



WELCOME TO OUR

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 22, 2023



OUR MISSION



SASO offers survivors of sexual violence, support, compassion, hope, and healing. We work to end sexual violence through survivor-led advocacy and prevention education that recognizes the connections between oppression and sexual violence.

Inside this issue:

- ED Letter
- Community Education
- Cultural Outreach
- Welcome New Team Member
- SART Update
- Donor Thank You

Dear Community Members,

As we are nearing the end of the year, we at Sexual Assault Services Organization are filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our community in our mission to prevent sexual assault and provide support for survivors. We are deeply appreciative of our community's commitment to creating a safer world for all. Your generosity and support has made a real difference in the lives of those affected by sexual violence. Thank you for joining us in this time of celebration and gratitude in reflecting on the achievements of the past year. So far in 2023, we have been able to help over 210 survivors of sexual violence. We have answered 843 calls on our 24/7 support line, provided 32 Healing from Trauma groups, 221 counseling contacts, advocated for 11 clients during law enforcement reports, tracked 10 court cases, attended 25 hospital exams and facilitated over 128 office hours at Fort Lewis College. In addition, our prevention efforts have been off the charts this year! We have connected with over 8,492 community members through 55 community outreach presentations, 79 cultural outreach presentations and 27 prevention education workshops. Our support of survivors can look like a 15 minute phone call or over 300 hours of staff time, providing ongoing support and advocacy as survivors move forward from the trauma they have experienced.

This year, as we reflect on the progress we have made and the challenges that still lie ahead, we are reminded of the critical role that our community plays in our work. Your support allows us to provide essential services to survivors of sexual assault, educate communities about prevention, and advocate for systemic change. Thank you for continuing to support survivors in our community and helping us to spread the word about prevention efforts.

And, despite all these efforts, we still have work to do. 1 in 3 individuals will experience sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.

Here are a few ways you can make a difference this holiday season:

- Donate online at <https://www.coloradogives.org/organization/SexualAssaultServicesOrganization>
- Consider making a recurring monthly donation to ensure a steady stream of support
- Volunteer your time or skills to assist with our programs and activities. New volunteer training begins January 20. Applications are available here: <https://www.durangosaso.org/volunteer>
- We are also looking for board members. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please send me an email, laura@durangosaso.org
- Spread awareness about SASO and the importance of sexual assault prevention

Thank you for considering our annual holiday appeal. Your generosity is an investment in the future of our community and the well-being of all individuals.

Together, we can create a world where sexual assault is prevented and survivors are supported.

Sincerely,

Laura Latimer,
Executive Director



What's New?

Cultural Outreach

¡SÍ SE PUEDE, DURANGO! ("YES, WE CAN!")

October 21st was the first all-Spanish symposium in our community.

It was organized by Sexual Assault Services Organization, Construyendo Poder, Compañeros Four Corners Immigrant Resources Center, La Plata Food Equity Coalition, El Centro de Muchos Colores and FLC's Borders and Languages program.

We had more than 50 participants, most stayed throughout the whole event, which lasted 8 hours! We also had more than 20 kids; it was important for us to have childcare since this can be an impediment for Latinas/os/es to attend these types of events.



There were 4 presentations completely in Spanish that were selected by the community; they had 15 topics to choose from and these were the ones chosen:

- **Know Your Rights Workshop:** myths and truths about immigration law
- **Let's talk about sexual violence.** What is the U Visa?
- **Leadership:** How to trust in the power of your voice?
- **Mental health, trauma and survival of immigrants.**

We obtained donations and sponsorships to provide lunch, healthy snacks, and childcare for everyone attending.

Everyone came together at the end of the event to celebrate the collaboration and unity in our community, expressing the sentiment that ¡Sí se pudo, Durango! (Yes, we did it, Durango!)



