

"BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND SO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST." GALATIANS 6:2

Brittany Hillis

RESIDENT TESTIMONY

I grew up with both parents in active addiction, and they were abusive towards each other. My Dad suffered from Type 1 diabetes, and the drugs quickly shut his body and his organs down. Before I knew it, I was only 16 and had lost my dad. After my dad passed away, I moved out of my home and away from my mom because she was bitter, angry, and became abusive. At 16, when I left home, I moved out and began working on my own. I began what I believed was only a minor start of my addiction. I began using marijuana. I met a man and got pregnant with my first son at age 17. He started abusing me verbally, and then it progressed into mental and physical abuse. Fourteen months after my son was born, I was constantly taking abuse in multiple ways. I then got pregnant with my daughter, who I found out during the pregnancy would have Down Syndrome and would not develop normally. During my pregnancy, I was still being abused. When I was seven months pregnant, I learned that my fiancé was cheating on me. I tried to run to the house and pack my things to get away, but he caught me by the head and snatched me, brutally beat me, and drug me down the road with a car. All of this caused me to go into premature labor with my daughter, who had only developed to 4 months despite me being seven months pregnant, so she was stillborn.

Even though I wanted to die myself, I summoned the courage to come face-to-face with him to ask him how he slept at night. He responded, "He doesn't." That's when he gave me a drug, meth, that would keep me awake. My life became more of a nightmare after that. I became addicted to it because I was using it to stay awake so I did not have to live with the nightmares. I hated meth because it is what my dad used and contributed to his death. One time during one of my meth highs, I went to the hospital looking for my daughter. They admitted me to the hospital because I had a mental breakdown. They sent me to a mental hospital, and that is how I was able to escape the abusive relationship.

After leaving the mental hospital, I managed to stay clean for 19 months, and then I relapsed on meth. Around three years after I had left the previous

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relationship while still struggling with my addiction, my 2nd son was born.

It took being arrested and nearly facing a sentence of going to prison to help me see that I needed to make some changes in my life. I started going to church at the jail and began praying. Later, I was told that they had changed my sentence to going to rehab instead of facing a prison sentence. I was then handed an application to the Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia.

Since coming here, I have found happiness around people that I know love me. I previously used drugs to survive the pain, and I pretended to be happy. I have found out that I don't need anything more than God and His love. I have found people who accept me for who I am, and more every day, I am beginning to accept myself in ways that I never thought were possible. I can



love myself. I have found coping mechanisms, especially through journaling. While growing up, I played guitar and sang gospel music, and since being here, my joy for that has returned.

After I graduate from the Rescue Mission, I plan to show my two sons that their mother has changed and is now a God-fearing woman. I have made mistakes, but I never have to feel like a disappointment that will never get anything right again.

Recognize the warning signs of abuse.

At the start of a new relationship, it's not always easy to tell if it will later become abusive. In fact, many abusive people appear like **ideal partners** in the early stages of a relationship. The warning signs of abuse don't always appear overnight and may emerge and intensify as the relationship grows.

Yet, every relationship is certainly different, and domestic violence doesn't always look the same. However, one feature shared by most abusive relationships is that the abusive partner tries to establish or gain **power and control** through many different methods at different moments.

Common signs of abusive behavior in a partner include:

Additionally, even one or two of these behaviors in a relationship is a red flag that abuse may be present.

- Telling you that you never do anything right.
- Showing extreme jealousy of your friends or time spent away from them.
- Preventing or discouraging you from spending time with others, particularly friends, family members, or peers.
- Insulting, demeaning, or shaming you, especially in front of other people.
- Preventing you from making your own decisions, including about working or attending school.
- Controlling finances in the household without discussion, such as taking your money or refusing to provide money for necessary expenses.
- Pressuring you to use drugs or alcohol.
- Intimidating you through threatening looks or actions.
- Insulting your parenting or threatening to harm or take away your children or pets.
- Intimidating you with weapons like guns, knives, bats, or mace.
- Destroying your belongings or your home.



