice) Center across from the courthouse in a rented space with onsite partner Pisgah Legal Services.
- 2015:** Mainstay reopens the counties Child Advocacy Center. Mainstay's job training program expands into the Resale Store.
- 2016:** First United Methodist Church partnership started for 8 apartment units for us to house. Safelight, Inc. formed as Mainstay and The Healing Place merge to better provide essential services to all survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse.
- 2017:** The Child Advocacy Center regains national accreditation. Safelight expands its job training program to include Sewing Our World Together ending in 2022.
- 2019:** Counseling Center formalized and begins for children and adults off Asheville Highway.
- 2021:** Outreach Program formalized and begins. Full Renovation of shelter basement 133 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue occurs adding a large meeting room, computer lab and additional office for staff.
- 2022:** Washington Street office opened to house Administration, Family Advocacy Center, Counseling Center, Community Outreach and Child Advocacy Center. Formed Henderson Counties Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Taskforce formed, partnering with Partnership for Health.
- 2023:** Lethality Assessment Program started officially with our local law enforcement partners. Full Shelter renovation and creation of first onsite Animal Kennels in Shelter opened in December, a partnership with Blue Ridge Humane Society. Full renovation of community engagement space for trainings, groups, and a computer lab space.
- 2024:** Camp Hope America/Pathways started with our first camp! Housing Program began with Rapid Rehousing offered onsite. Foley, our Canine Companion joined team. Impact Health, Healthy Opportunities pilot partnership begins. Formed Henderson Counties Human Trafficking taskforce. Full renovation of our Safelight resale store.
- 2025:** Started Acute Forensics program with Blue Ridge Health onsite. Added another Outreach position to expand prevention work in schools. Renovated our Dandelion Café and included a new product line expansion in our Job Training Expansion.

*Creating hope and healing for families*



# A Survivor's Story

1 in 3 women  
1 in 4 men  
1 in 2 transgender individuals  
experience interpersonal violence



My story is about a journey of resilience: overcoming abuse and finding strength. My journey to America was supposed to be a new beginning, a chance for a better life, under the care of someone I trusted. I left a land of extreme poverty in the outskirts of a city in Zimbabwe. When we talk about abuse, often people think men, but this was a close family female friend who I trusted. She talked me into coming over for a good paying job so I could be near my son who was graduating college from UNC Asheville after studying abroad here.

The trust I had with her was shattered when I found myself subjected to verbal abuse, threats, humiliation, and lies. Her words cut deep, like knives into my soul. Being called names, belittled and blamed for the things, it took a toll on my mental health. She tried to force me to drink alcohol and meet her male friends. When I refused, she would yell obscenities towards me. I was not allowed to have contact with the outside world. I was not allowed to have friends. I was alone and broken. I talked to an attorney through Pisgah Legal Services who helped link me to Safelight. Amidst this darkness I found a glimmer of hope.

Safelight shelter became my sanctuary, a haven where I found healing and rebuilding myself. The support and care I received were instrumental in my recovery. Counselors, advocates, and fellow survivors helped me to begin to find my strength and confidence. I came without any clothes except what I was wearing, and I had not eaten for days and was immediately connected to clothes from our Resale store. I remember Paige encouraged me to eat, and she boiled some eggs for me. I remember being scared to come out of the shelter, it took me months to feel safe to exit the building. I remember going to the Dandelion Café as my first outing as a safe outing, easter outing.

During my time with Safelight working with the Job Training Program with the Resale Store. I have fond memories with Job Training learning how to sew at Safelight, learning something without being controlled or judged, I was able to piece my world together. The sewing room downstairs was quiet, where I could go and be alone on Saturdays and create art and start healing. In the Safelight Resale Store, I learned to connect again and make friends.

With the Safelight Financial Stability Classes, I discovered that a larger percentage of women who go through abuse do not have a college education and are not financially independent. With Pisgah Legal Services I finally received a work permit. Safelight helped me next to enroll at Blue Ridge Community College and I received my GED with a tutor from Literacy Connection. When I graduated, most of the Safelight staff came to watch me cross the stage. I was asked to give the graduation speech that year for the class. Now, I with my LPN, I help my community and give back working with AdventHealth.

--Safelight survivor, now thriver





# Partnerships

Blue Ridge Health provides comprehensive medical care to vulnerable populations throughout Western North Carolina, including prenatal care and in the hospital setting.

