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**SAFE & SOUND**

**OCTOBER NEWSLETTER**

## **GREETINGS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Greetings neighbors!

It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood (especially on a fall day when the temperature is peaking at 79 degrees)!

It's the time of year where our community outreach efforts are met with residents raking up fall leaves, where children are jumping in those leaves and parks are still activated with families soaking up the final bit of the season.

We've found this to be a great time to grab a cup of hot chocolate or champurrado with a new neighbor on the block to help welcome them to the district and to help answer questions about the happenings in the area.

It is a great time to strengthen connections and build on the momentum of the safe summer programs we've hosted.

This month's newsletter provides a snapshot of what the team has been up to and how we've been able to continue making great strides towards a safer Milwaukee & Racine.

I'm extremely proud to spotlight our prevention efforts during the month of October that engaged both adults and young people in meaningful conversations around what it means

to be advocates for their own safety. From our workshops in elementary schools discussing National Bullying Prevention month – where students wore the color orange to help promote kindness, acceptance and inclusion in the classrooms. Students at River Trail Elementary School in District 4 learned about how they can be a student leader and do their part to discourage their friends from treating others in a way that they didn't want to be treated. Our Neighborhood Organizers were able to talk to students about being peer mediators and using their youth leadership skills to help promote peace. And then later in the month our team wore the color purple to help raise awareness around the harsh reality of domestic violence in our communities. Sadly, the conversation was very personal for many of our staff who either identified as a victim or survivor of domestic violence. It was a difficult reminder that we need more education and resources to help women and men who are in toxic relationships.

October also centers our conversations around world mental health month. The team leaned into training and professional development workshops specific to adult and youth mental first aid. We also partnered with Community Advocates to host a QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) suicide prevention workshop so that we have insight on how to best support residents in crisis. And just this week we hosted an intergenerational talking circle that created a safe space to have discussions around grief – especially for families who can relate to the idea of losing a loved one too soon. Special thanks to our partners at Westcare for helping to facilitate the conversation to a packed audience of attendees.

Our prevention work continues to focus on the opioid crisis and how we can help spread the word about the dangers of misuse and abuse. This newsletter will provide updates on both the annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and our growing work around the Better Ways to Cope project with Milwaukee County. Stay tuned for exciting updates around our campaign in the new year.

Soon it will be November and our team has been working to set our intentions about the neighborhood safety work we will embark upon in 2025. We can't wait to share our updated Strategic Plan with our partners and stakeholders as we move onward and upward creating safer neighborhoods –together!

With warm regards,

Bridget Whitaker, JD  
Executive Director

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# WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

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## Neighborhood Changemaker Breakfast Raises Over \$81,000!



On October 4th, Safe & Sound hosted the Neighborhood Changemaker Breakfast at the Wisconsin Club, bringing together residents, community leaders, and partners to celebrate those making a difference in Milwaukee and Racine. The event featured networking, a keynote speech

from Carlton Mayers, II, Esq., a silent auction, and an inspiring awards program honoring local changemakers.

Thanks to the generosity of attendees, we surpassed our fundraising goal, raising over \$81,000 to support our mission of building safe and empowered neighborhoods.

Congratulations to Our 2024 Awardees:

**Public Safety Award:** Chief Alex Ramirez, Racine Police Department

**Herb Kohl Champion Award for Outstanding Resident Leader:** Kewanee Allen, Milwaukee District 7 Resident

**Collective Impact Partner:** Mrs. Mary Fullilove and The Salvation Army of Milwaukee County

**Neighborhood Changemaker Award:** Pastor Anthony and Dr. Linda Caples, Epikos Church – Sherman Park

**Youth Essay Contest, First Place:** Victorio Perez, age 15, Ronald Reagan IB High School

**Youth Essay Contest, Second Place:** Lynette Hightower, age 17, Obama High School

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to Board Member Event Co-Chairs Camila Sparks and Gatlin Dresidan hosting our event, along with our entire Board of Directors for their support!

We are deeply grateful to all who attended and contributed, and we look forward to continuing our work together to create lasting change in our neighborhoods.

Do you want to empower a neighborhood changemaker? Your donation will make it possible for Safe & Sound to connect residents with resources and to build bridges between residents and law enforcement.

[DONATE HERE](#)

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## Become a Resident Leader

Are you ready to make a real impact in your neighborhood? Join us for Safe & Sound's **Resident Leadership Training**, kicking off in November! This free program is designed to empower residents like you with the skills and knowledge to promote safety and positive change in your community.

Through interactive sessions, you'll learn effective strategies for organizing community initiatives, building relationships with local leaders, and addressing public safety challenges. By the end of

the program, you'll be equipped to lead efforts that foster a stronger, safer, and more connected neighborhood.

**Learn how to:**

Establish a Block Club

Engage with local elected officials

Conduct community outreach with local neighbors

Use the City of Milwaukee's mobile app to address nuisances in your neighborhoods

Plan events that empower your neighborhood

Partner with local nonprofits like Safe & Sound who prioritize resident needs

**Session Details:**

• **Dates:** Wednesdays 11/6- 12/11

• **Time:** 6pm-8pm

• **Location:** Safe & Sound, 4422 W Leon Terrace, Milwaukee, WI 53216

Don't miss this opportunity to step up as a leader in your community!

