Seasons Greetings!

It has been a busy year for SASO. We continue to provide advocacy services in our Durango office and in our new Ignacio office in the ELHI building. SASO has maintained our 24-hour crisis hotline, law enforcement advocacy, medical advocacy for forensic medical examinations, and criminal justice advocacy through the court process. As the only confidential community advocacy agency serving sexual assault victims in La Plata County, SASO provides an essential service to our community members. We have provided 210 self-reported victims with 1,101 direct services and 472 referrals to community partner agencies in 2020. We are on track to surpass these numbers for 2021. During this challenging time, we are grateful to continue supporting victims of sexual violence in their healing. Your support continues to maintain our essential services.

In addition to all the services SASO provides, we took on some new endeavors. SASO opened the Phoenix Center at Fort Lewis College, providing advocacy on the Fort Lewis College campus in conjunction with Alternative Horizons. We also provided a Holistic Healing Series, exploring alternative methods of healing from sexual trauma. We know that survivors have different paths to healing and wanted to provide an opportunity to explore less traditional healing options through this innovative programming series. SASO hosted the 4th annual Violence Against Native Relatives Symposium, and were able to partner with Durango Independent Film Festival, Fort Lewis College, and the Durango Arts Center to host a film screening of Somebody’s Daughter and Say Her Name. The films had been in “the works” since 2020. It was wonderful to partner with local support to bring the films to our community and raise awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives.

In the new year we are looking forward to partnering with La Plata Youth Services on programming for area youth. We also anticipate moving forward with Project Angel Shot in partnership with the Durango Police Department to raise awareness and provide additional safety measures to Durango residents.

Though this new world is challenging, we continue to provide advocacy to victims of sexual violence in our community, aiding them in finding and engaging their healing.

With the onset of the pandemic, our world has shifted. Sexual assault has not stopped and SASO has continued to respond to our community members in need as well as worked to continue providing education and outreach to stop sexual violence. Thank you for your ongoing support in our efforts. We couldn’t do it without you!

Laura Latimer
Executive Director

Find us online:
www.durangosaso.org
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Follow us on Instagram!

S A T A F Y 2 0 2 1  P A G E 1

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

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Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

Did you know that our community has a SART? SART stands for Sexual Assault Response Team. Primarily, this team consists of community agencies including Community Advocacy (SASO), Forensic Nurse Examiners at Mercy Medical Center, the office of the District Attorney, and Law Enforcement. The team is also partners with Fort Lewis College, Probation, Hilltop Corrections, and the Department of Human Services, as well as many other departments and non-profits. Our mission is clear: the SART is to ensure an effective, consistent, comprehensive, and collaborative response to sexual assault that prioritizes the needs of survivors, brings offenders to justice, and reduces the impact of sexual assault in the 6th Judicial District. A SART is a multidisciplinary interagency collaboration that unites its members in a victim-centered, offender-focused approach that through case review evaluates if current protocols were followed and identifies if gaps exist. A SART routinely balances needs of victim/survivors as well as the Criminal Justice System in order to increase victim and community safety, prevent future victimization, and work towards improving prosecution outcomes. SART Partners collaborate to ensure each victim of sexual assault receives a comprehensive, timely, and victim-centered response.

So why does this matter to our community? Simply stated, we want our community to be aware that there is a team of people who genuinely care about the issue of sexual assault. We realize that there are times when this doesn't feel like the case, especially when the public perception is, “nothing ever gets done” or “there is no justice”, the exact opposite is actually true. These issues due matter and there are a lot of meetings, training, and conversations going on, sometimes in public, but mostly behind the scenes, to ensure our community is safe from perpetrators who prey on the vulnerable. Our law enforcement agencies continue to do all they can to investigate and arrest perpetrators, while our District Attorney's office continues to do their best to prosecute cases and provide victim services. It is comforting to know that our community is collaborating to bring an awareness and end to sexual assault. If you have any questions about SART, please contact Brian Williams at SASO. Brian serves as the SART Coordinator and is always willing to bring more awareness to our community about what the SART is doing.

Brian Williams, SART Coordinator

COLORADO GIVES DAY

SASO had to cancel our annual Chef Showcase for the second year due to Covid concerns. We are focusing our efforts on our Colorado Gives campaign. Please consider donating to SASO during this giving season. Our goal is to fundraise an additional $12,000 by the end of 2021. Your contributions help SASO provide 24/7 advocacy for sexual assault survivors in our community.

What your donation can buy:

- A donation of $66 sponsors our 24/7 hotline for one day.
- A gift of $88 provides 4 hours of an advocate's time to be with a survivor during a medical forensic exam.
- A donation of $188 covers the participant cost of one of our Healing through Trauma support groups.
- A gift of $1,170 pays sponsors one day of SASO’s operations.
Congratulations to the 7 new volunteers who completed SASO’s 30-hour hotline training in September! Topics covered included First Responder training, advocacy 101, investigations, prosecution, victim’s rights and compensation, sex offender treatment and probation, Title IX, reporting, and more. We are grateful for all of our speakers and the opportunity to collaborate with other agencies. SASO will be hosting another FREE training in January/February, email emily@durangosaso.org for more information.

