

The Purple Thread

My Sisters' Place Volunteer Newsletter

June 2023

**Dear MSP Volunteer,
Welcome to our second annual MSP Volunteer Newsletter, The Purple Thread!**

A message from our CEO, Karen Cheeks-Lomax

Taking the first steps towards a new life is daunting. At My Sisters' Place, we don't want survivors to have to take those steps alone. Enter, our beloved volunteers.

The volunteer program was launched with the idea that advocacy should support our clients' lives with empathy and without judgement while honoring their stories. The program stipulates that we should always put the clients first, as we help them surmount obstacles and navigate limited resources. It is an expectation that our volunteers meet the client with a spirit of ongoing commitment and a consistent standard of care.

Volunteers make the difference between a client sitting alone in a crowded waiting room – sometimes in close proximity to an abuser – and having someone there to listen and provide encouragement when it is needed most. Many SILs are interpreters and translators, working closely with staff to bridge language barriers. Our SIL volunteers are fluent in Spanish, French, German, Yiddish, Italian, Hindi, Portuguese and Arabic.

Our volunteers are MSP ambassadors. They are on call to help however and wherever we need them: in the shelter, organizing our in-kind room, stuffing envelopes, tabling at community events, placing orders for children's clothing, or assisting clients in choosing furniture for new homes. A common agency-wide request is, "Do you think a volunteer can help?"

By participating in community outreach efforts, volunteers further MSP's mission by increasing awareness of domestic violence and providing resources to those in need throughout our communities. Volunteers have held the hands (literally and figuratively) of thousands of survivors as they have travelled on their journeys toward safety, peace, and justice.

With heartfelt gratitude, we say "THANK YOU" to all of you who give so generously of your time and spirit in support of survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking.



It takes only one person at the right time and the right place to make a difference and change the world.

Agency Updates

Since June of 2022, we have had many more volunteers offer their time and energy to the great work that we do at My Sisters' Place. We've welcomed **53 new volunteers** who bring such amazing backgrounds and expertise to our fold. Many of them have already jumped in with all hands on deck, ready to serve and support our community, and have helped keep our agency running smoothly and efficiently. In addition, **15 new Sisters-in-Law (SILs)** completed 30 hours of training and are now certified to have direct interaction with our survivors.

We are still in need of bilingual translators, so please spread the word among your networks of colleagues, acquaintances, family, and friends.

We continue to use a hybrid model at MSP's offices with staff interchanging on a bi-weekly schedule, to allow for safe distancing when our clients need to stop by for appointments and assistance. Court, medical, immigration and other necessary accompaniments have started to pick up, however many meetings continue to take place online or via phone calls.

Look at all you've done!

- Participated in 23 tabling events
- Packed 255 backpacks with supplies for kids bound for school
- Stuffed and addressed hundreds of envelopes with MSP materials
- Wrote virtual notes and letters of encouragement
- Sent thank you cards to donors and friends of the agency
- Joined/lead/advertised more than 100 donation drives, and received an unbelievable amount of personal hygiene products as a result
- Organized in-kind donations at MSP offices in Yonkers and White Plains
- Delivered many boxes of donations to the shelter and our sister agencies
- Joined the DV walk 2022 across the Tappan Zee Bridge
- Assisted with numerous interpretations (via telephone and ZOOM) and translated many necessary documents for client accompaniments and cases
- Accompanied clients to family courts, immigration offices, medical appointments and the Furniture Sharehouse
- Received, sorted and distributed Halloween costumes and Mother's Day gift baskets

**We know that April was National Volunteer Appreciation Month,
however...**

Our gratitude to our volunteers cannot be kept to just one month.

Our staff and clients are so inspired by what you do to make a difference in the lives of so many, so we have decided to celebrate and salute you, each and every day!

My Sisters' Place has designated June 28, 2023, to kick off a Volunteer and Donor Appreciation YEAR. Your belief in the mission and the guidelines of our agency, is evident in all you do on our behalf. We are indebted to you, and we appreciate the selfless donation of your time, energy, and resources.



THANK YOU!

