



DoveTales

the newsletter of Dove, Inc.

February
2024

Barbara Blakey
Editor

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Dove Domestic Violence Program Teen Community Awareness and Education Presentation

FY 22 School presentations | 40 in 10 schools

FY 23 School presentations | 74 with 1,955 students

"love is respect, a project of the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline), began in 2007 as a response to the experiences of young people across the US with dating abuse and harassment. 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men who experienced rape, physical violence, and stalking by an intimate partner first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM) is designed to amplify your voice and experiences in relationships— we want to uplift what's healthy and what is unhealthy or even abusive. This is so important that in 2010, Congress declared Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month every February.

Teens, young adults, and their loved ones unite to spotlight the real harm young people experience online, on campus, and at home. Together, prevention and education can keep us safe and create the healthy and fun relationships we all deserve. love is respect brings awareness to teen dating violence, and unites teens, young adults, and those who support them in a national effort to promote healthy relationships and prevent future abuse."

2024 [love is respect](#) | [Action Guide](#)

Dove's Mission

Dove is an organization that engages religious institutions, volunteers, and advocates seeking to coordinate efforts to address unmet needs and social injustices. These needs are met through coordinated programs focusing on domestic violence, homelessness, education, volunteer and community empowerment, and individual emergency need fulfillment.

Dove works for justice, equality, and understanding among all people.

Executive Staff

Darsonya Switzer, Chief Executive Officer
Tina Owens, Chief Operations Officer
Barbara Blakey, Chief Communications Officer

Program Leadership

BABES Program

Sandy Laesch, Interim Coordinator

Children's Clothing Room

Kathy Walters, Coordinator

Dove Financial Assistance

Molly Tenuto, Program Director

Dove Food Pantry

Ashlyn Burrus, Coordinator

Domestic Violence Program

Joyce Kirkland, Program Director
Ashlyn Burrus, DeWitt County Coordinator
Becky Comstock, Moultrie County Coordinator
Susie Kensil, Shelby County Coordinator

Homeward Bound

Christopher DeJaynes, Program Director

Neighborhood Services Program

LeAnn Ellis, Coordinator

RSVP • Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Angie Williams, Program Director
Kathy Walters, Macon County Coordinator
Silvia Comfort, DeWitt County Coordinator



There are times that we get so bogged down with day-to-day tasks that we forget to stand in appreciation of those who show their unwavering appreciation to us. There is no part of our responsibilities that can be carried out if it were not for the love and support of Our Dove, Inc. Community. So, during this month that is made for love, we want to say that we love Our Dove, Inc. Community of supporters who span all across the world!

Here at Dove, our days are often long, and most are not filled with heartwarming stories, but Our Dove, Inc. Community keeps our spirits lifted through it all. Our Dove, Inc. Community always comes rushing when the need is great. And does so with hands full of love! Our Dove, Inc. Community fully and unselfishly understands that the work does not get accomplished without love.

Our Dove, Inc. Community shows love through the provision of blankets that keep people warm when the temperature plummets. Our Dove, Inc. Community shows love through the provision of diapers for the many babies we see coming through the doors. Our Dove, Inc. Community shows love through the provision of books that the giggling children read during their stay in the domestic violence shelter. Our Dove, Inc. Community shows love through the \$10 contribution that kept the lights on in a house for a teenager who needed to study for a test.

Our Dove, Inc. Community is consistently in support of us and those that we serve. Although we can never truly express how thankful we are for Our Dove, Inc. Community we can let you know that none of what you do in support of us goes unnoticed! We love and appreciate you no matter where you are and how and when you show up!!!

Darsonya Switzer (she/her)
Dove, Inc. Chief Executive Officer



To our Dove Member Congregations

As we begin this new calendar year, please make sure our contact information is up to date! Please email us with your staff members and Delegate contact information to dove@doveinc.org

To learn more about becoming a Dove Member Congregation, please contact Barb Blakey or Molly Tenuto at 217.428.6616 or dove@doveinc.org

NEWS

from the Domestic Violence Program



As most know, **February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month!** The entire month is dedicated to raising awareness about teens, and their dating relationships, and putting a stop to dating violence before it even starts. Dating violence is more common than people think, especially among teens & young adults. 1 in 3 U.S. teens will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from someone they're in a relationship with before becoming adults.

The theme this year is **"Love Like That"**. The **"that"** means what you are looking for in a relationship. We want our teens to know what is healthy and unhealthy before or when looking for a partner, and this is what we present in the local high schools we visit. **We encourage everyone to wear orange this month or specifically on the 6th, orange shows solidarity and raises awareness about dating violence!**

If you know someone who is experiencing or who has experienced teen dating violence, please give them resources to get help! Dove offers counseling for our teens- up to eight 90-minute sessions without parental consent. We even have a support group on Tuesday nights at 5:30 p.m., so you can talk about what is going on in a comfortable and confidential space.