Our partnership with Safelight has allowed us to expand our services to cover victims of violence in our Henderson County community and improve the quality and scope of referrals for our emergency departments. Safelight hosts and facilitates acute forensic advocacy and linkage to behavioral and legal services, which are crucial. Our staff provides forensic exams and follow-up medical care. Together we are creating a safer and healthier community where survivors of abuse or violence have the services they need for justice and for physical and emotional recovery.

*Asman Peiffer, Family Medicine Physician  
Blue Ridge Health*



Over 40 partners in excellence have signed memorandums of agreement with us including shared office space or funding together. Safelight collaborates with different community partners and agencies to ensure clients' needs are met.

I am extremely proud of the growth that Safelight Child Advocacy Center continues to achieve. The partnership between AdventHealth and Safelight provides our CAC with the ability to serve families when they need to be served.

Safelight ensures full-time staffing of forensic interviewers and advocates. AdventHealth allows me to work full-time as the medical provider onsite. This collaboration allows for children and families to be seen quickly rather than to wait to be served, and our partners know that we are ready to help them with any urgent needs. I'm honored to get to work with such a dedicated group of people.

*Meredith Harding-Bremner PA-C  
AdventHealth | Safelight Child Advocacy Center*

# FY25 Service Stats



**24-Hour Emergency Shelter** filled **22,829** beds for **273** survivors



**Outreach for Prevention and Education** provided educational programs to **10,647** individuals in our community



**Counseling Center** provided **1,503** sessions for **319** survivors



**24-Hour Crisis Hotline** answered over **1,460** survivor calls



**Family Advocacy Center** helped **287** survivors



**Child Advocacy Center** assisted **276** children



**Domestic Violence & Partner Intervention Program** engaged **69** men and women



**Housing Program** enrolled **114** individuals and successfully housed **26**



**Community Engagement** supported 29 survivors with financial literacy and employment in our Safelight Resale Store and Dandelion Cafe





# Supporters

Thank you to our over 800 donors, sponsors and volunteers! We could not do it without you!



## Thank You to Our Event Sponsors

- First Citizens Bank
- Benton Roofing
- Blue Ridge Cabinet Connection
- Carolina Village
- Crate Wine Market & Project
- Duke Energy
- The Edwards Family
- First Citizens Bank
- First United Methodist Church
- Fortis Properties
- Gibbs Service Group
- Gilreath Shealy Law, PLLC
- HomeTrust Bank
- Hunter Suburu
- LS Creative
- Mast General
- Mr. Rooter Plumbing
- New Belgium Brewing Company
- Old National Bank
- Stuller Power Solutions
- Sugar Hollow Solar
- Wilsonart International

## Thank You to Our Annual Sponsors

- AdventHealth
- Champion Comfort Experts
- Dunlap Construction
- Horizon Heat & Air
- Hunter Hometown Foundation
- McGuire Wood & Bisette Law Firm
- Old National Bank
- Southern Alarm & Security
- Stuller Power Solutions
- UNC Health Pardee
- WLOS



# How Can You Support?

## Mail a check

317 N. Washington St., Hendersonville, NC 28739

## Give online

<https://www.safelightfamily.org/donate.htm>

## Make a Gift of Stock/Investments

A gift of stock is an impactful way to support us and make a smart decision for your taxes. By transferring stocks, you can avoid capital gains tax, lower your tax burden, and donate the full amount to Safelight.

## Donate Through Your IRA

If you are 70.5 or older and you have a traditional IRA, you can support us this year with a tax-free gift from your IRA called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Giving from your IRA can lower your tax burden by using pre-tax funds for a gift.

## Use your Donor Advised Fund to Give

If you have a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) with an organization such as the Community Foundation of Henderson County, please follow their guidelines for minimum contributions and recommending grants.

## Text2Give

Text2Give makes it easy to give to Safelight! Simply text the amount of your donation to our Text2Give number: (828) 492-3322. Once received you can register the account you want to draw funds from, and you are ready to go!

## Scan Our QR Code

1. Open the Camera app on your smartphone.
2. Hold your device so that the QR code appears in the viewfinder in the Camera app. Your device recognizes the QR code and displays a notification.
3. Tap the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.