Studies show that volunteering helps individuals feel more socially connected, reducing feelings of loneliness and depression, leading to improvements in physical health, and longer lifespans. Volunteering feels good and can increase your sense of purpose in life. Acting generously is known to trigger your brain to release chemicals that can lower stress and improve mood.

A study by Yeung, Zhang and Kim found that volunteering led to an increase of:

- 8.5% in mental health
- 9.08% in physical health
- 7.35% in life satisfaction
- 11.11% in social well-being
- 4.3% decrease in depression

(BMC Public Health)



*At My Sisters' Place:
We are advocates
We are client-centered
We act with integrity
We are collaborative
We are anti-oppression*

*At My Sisters' Place we value:
Community
Diversity
Equity*

*We believe that relationships matter,
that volunteering is transformational,
that everyone should be respected,
and that we all MATTER!*

Volunteer Spotlight



Dorothy Botsoe believes passionately in MSP's mission to end domestic violence and human trafficking through comprehensive services, advocacy, and community education. She says this is so simple yet profound. As a Real Estate agent who lives and works in Westchester, she gives back to her community by being an advocate for My Sisters' Place - she is also a member of MSP's Board of Directors. She is happy and honored to have been given the opportunity to volunteer for My Sisters' Place.

Stacy Bittel has been involved with MSP for the past two years, hosting neighbors and friends for information sessions as well as coordinating gift card and mother/baby product drives. She recently started organizing the in-kind room at the White Plains office. When she isn't busy chasing after her two elementary-aged boys, she enjoys playing tennis, trying new recipes, and sinking into fiction.



Joan Lloyd donates earrings to women's shelters through her small business, Bling's The Thing. She offers workshops in libraries across Westchester County to teach interested parties and individuals how to make their own jewelry and encourages people to donate one pair for each pair made. MSP has been a lucky beneficiary of her beautiful jewelry for many years. Her care and generous spirit can be seen in the beauty of her creations.

Denise Elliott's introduction to MSP was over 30 years ago. She has always admired the agency's work for victims of abuse, having been a survivor herself. She retired from tech at PepsiCo, where she led a campaign for donations to MSP. When she's not on the pickleball court, she enjoys free-style dancing outdoors to local bands. She appreciates MSP's continuous strategic growth into new areas, including human trafficking. Thank you for being the organization for which I am proud to be a volunteer!





In her younger years, **June Sidman** was a serious competitive figure skater and then 15 years as a judge with the US Figure Skating Association. She went to art school and became a painter, had several shows of her work, and has a website (JuneSidmanart.net). She is new at MSP, an elder having just turned 82 on June 21. She feels very fortunate to have discovered painting. MSP is the beneficiary of cards that she has personalized for our clients, which serve as a warm welcome when they enter the shelter. She says she is glad to contribute to MSP in whatever way is possible and appropriate.

Shout Out to Miyuki Oblitas

Miyuki Oblitas is a tenacious student, eager to embark on her collegiate career and make an impact on her school and community! Best described as thoughtful, sociable, and passionate by her counselors, she looks forward to the opportunity to develop both academically and within the workforce. She intends on pursuing sociology at the College of the Holy Cross to secure a profession in the field of nonprofit or public policy to give back to underserved communities.

A few of Miyuki's extracurricular/volunteer accomplishments:

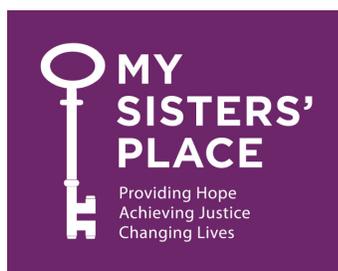
- An integral part of Survivors Inspiring Action (SIA), a partnering group of domestic violence survivors who work together to educate MSP stakeholders on the multidimensional experiences of a survivor through community outreach, fundraising, and staff education.
- Co-created the 2022 Mamaroneck High School presentation for the Human Rights Institute Conference for High School Student Leaders of The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center.
- Co-designed and distributed over 200+ "Safe Space" stickers for Mamaroneck High School faculty to express their support for LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and disabled students.
- Member of the mission of the Mamaroneck District Equity Team (DET) to identify, acknowledge, and dismantle the systemic barriers that prevent equity and access for all students by creating and implementing a sustainable plan for equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.