If you would like to know information about teen dating violence, you can visit loveisrespect.org!

**Again, Happy Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month!
#TDVAM2024**

Danielle Cunningham, Education and Awareness Supervisor

NEWS

from the Domestic Violence Program

Now that it's the beginning of a new year, some things have started to slow down in the Domestic Violence program. But, on the other hand the DeWitt County Food Pantry has been so busy. Now having an extra day during the week, that's been helpful for some individuals in the community. Another thing that has grown here this month is the amount of people that have wanted to volunteer with the Food Pantry. By having the extra hands on our busy days it has truly helped a lot! From the bottom of my heart, I am truly so thankful for all the volunteers that come to the Dove DeWitt Office. It is so greatly appreciated!

Ashlyn Burrus
DeWitt County Coordinator

The Moultrie County Dove office will be closed February 12 through 19. Services are always available by calling the 24-hr hotline at 217.728.9334.

There will be no Thursday night group February 15 or 22.

Becky Comstock
Moultrie County Coordinator

A Life That Makes a Difference

Many of us question ourselves, our purpose, and our worth from time to time. "Do I really matter?" "What have I accomplished in life?" Amid our doubts, we often don't see the lives we touch and the legacies we are building. This was brought home to me amid the recent loss of one who touched so many lives at Dove and throughout her community.

Linda Staff started in Dove's Domestic Violence Program as a legal advocate and became the Coordinator of Dove's first rural satellite office in DeWitt County. After years of faithful advocacy, she retired from Dove, but kept the agency close to her heart. She later answered the call to offer a Bible Study group for domestic violence survivors, using Women of the Bible as the theme for teaching and spiritual support. Every participant in that group was touched by Linda's kindness, powerful faith, and humble spirit. Linda was beloved by Dove staff, who were the recipients of her zinnia bouquets, candy treats, handmade cards and bookmarks – and her love. During my last visit with Linda, she asked how all of her friends at Dove were doing and she presented a last gift of bookmarks to give to Dove staff. She always was thinking of others. Linda's legacy was her faith, humility, and kindness, which rippled outward among those she encountered. Linda taught us by example how to live fruitful, joyous, and compassionate lives.

The work we do at Dove touches so many lives and you are a part of that. Whether you are a board or staff member, a volunteer, a donor, or a community member who has referred someone for Dove services, you have made a difference in another person's life. Thank you for your legacy of service to others – like Linda, your life makes a difference.

Joyce Kirkland

Your gift will ensure that services
can continue.
Please give generously.

Dove, Inc.
302 S. Union Street
Decatur, IL 62522

or donate online at doveinc.org

Attention RSVP Volunteers!

Please Save the Date:

RSVP Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
Thursday, August 22
5:00 to 6:30 p.m.
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Details to come!
We will begin taking reservations in July.

Children's Clothing Room



Central Christian Church
650 West William Street, Decatur

Mondays & Wednesdays
1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Free clothing, yes really free,
for infants through teens

Thanks to the members of RSVP
who serve at the clothing room!



BABES

***Are you wanting
to volunteer in the
BABES Program
for the 2024 Spring Semester?***

***If so, contact us for more on the
program to see if it would be a
good fit for you!***

***Contact Barb Blakey
bblakey@doveinc.org or
Sandy Laesch
slaesch@doveinc.org***

217.428.6616

Happy Valentine's Day!



From: Buttons, Bows, Myth Mary, Early Bird, Donovan, Rhonda, Reggie, and Sandy.

Some of you might remember the days when we decorated shoe boxes to receive valentines from fellow classmates. I always enjoyed Valentine's Day, the anticipation of maybe receiving a special valentine from a certain special someone, but it was fun and nice to read all the cards from my classmates. Not much has changed for me, Valentine's Day is not just about having a significant other to get a card or gift from or give to, but to show the people I care about by letting them know how much they mean to me. So, this Valentine's Day reach

out to a friend, acquaintance, or maybe a coworker to let them know that they mean something to you.

A big Thank You goes to all who help and fund the BABES Program, it is appreciated!

I want to welcome Cindy Landacre who is becoming a BABES Volunteer.

We started our 2024 Winter/Spring BABES programming in January at Parsons, and February at Meridian and Johns Hill. Thanks to all the BABES Volunteers that jumped right in especially with the cold, snowy, and icy winter we are having.

If you are interested in the opportunity to make a difference in a child's life, email me for more information about becoming a BABES Volunteer.

Sandy Laesch, Coordinator

Come and make a difference at the next
Resident Council Meeting!



The Resident Council meeting is an opportunity for residents to freely discuss topics to improve the quality of life within their development.