For more information and to register, email Bridget Whitaker, [bridget@safesound.org](mailto:bridget@safesound.org)

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## **Youth Prevention Summit 2024: Equipping Milwaukee's Youth with Coping Strategies**



On September 21, 2024, Safe & Sound hosted its annual Youth Prevention Summit at Milwaukee Academy of Science, drawing together young people, community leaders, and educators to focus on innovative and healthy coping strategies. This year's summit emphasized emotional well-being and mental resilience, giving youth practical tools to manage life's challenges in positive, constructive ways.

The event began with a calming sound bowl session led by Zakia Wells, setting the tone for a night of reflection and growth. Throughout the evening, music from a live DJ filled the space as attendees visited interactive stations, including drug prevention activities, drunk goggles simulations, community resource tables, and a photo booth, blending education with engagement.

A central feature of the summit was a dynamic panel discussion where community leaders shared personal stories and responded to impactful questions. Panelists discussed the challenges of adolescence, strategies for managing stress, the importance of natural highs, and navigating difficult situations involving drugs or alcohol. Attendees resonated with the panel's honesty and insights, noting how much these shared perspectives strengthened their understanding of resilience and coping.

The event closed on an inspiring note, as participants expressed hope and motivation, and some leaders stayed on to discuss further collaboration. This year's Youth Prevention Summit not only provided essential coping tools but also reinforced the value of community support and shared experiences, leaving everyone with a sense of connection and empowerment.

Safe & Sound is excited to continue this momentum, supporting youth as they face life's challenges with strength and positivity.

Special thanks to our panelists for joining the conversation around finding better ways to cope: Ricardo Wynn (BLAQ MKE), Marina Murphy (Be Sad, Keep Going), Regina Williams (Mind, Body & Soul Dancers), Christopher Robinson (Westcare), Carnell Junior (Fathers Making Progress) and Dr. Lakeisha Russell, LPC (moderator).

This Youth Prevention Summit, as well as our ongoing opioid misuse prevention programming is made possible by our partnership with Milwaukee County's Better Ways to Cope campaign. Learn more about the campaign [here](#).

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## **Safe & Sound and Milwaukee Police Collect Unused Prescription Medicine and Distribute Lock Boxes on National Drug Take-Back Day**



On October 26th, Safe & Sound partnered with five Milwaukee Police districts for National Drug Take-Back Day, resulting in the collection of over 100 pounds of unused and expired medications. This effort provided Milwaukee residents with a safe and accessible way to dispose of prescription drugs, helping to prevent misuse and protect our communities.

In addition to collecting medications, Safe & Sound handed out medicine lock boxes to community members. These lock boxes are an essential tool for securely storing medications in the home, reducing the risk of accidental exposure, especially among children, and helping to prevent theft or misuse. By partnering with Milwaukee's police districts, Safe & Sound supports a community-wide approach to medication safety, working to protect families and reduce the likelihood of drug abuse.

We thank Milwaukee residents for their participation and our law enforcement partners for their commitment to creating safer neighborhoods.

“The success of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (or DEA’s) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day events are not possible without working together with our local law



enforcement partners and healthcare providers. The large amounts of unwanted prescription drugs collected at Take Back events reflect our shared commitment to the safety and health of our neighborhoods. These events allow us to help inform residents about the dangers of misuse and abuse that lead to overdose fatalities in Milwaukee County. We see this work as a prevention measure that we can rally so many families around.” – Bridget Whitaker, Executive Director

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## **Safe & Sound Welcomes New Board Member Elizabeth Erickson**

Meet Elizabeth!

Safe & Sound is excited to announce the addition of Elizabeth Erickson, Co-Executive Director of Higher Expectations in Racine, to our Board of Directors. Elizabeth brings a wealth of experience in collaborative community work, and her dedication to empowering Racine County aligns perfectly with Safe & Sound’s mission.



“I am excited to be a part of a team that believes in collaborative action and is working hard to empower Racine County to reach its highest potential,” says Elizabeth. “I love being able to create space for the community to engage in co-creating solutions across our outcome areas. I’m thrilled to be a part of building a stronger, brighter future for Racine County!”

Here are a few fun facts about Elizabeth:

- She lives in Racine with her partner, their daughter, a dog, and a cat—plus some beloved pet rats from years past!
- From 2014-2016, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Madagascar.

- Her go-to karaoke song is “Part of Your World” from *The Little Mermaid*, inspired by her partner’s business, The High Note Karaoke Lounge.

We’re thrilled to welcome Elizabeth to Safe & Sound and look forward to the impactful work we’ll accomplish together!

## Announcing the Winner of the Opioid Awareness Poster Contest: Imanuel Hall-Kneemiller!



Safe & Sound is thrilled to announce Imanuel Hall-Kneemiller from North Division High School as the winner of our 2024 Opioid Awareness Poster Contest! This contest called upon artists and advocates from Milwaukee and Racine to create powerful artwork that raises awareness about the dangers of opioid abuse and the importance of prevention and treatment.

Immanuel’s poster stood out for its originality, impact, and commitment to the theme "Raise Awareness, Save Lives." In recognition of Imanuel's work, the winning poster will be displayed on a billboard this coming Winter, bringing this critical message to a broader audience in our community.

Congratulations to Imanuel for this incredible achievement and thank you to everyone who participated in helping us fight opioid abuse through art and awareness!



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