Remember:
NO ONE deserves to experience abuse of any kind—for any reason.
And every type of abuse is serious.

<https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/domestic-abuse-warning-signs/>



OCTOBER IS
**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**
AWARENESS MONTH

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

was launched nationwide in October 1987 to connect individuals and organizations working on domestic violence issues while raising awareness for those issues. Over the past 30 years, much progress has been made to support domestic violence victims and survivors and to hold abusers accountable.

Domestic violence is a serious problem that affects everyone and causes damage to families and communities that can last for generations. **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** is an opportunity to engage our community in conversations about this issue, show our support for those whose lives have been affected, and share resources in our local community.

To raise awareness and help prevent abuse, the Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia has the following events planned during the month of October. We believe that it is our responsibility to Stand Up, Step Up, and Speak Up against domestic violence.

Candlelight Vigil

Join us to honor victims of domestic violence and their families, celebrate the successes of survivors, and take a stand against abuse in our community.

October 29, 2024
6-7:30 pm
Washington Park
College Street
Macon, Georgia 31201

Purple Pinwheels

We are partnering again with the Shoppes at River Crossing to display pinwheels that represent a person who died during a domestic violence incident in the state of Georgia. We will have a table set up on October 5th and 19th and invite you to stop by and see us.

October 1 – 31, 2024
the Shoppes at River Crossing
5080 Riverside Drive
Macon, Georgia

Thrift Ministry Sale

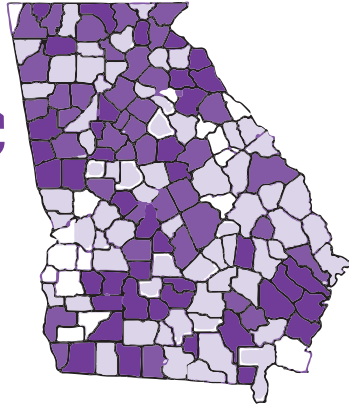
We will have special savings at both thrift store locations. Notifications of sales will be posted on Facebook.

October 1 – 31, 2024
Bargain Center
3375 Napier Avenue
Macon, Georgia

Barn Center
6601 Zebulon Rd
Macon, Georgia



Georgia Domestic Violence Statistics



163

In 2023, Georgia had **163** domestic violence deaths.

80%

In 2023, a firearm was the weapon used in **80%** of the domestic violence deaths in Georgia.

38K

There were **37,653** incidents of family violence reported in Georgia during 2023.

↓
-21%

There was a **21.2%** decline in family violence incidents reported to law enforcement from 2019-2023.

4:5

Over the five-year period from 2018 to 2023, nearly **4** out of **5** primary victims killed in domestic violence incidents were women.



Of the **18,984** (emergency) Temporary Protection Orders issued in 2023, **42%** were extended into a longer-term TPOs.

Domestic Violence National Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia
Women's Life-Recovery Program
478-743-5445 ext. 308

STOP
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence can affect anyone



1 in 5 women

1 in 7 men

will experience domestic violence.

Complete the enclosed reply card or donate online at
rescuemissionga.com/newsletters

Rescue Mission
OF MIDDLE GEORGIA

Connect With Us



rescuemissionga.com
follow us on **facebook** and **instagram**



dawn@rescuemissionga.com



478-743-5445



6601 Zebulon Road, Macon, GA 31220



Bargain Center
3375 Napier Avenue, Macon
478-743-5445 ext. 317

Barn Center
6601 Zebulon Road, Macon
478-743-5445 ext. 406

Donation Pick-Up
Steve Floyd, 478-743-5445 ext. 314



GIVE YEAR-ROUND

Consider becoming a monthly giver and have a lasting impact throughout the year! Find out how at rescuemissionga.com/monthly



Proud "Certified Excellent" member of City Gate, accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and recognized as a "Four Star Charity" by Charity Navigator.