



## The Newsletter of the Coalition

### *All survivors, now and always*

2025 has proven to be a year of challenges, obstacles to overcome, and a recognition of the importance of advocacy which clearly focuses on the needs of victims, survivors, and experiencers of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking.

This year has given us a greater awareness of the importance of broadly and loudly sharing the value of the organizations serving them. In 2025, MCEDSV served thousands of survivors through the Statewide Hotline and the Survivor Law Clinic. We have trained thousands of advocates, community members, and allied professionals. We have spent countless hours advocating for the needs of our member programs and the people they serve. We couldn't have done it without the support of all of you. This season, we wish to express gratitude for the generosity of our supporters and members.



CO-EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTORS  
CHÉREE  
&  
MERKEB

In 2026, your support will be critical. MCEDSV will continue to illuminate the needs of our programs and the people we all serve. We will continue to represent the needs of victims, survivors, and experiencers of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. We will continue to project and reflect our shared values of equity, peace, and justice.

In Unity, Chéree Thomas and Merkeb Yohannes, Co-Executive Directors, MCEDSV



### *Survivor Law Clinic*

We currently remain paused on intake as a result of the government shutdown at the federal level. Although we have not been able to take on new survivor cases, we are still in pursuit of justice for survivors everywhere. Most recently, one of our attorneys led a family law custody trial that highlights the need for legal representation and the complexities of the legal issues survivors can face. In this case, the same survivor was having to navigate abusive litigation - the misuse of legal process to harass, intimidate, or control a survivor - in the forms of two criminal cases and three separate protection orders (PPOS).

INTERSECTIONAL

TRAUMA INFORMED

SURVIVOR CENTERED

## *Advocates Supporting Survivors During Challenging Times*



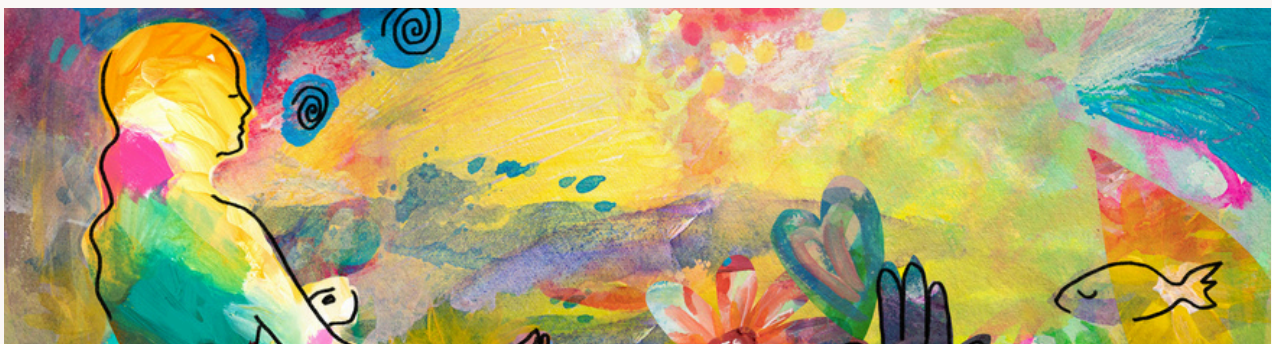
Throughout the quarter, advocates demonstrated remarkable resilience and collaboration as they supported survivors in a constantly shifting landscape. Even when local resources such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, mental health counseling, and culturally specific services were limited or unavailable in some regions, advocates worked creatively and persistently to bridge those gaps. These challenges highlighted their commitment to teamwork, problem-solving, and compassionate care. By thinking collaboratively and innovatively, advocates helped survivors identify the safest and most empowering options available, providing steady emotional support and reinforcing hope during difficult moments.

# 855-VOICES4

Sexual Assault • Domestic Violence • Human Trafficking

24/7 • Confidential • Anonymous

## *Improving Maternal Health Equity*



Violence is higher during pregnancy, and after giving birth, experiencing violence can impact birthing and delivery. We are leading a two-year grant, partnering with Birth Kalamazoo Heart Soul Birth Pros, to empower and train doulas – professionals that improve maternal health equity by providing psychosocial-emotional support to birthers.

This project will equip 630 doulas, birthing professionals, and survivor advocates with culturally specific, trauma-informed training and resources, directly improving care for pregnant survivors of domestic and sexual violence and reducing health disparities in BIPOC and rural communities.

## *Wrapping Up & Gearing Up - A New Year*

The kick-off to fiscal year 2026 ushered in fresh, inspiring activities, partnerships, and opportunities for community engagement!

Excitement ensued with MCEDSV's membership with the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. The celebration was marked by a ribbon-cutting at our Okemos office with the Chamber and its enthusiastic Ambassador crew, as well valued community partners from greater Lansing and Meridian Township (pictured here). The occasion coincided with ongoing special events during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)! MCEDSV is proud to establish this relationship by becoming members of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce!



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HELP

Begin by Believing

GIVE  
HELP



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