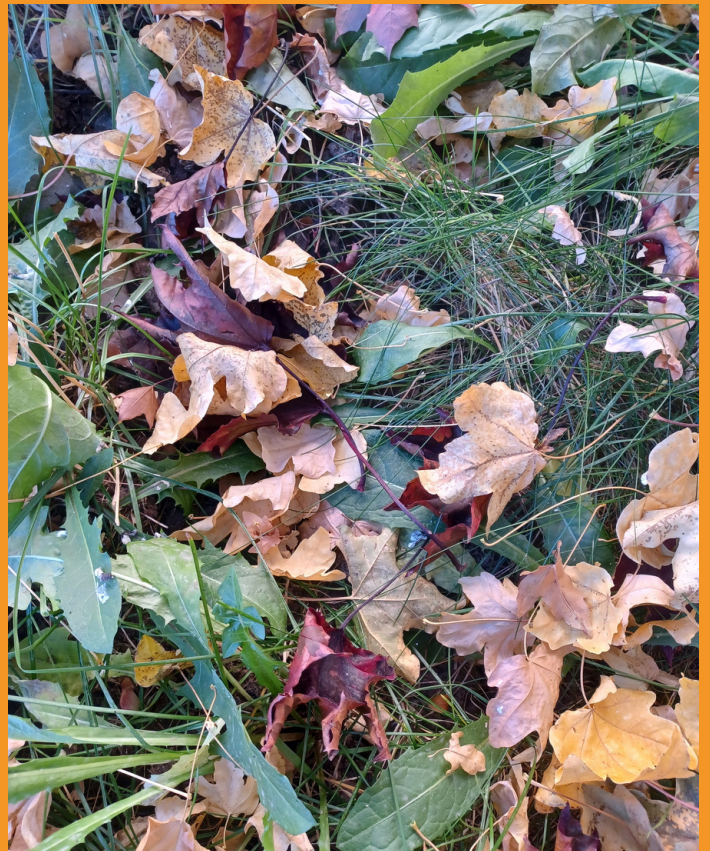
- Brenda Alonso-Chavez
Cultural Outreach Coordinator I

What's New?

Cultural Outreach

OUR HEALING GARDEN IS GOING TO SLEEP FOR THE WINTER.

The leaves are turning bright yellows and reds. Our chokecherry tree is bare and ready for a rest. To help our friends come back to us in the spring, we are leaving the leaves and grass for next year. They hide a whole host of helpful insects that need the leaves for warmth and food. What can look like a mess is a careful system that Mother Nature looks after, and can be used at the bottom of the garden boxes in the spring. In the coming weeks we will be getting the wood for the garden boxes. If you would like to help put them together, please reach out and let us know!



- Raven Nyx
Cultural Outreach Coordinator II

WELCOME, LIZ!

Liz recently joined the SASO Team as Volunteer and Advocacy Services Coordinator. Before joining SASO, Liz worked as Program Manager at In the Weeds, a Durango-based nonprofit that focuses on mental health support and suicide prevention for individuals working in the restaurant industry. Liz holds a Bachelors degree in English and Political Science from Western Colorado University. With an educational background in literary and political theory, she is an advocate for the importance of individuals and groups of people having the power to tell their own stories and create their own meaning. Liz believes in the healing power of community connectedness and creative self expression. In all of her work, Liz wants to celebrate difference and campaign for thoughtfulness and understanding.



Support Groups

A word from Brian

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

“If you are looking for me on Monday’s, you will find me in jail. Ok, not really ‘in jail’, but at the LaPlata County Jail in Durango. As part of SASO’s PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) I am providing groups to survivors at our jail. Originally, the groups started with a women’s group. Once there was success with the first group, expanding to another group was a no brainer. Typically, groups start off slow with just a few attendees, but then word gets out about helpful the groups were, and they quickly grew with numbers ranging from 4-11 per group.