Please join us:

- Let your voice be heard
- We want to discuss your concerns and suggestions within your community
- Come share your ideas of improvements for your community, surroundings and housing needs
- Ensure your views are acknowledged and addressed
- Let's talk safety

Date: Thursday, February 8, 2024

Location: Homeward Bound
788 E. Clay, Decatur

Time: 12:30 p.m.



all in:

Macon County Inter-Agency Council

Please join us at the **all in** gathering!

4th Tuesday of the month • NOON to 1:00 p.m.

Upcoming Dates: February 27 & March 26

Central Christian Church, 650 W. William, Decatur
Corner of Monroe and William Street, near downtown Decatur.
Please park in main lot, come in main entrance and proceed to lower level fellowship hall

**For more information,
please call:**

**Molly Tenuto or Angie Williams
Dove, Inc.
217.428.6616**

**or email
mtenuto@doveinc.org
awilliams@doveinc.org**

Join us for networking and sharing information:

- program coordinators
- direct service providers
- information sharers

These meetings produced many collaborations and shared vital agency information in 2023. We are excited about 2024!

4th Tuesday of each month, NOON

- We will keep the gathering to an hour.
- Feel free to bring your lunch.
- No membership fees.

Dove Financial Assistance

*Donation are needed
to keep this
emergency financial assistance
program thriving,
and supporting
families in need!*

*Please use mailing address:
302 S. Union, Decatur, IL 62522
or on Dove's website
doveinc.org*

*Please put DFA on
check memo line
or in the comment box.*

When applicants come to see us for assistance, we hear various reasons for the hardship they are experiencing. There are some that have had car trouble, some that have lost their job or had their hours reduced, some have had a major medical emergency, and the list continues. The one thing that is consistent is that the applicants are going through a stressful situation and are just trying to stay afloat with their bills. If the applicants meet our guidelines, we are able to assist due to all of the donations we receive specifically for DFA! No matter how big or small the donation is, each and every one of them matters and makes a difference!

I am excited to share that recently we have received two different grants that will also help with our goal of reaching more people this year! One of the grants is for seniors aged 60 or older in Macon County for either power or rent. The other grant is for either power or rent in Macon, Moultrie, or Piatt County. For both, all our normal guidelines still have to be met, which can be found on our website, doveinc.org.

If you know someone experiencing a hardship, please share our contact info with them so we might possibly be able to assist in getting them back on their feet. Or if you are experiencing a hardship, please reach out for assistance!

Don't forget to check if you qualify for Warm Neighbors Cool Friends, please see the income guidelines for this program. This is a matched program where payments from the past 45 days can be matched up to \$500. Warm Neighbors Cool Friends is a great program funded by the Energy Assistance Foundation to assist moderate income families overcome financial hardships encountered. There are many that appreciate the assistance this program allows them to receive. We are grateful that we are able to be the distributors of these funds for Macon, DeWitt, and Piatt Counties!

Molly Tenuto
DFA Program Director

Dove Financial Assistance

Helping with emergency financial assistance

DFA Winter Hours • January 2, 2024 – March 22, 2024

Please note:

- DFA will be closed on all Holidays recognized by Dove, Inc.
- If there is inclement weather, please check social media to ensure that DFA will still be open that day.

Macon County Sites:

Decatur Public Library, 120 N. Franklin, Decatur
 Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
 Mondays, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 Closed February 19 due to holiday observance.
 All other times will be by appointment only.
DFA@doveinc.org or 217.619.9108

Contact Info for sites below: DFA@doveinc.org or 217.433.7435

Shelby County Site:

Salvation Army Building, 133 E. Main St., Shelbyville
 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Moultrie County Site:

First United Methodist Church, 216 W. Jefferson St., Sullivan
 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Piatt County Site:

First Presbyterian Church, 214 S. Charter, Monticello
 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

DeWitt County Site:

Dove, 803 W. Leander, Clinton
 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



2023/24 Warm Neighbors Cool Friends Income Requirements &
 Energy Bill Payment Assistance Guidelines

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO APPLY:

- Driver's license or other Photo ID
- Copy of current Ameren Illinois energy bill
- Proof of income



PROGRAM RULES:

- Applicant(s) must reside at address on bill and have active service in their name
- Applicant can only receive assistance ONCE per heating season (February 1 – May 31) and ONCE in the cooling season (June 1 – August 30)
- Account balance must be lower than \$1,500
- WNCF pledges up to \$500 during heating season matching customer payments within the last 45 days
- Cooling season maximums are \$200 and are intended for seniors, disabled, or those with medical conditions exacerbated by heat (with a doctor's letter)
- 30 Day (GROSS) Income Range by Family Size

Family Size	WNCF Income Range
1	\$2,431 - \$4,513
2	\$3,288 - \$5,158
3	\$4,144 - \$5,804
4	\$5,001 - \$6,446
5	\$5,858 - \$6,963
6	\$6,714 - \$7,479
7	\$7,571 - \$7,996
8	\$7,776 - \$8,513

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTOR FOR MACON, DEWITT, AND PIATT COUNTIES:

- Dove, Inc. will assist with applications. Contact 217.619.9108 for questions. Documents can be emailed to DFA@doveinc.org
- Please visit www.doveinc.org for a list of our walk-in hours and locations or see left.