EMERGENCY SHELTER \$50,000

Help our shelter expand to add more rooms to serve families fleeing violence and abuse

24/7 CRISIS HOTLINE-3 MONTHS \$25,000

24/7 Crisis Line staffed for 3 months

SCHOOL TRAININGS - 1 YEAR \$10,000

Support our Outreach Program for elementary school children, teachers, and administration

JOB TRAINING PROGRAM - 6 MONTHS \$5,000

Pay a client in our job training program in our Dandelion café or Resale store for six months

CAMP HOPE HENDERSON COUNTY \$5,000

Support one camper through a year of Pathways events and a week of summer camp

24/7 CRISIS HOTLINE \$2,500

24/7 Crisis Line staffed for a week

SHELTER STAY - ONE MONTH \$1,500

Serve a survivor in our shelter for one month

JOB TRAINING PROGRAM \$1,000

Pay a client in our job training program in our Dandelion café or Resale store for one month

CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER \$500

Support a child who has experienced or witnessed violence to have a one and done retelling of their story

FAMILY ADVOCACY CENTER \$250

Support a family through court, legal, and medical advocacy

SURVIVOR COUNSELING & SUPPORT GROUPS \$100

Support a survivor receiving individual counseling and support groups

SHELTER STAY - ONE NIGHT \$50

Serve a family or individual in shelter fleeing violence or abuse

HOSPITAL ACCOMPANIMENT BAGS \$25

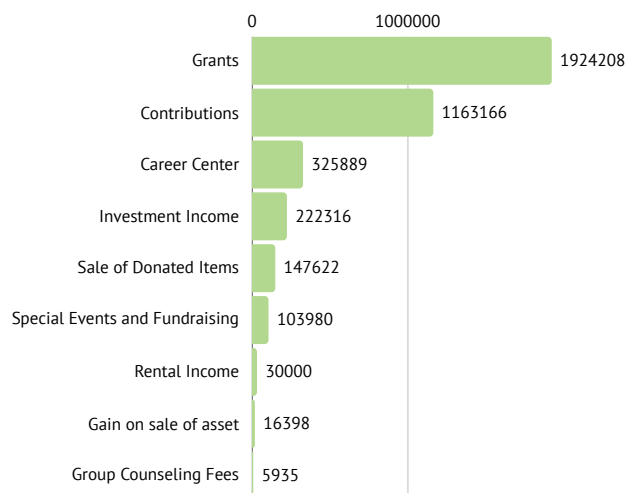
Emergency toiletries, clothing, and community resources



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

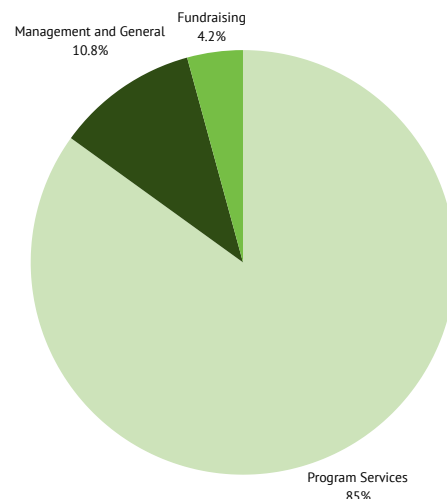
FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

## REVENUES



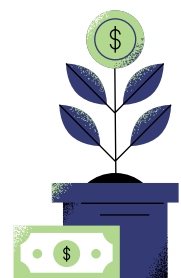
**TOTAL REVENUE: \$3,939,514**

## EXPENSES



**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$3,075,568**

## ASSETS



|                                       |                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Current Assets                        | 858,811            |
| Property and Equipment                | 3,918,098          |
| Investments                           | 999,922            |
| Beneficial Interest in Endowment Fund | 230,611            |
| Unconditional Promises to Give        | 10,656             |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                   | <b>\$6,018,098</b> |

## LIABILITIES

|                                          |                  |
|------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | 181,131          |
| Long term debt – current position        | 60,008           |
| Operating lease liabilities - current    | 7,657            |
| Long term debt – noncurrent position     | 139,180          |
| Operating lease liabilities - noncurrent | 10,656           |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>                 | <b>\$398,632</b> |





**317 N. Washington Street  
Hendersonville, NC 28739  
(828) 693-3840**

**[www.safelightfamily.org](http://www.safelightfamily.org)**

**Should you have any questions, please contact  
828-693-3840 or [info@safelightfamily.org](mailto:info@safelightfamily.org)**