SASO VOLUNTEERS MATTER

You’re not a victim for sharing your story. You are a survivor setting the world on fire with your truth. And you never know who needs your light, your warmth and your raging courage.

-Alex Elle

A Volunteer Story

I volunteer for SASO because I want to be there to support anyone that has been sexually assaulted. Whether it is answering the hotline, holding someone’s hand or being present in the courtroom can help with their healing journey. I understand all the emotions someone goes through. I was raped at 16 and sexually assaulted 4 times in the military. I didn’t have anyone to talk to about it and just wanted it to go away. As a result, I suffered for 40 years in silence. I don’t want anyone to go through what I did by not having an outlet to heal. SASO is an amazing organization and integral to our community. I wish there had been an organization like this when I was assaulted. Survivors need to be seen and heard. Conversations and education about sexual assault need to continue to happen because unfortunately it isn’t going away. Having someone that is knowledgeable that I could trust would have taken years of pain, shame and silence from my life. Being an advocate is now my purpose and passion. SASO has allowed me to give back and as I help others it allows me to continue to heal.

-Michelle

SASO VOLUNTEERS!

6,280
The total number of hours SASO volunteer hotline advocates have contributed to the agency in 2020.

2020 Hotline Numbers

210 Total Unduplicated Victims
640 Served through the office and the 24 hour hotline
1,101 Victim Services
472 Referrals

For more information about volunteering, contact emily@durangosaso.org
First Annual Laney’s Luncheon SASO Fundraiser

A huge thank you to PRIMI for hosting our first annual Laney Malavolta Luncheon fundraiser this October in honor of our amazing victim advocate who passed this summer. We are very proud to announce that our joint efforts raised nearly $9,000 in Laney’s honor towards SASO. PRIMI selflessly donated the food and labor plus 100% of the proceeds from the event along with generous personal donations throughout the day. We would like to thank everyone who attended for making this such a special day. PRIMI and SASO hope to make this an annual tradition every fall around Laney’s birthday!

Covid Response

SASO is proud that we have been able to continue services throughout the pandemic. SASO has maintained our 24-hour crisis hotline, law enforcement advocacy, medical advocacy for forensic medical examinations and criminal justice advocacy through the court process. We also reestablished our community support groups through zoom. We maintained all services through phone, in office meeting (using masks, maintaining safe distancing, using antibacterial cleaning solutions) and teleconferencing. SASO has provided our office for law enforcement interviews as a safe environment that is more comfortable for the victims during reporting. SASO has also resumed our educational efforts. We have been invited to do presentations with Durango High School classes and look forward to educating our community on how to stop sexual assault before it happens.

SUPPORT SASO AND GIVE THE GIFT OF SPECIALTY WINE TO YOUR LOVED ONES THIS SEASON!

Bottles are available now!

Your choice of:
Chardonnay
Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot Blend

Wine can be purchased at Four Leaves Winery, 528 Main Ave https://fourleaveswinery.com/
Cultural Outreach

This year, SASO is pleased to announce the completion of the 4th Annual Violence Against Native Relatives Symposium. The purpose of the annual symposium is to bring education to communities on topics surrounding violence against Native relatives. By giving communities, service providers, and other agencies information on how trauma impacts Native communities, what information have presenters gathered while working with Native communities, and how are they able to help Native clients. These topics include, but are not limited to, historical trauma, sexual violence in tribal communities, domestic violence and intimate partner violence, human trafficking, strangulation, stalking, missing and murdered Indigenous relatives, forensic nurse examinations (FNE)/sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE), child sexual violence, and jurisdictional issues involving Native communities. Along with these topics, there are topics to combat violence against Native relatives, such as, healthy relationships, safety planning, and survivor sacred stories.

Our staff is thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate with Fort Lewis College and Alternative Horizons. The opening of the Phoenix Center marked the collaborative effort between the three organizations. The Phoenix Center is a shared space on Fort Lewis College Campus, where individuals can speak to staff from SASO and Alternative Horizons in a confidential manner. SASO holds office hours in the space on Mondays and Thursdays from 12pm-2pm, and Alternative Horizons holds office hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12pm-2pm. The center is located in the Education Business Hall in room 240. Informational materials are made available at all times and the space has been decorated to increase comfort levels. Sharing this space allows for increased accessibility to services for clients who may not otherwise know that our community-based services are available to them. This collaboration also strengthens our work as a community to provide information about the impacts of violence. Increasing the availability of this information serves as a means of prevention. Together, we can all work together to combat the risk and impacts of violence within our community. The door to the center is propped open during office hours for those who are interested in stopping by!
Our Deepest Gratitude from 2021~

SASO extends an amazing thank you to all donors.

Our donors make Sexual Assault Services Organization strong.

We truly appreciate your support!

Thank you to all our donors and supporters- you make our work possible.

Wishing you health, happiness, safety, and joy in the new year!

-SASO Staff and Volunteers