



The CommUUnicator

**Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro**

Domestic Violence Month

By Annie Garrison

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and I want to share with you information about this scourge on our society. Let's be clear, domestic violence impacts all of us! It is a community and public health issue. All of us know or have known someone who has been involved in domestic violence. It permeates all socio-economic levels, all ages, races, cultures and religions. Underserved populations and specific groups have a higher rate of domestic violence, including LGBTQ+ and disabled people, minority women, girls and seniors. Men and boys are also domestic-violence victims. The emotional and psychological impact on children is astounding, and family abuse is often a grooming ground for children becoming abusers as adults. Almost all human trafficking victims will say that the root cause of their becoming a victim started at home with domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior used by one individual intended to exert power and control over another individual in the context of a family setting or intimate relationship. It can take place in the home or at work. The forms of abuse are physical, sexual, emotional, and economic. The most common causes are alcohol and

substance abuse, sense of entitlement, history of being abused themselves – generational, mental illness, financial stress, lack of empathy, gender discrimination, and bullying. Abusers can be a family member, neighbor, boy or girlfriend, internet acquaintance, caregiver, student, clergyman/woman, or employer.

Virginia received 72,831 calls in 2024 to its hotline, and one in three women and one in six men will experience stalking in their lifetime (VA 2024 Annual Attorney General Crime Report). Twelve million people experienced some form of domestic violence in the US and in VA, 38.6% of women and 28.5% of men suffered from some type of domestic abuse in 2020 (VCU Report).

We have a responsibility to ourselves, family and friends, and our community to be on the lookout for abusive situations. They can be subtle. Ask, encourage, and don't give up when you run into resistance (and you will). Seek out help and don't judge. Be upfront with a potential victim. If there are children involved or you feel there is an imminent threat of physical violence, call 911. Other resources are: State Hotline (800-838-8238), Augusta Health Behavioral Center (540-332-4000), and New Directions (540-885-6800). It takes only one small action to start ending domestic violence. Remember, victims or even

potential victims feel voiceless and powerless and need to know someone cares!

Our member, Annie Garrison, is an experienced volunteer and advocate for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. She was president of a human trafficking/domestic violence nonprofit in Florida and was a certified lecturer presenting workshops at area nonprofits, hospitals, schools, and universities.

Looking Forward to the 2025 UUFW Service Auction!

By Kay Yost

Last weekend I had the joy of spending time with many of our UUFW members taking a walk along country roads in Augusta County and then enjoying an incredibly delicious gourmet picnic.



This was the 21st and last year for this particular event. Over the years it went from being referred to as a picnic and hike to being called a picnic and “brisk walk.” I wasn’t around for the first 10-11 years, but the walks I participated in have taken us to Mint Springs Valley Park, the Elkton Community Center, Montgomery Hall Park, Natural Chimneys Park, and various country roads and trails in

our local area. Thank you, Florence Ferguson, Laura Hiatt, Sue Peason, Sheila Farlam and Pat Donovan, for sharing your culinary talents and offering this auction event for so many years.

This year, I’ve also participated in a mini-golf tournament and trivia & tacos night and purchased some very nice jewelry, books, artwork, local honey, and gift baskets all through the annual UUFW service auction. Some of these items have made nice holiday gifts! Put on your thinking caps and get some ideas for what you might donate to the auction this year. It’s a good opportunity to share your interests, skills, and talents while raising funds on behalf of the UUFW. The auction task force will be ready to accept descriptions and photos of donations beginning October 20 and the auction will be held Sunday, November 9 following the service and a finger foods potluck lunch.

Upcoming Community Events

The cities of Staunton and Waynesboro have not let the current political climate diminish support for their LGBTQ+ communities. This is in contrast to the unfortunate situation a few months ago when the Augusta Board of Supervisors canceled a pride event at the Fishersville Library on short notice.

[Prism Waynesboro](#) is this Saturday from 12:00 to 4:00 pm, downtown (503 W. Main St.), and the [Staunton Pride Festival](#) will be October 11 in Gypsy Hill Park. The UUFW will have a table under our new canopy at both events, along with other community organizations and vendors. You can sign up and help to share information about UUFW with attendees, or just come to have fun and show your support.