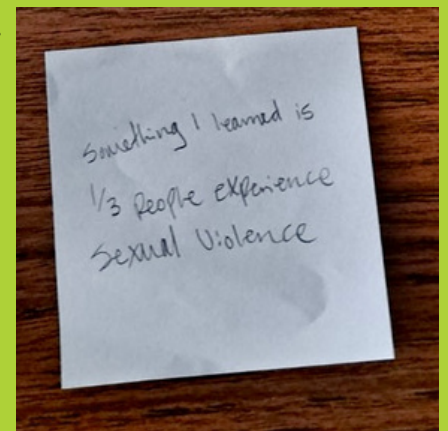
The overall content for the women’s group comes from the curriculum, “Healing Trauma: A Workbook for Women and Gender-Diverse People,” by Dr. Stephanie S. Covington. The content for the men’s group is from Dr. Covington’s, “Building Resilience: A Workbook for Men and Gender-Diverse People.” Both groups help attendees work through different aspects of trauma, by discussing trauma, grounding exercises, power and control, gender roles, and healthy relationships and boundaries. The curriculum lasts about six weeks, broken down into six sessions allowing the groups to slowly work through the topics, while in group and during the homework given. Once the six weeks is concluded, any person who attended all six sessions, receives a certificate of completion. The biggest challenge is consistency. Some folks chose not to attend sometimes because they are tired, don’t feel like it, are released, or are working through something within their respective pods. The group’s success comes from the attendees themselves, who interact with comments and questions, create their own group agreements for how the group will be led, the calming and peaceful nature that is nurtured that allows both men and women to be vulnerable.

Overall, the groups have proven to bring about healing, peace in calmness within the individuals themselves and in the jail as whole. This is special work that aims to help the attendees heal from their trauma and give new language to what they are experiencing. I like to say, ‘new words create new worlds.’ It’s SASO’s hope that through these groups, a new inner and outer world can be created”.

- Brian Williams
SART Coordinator

“Being so young in my career, I feel a great sense of gratitude and honor in having the privilege of teaching youth about consent, boundaries, healthy relationships and so many other important topics. At times it can be uncomfortable to ask questions and talk about intimacy with high school students. Sometimes they are quiet, and engagement always differs but it still seems impactful. You can tell when certain things sit with them. We’ve received a great deal of positive feedback from different presentations. Looking to the future, we purchased the Unhushed Curriculum that we are so excited to implement into classes next year.

SASO is proud to provide advocacy services and prevention education that acknowledges the intersection between oppression and sexual violence. We provide prevention education to age groups ranging from early childhood (5+) to late adulthood. Our education curriculums are tailored to be age-appropriate and culturally considerate to the populations that we are serving. The topics of our curriculum include consent, conflict resolution, nonviolent communication, myths vs facts of sexual violence, healthy relationships, boundaries, bystander intervention, compassion, cyber safety, sextortion, human trafficking, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, motivational interviewing, and more! We are happy to have successfully facilitated prevention education in the Durango, Ignacio, and Bayfield school systems, as well as at the Fort Lewis College campus. We carried out 83 Prevention Education sessions this year, serving 1,927 participants! Our organization also presents “train the trainers” workshops for other local organizations and partner agencies to work toward collectively providing the community with trauma-informed care. Sexual violence can be prevented, and we strive to do so by promoting our educational curriculums throughout our community spaces”.



- Lexi Mitchell

Community Education Coordinator

Our Deepest Gratitude in 2023

to our donors

Your contribution makes SASO strong. We appreciate you!

Brielyn Akins
Barr Engineering
Joe & Debbie Bishop
Randy & Kathy Black
Robert Carolan
Julie Cooley
Nicole Cyr
Paul DeBell
Jensen Laplante Development
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Laura West
Andrea Westinicky
Molly Wieser
Briggen Wrinkle



Town of Ignacio



United Way
of Southwest Colorado



ANSCHUTZ
FAMILY
FOUNDATION



SASO

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES
ORGANIZATION

**SASO'S 24-HOUR SUPPORT LINE IS AVAILABLE TO
SURVIVORS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY,
PROFESSIONALS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.**

All calls are free and completely confidential.

We acknowledge it can feel awkward and scary to call a support line. We are here to help. SASO support all victims of sexual violence regardless of immigration status, sexual orientation, religion, gender, income level, race/ethnicity, age, or ability.