**Congratulations, Miyuki, and thank you for all that you do for My Sisters' Place!
We are so lucky to have you as part of the MSP Family!**



Thank you to our amazing donors!

- AXA XL NY
- BOCES (Board of Educational Cooperative Services) Teacher Association Retirees (BTAR)
- Bundles of Joy
- Byram Hills Preschool
- Charity Knitting Bees
- Clifford Chance US LLP
- Community Synagogue of Rye
- Croton Harmon High School
- Feit Family
- Five Star Senior Center Yonkers
- Get the Word Out Ministry
- Girl Scouts of Mohegan Lake
- Girl Scouts of White Plains
- Hillel of Westchester
- Hitchcock School Scarsdale
- Iona College, New Rochelle
- Iona Preparatory School, New Rochelle
- JP Morgan Chase
- Junior League of Pelham
- Julia B Fee Sotheby's International Realty
- Junior League of Bronxville
- Jeff Kaufman, Avanti Linens
- Joan Lloyd, Blings the Thing
- Mariposa Quilting
- MBIA
- Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union
- Mirsky/Tannenbaum Family
- NBC Universal Community Impact
- The New York Football Giants
- Pearlman & Taffet Family and Friends
- Post Road Elementary School White Plains
- Ricks Family
- Rye High School
- Rye Rotary Club
- Scarsdale Synagogue
- Shikana Glory Delivery Ministry
- June Sidman, June Sidman Art
- St Pius Church, Scarsdale
- St. Joseph School of Bronxville
- The Standard
- Swiss Re
- Target
- Melissa Tomlin, 914PopUps
- Ursuline School New Rochelle
- Heather Weiland, Heart of Cabi
- Wells Fargo Advisors
- Westchester Reform Temple
- White Plains Chapter of Alpha Kappa
- Willow Towers Assisted Living
- Yonkers Federation of Teachers



Contact Us:

24/7 Hotline: 800-298-7233 (SAFE)

Chat: mispny.org/connect-now

Text: 914-600-4208

Website: mispny.org

Office Phone: 914-683-1333

Follow us!

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 My Sisters' Place NY

What you can do

- Sign up to receive our electronic and snail mail
- Visit our website (www.mspny.org) and read up on the services we offer to survivors
- Request our printed materials to share information about MSP and raise awareness in your community
- Attend an upcoming event
- Email any good volunteer stories or useful articles to jdennis@mspny.org for us to include in future newsletters



Upcoming Events

Early August 2023

Backpack Drive

September 19, 2023

Volunteer Orientation / Refresher Workshop

October 3, 2023

Teatime with Jenny via ZOOM or in-person

October 10, 2023 - March 2024

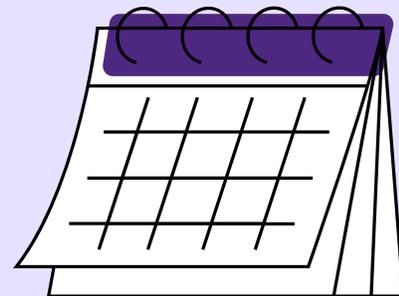
Volunteer Zoom Call Series 4 (12 sessions)

October 2023

MSP's Fall Luncheon Fundraiser

December 2023

Holiday gift card drive



MSP AT A GLANCE

In 2022...

Over **100** families found safety and support through our Shelter and “RISE” Transitional Housing Program.

We reached over **2,200** students at **30** different schools and community groups through educational programs.

Our Center for Legal Services reached over **1,200** individuals with advice and representation in Family and Immigration Law.

Our Operation Safety program trained over **550** healthcare professionals to identify DV and safely connect their patients to specialized support.

Our Family and Children’s Unit provided nearly **3,000** sessions of counseling and clinical therapy, reaching **hundreds** of families with counseling, support groups, and specialized programming for children.