News from Homeward Bound

Note from the Homeward Bound Director

The Macon County Continuum of Care and its Homeless Advisory Council, of which Dove Homeward Bound is the lead member, has now finished the annual Point-in-Time Count. Continuums of Care (CoCs) are required to conduct a PIT Count of people experiencing homelessness at least every other year. CoCs are also required to conduct an annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC), documenting the residential resources in their community dedicated to assisting people experiencing homelessness.

As a relatively small community, the numbers that will be released for Macon County will be much smaller than large metropolitan areas. For example, in 2023 officials reported more than 75,500 homeless individuals on any given night in Los Angeles County. But to see our local numbers as small and, therefore, not serious, would be a mistake. The PIT Count is essential in accumulating a number of unhoused individuals, but also in identifying what financial, medical, or mental health services may be required for those individuals.

While those of us that have security in life may be tempted to dismiss homelessness as a result of poor work ethic or laziness, such a blanket outlook is inaccurate. Often, mental health and substance abuse issues are primary contributors. Gaps of service in these areas ultimately lead to serious housing issues. It is important that we see homelessness as a serious ramification of much bigger issues. If we see the result, it is imperative that we follow the trail back to the beginning. Substance use disorder and mental health conditions are often located in the middle of that trail: a trail that begins with trauma.

Chris DeJaynes
Homeward Bound Program Director





Neighborhood Services Program

Sharing News About The Neighborhoods!

As we know it's good ole' winter in Decatur, IL. and with it, of course, comes some snow and ice and sometimes frigid temps along with sunshine from time to time. As one who isn't fond of getting out when it's icy, I still must say, even in all of this, each of the seasons are welcome to me.

Seasons bring change and change has a purpose. One thing that comes to mind is how a few of the neighborhood groups choose not to meet in the winter months. It's a bit of a slower pace for catching up, reflecting on the past, preparing for the future and setting goals with hope to see at least some of those goals come to pass.

The BABES Program, however, is off and running already this year. My partner for this session, Marcia Juriga, is a pro and helps things run smoothly as we tackle the issues the puppets face from week to week. We do this with hope, letting the children in the classroom see they can find healthy ways to cope and share anything they may face with a trusted adult.

January brought our congratulations to the Decatur Park District with an awesome and enjoyable 100-year celebration breakfast! There were also a few great neighborhood meetings, some time for organizing, as well as other appreciated connection opportunities.

So, now, welcome February, a short yet, busy calendar month. Who knows, maybe we will see a few green sprouts from the ground, reminding us spring is not far away and with it another, season of change with purpose and possibilities.

LeAnn Ellis
NSP Coordinator

Coalition Of
Neighborhood Organizations

CONO Meeting

February 16

(3rd Tuesday of each month)

5:30 p.m.

Decatur Public Library
130 N. Franklin
Decatur



RSVP

We have said goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024. Along with that comes the time of year when we must ... file our taxes. Once again, DeWitt County RSVP, AARP and Vespasian Public Library will offer **free tax services**.

Volunteers are needed for the following:

- Meeter/Greeter – meets each taxpayer and assists them with making sure all needed paperwork is in order.
- Tax Preparers – assist taxpayers in completing taxes and filing taxes with the IRS.

Training is required and provided free of charge. Volunteering hours will be on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings, February 7 through April 13, 2024.

Call Siliva at 217.935.2241 for more information.

Primrose Retirement Community is looking for volunteers to help with activities and cheering up our residents. Some residents could use a visitor especially during the winter months. You can make a huge difference in someone's life by helping in so many ways. Please reach out to Lea or Margaret at 217.872.1800.

For anyone interested in volunteering at **Scovill Zoo**, our Volunteer Training Classes begin on February 7! Classes take place on Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to noon for 10 weeks. Volunteer opportunities include running the train and/or carousel, giving guided tours to school groups, helping with special events, giving animal presentations off grounds, etc. This program allows volunteers to learn AZA-approved guided tour messaging and brush up on zoology and conservation topics important to the zoo. The training also ensures that team members have the tools they need to make each visitor's experience educational and enjoyable. Individuals interested in animal handling and doing our mobile zoo presentations will have to take additional training. Feel free to email the Volunteer Coordinator, Lizzie Van Ert, at evanert@decparcs.com or call the zoo office at 217.421.7435 to ask any questions. Must be 18 years or older to volunteer and be able to pass a background check.

Memorial Home Hospice is in need of volunteers for our hospice families! We are looking for people to provide companionship. There are other opportunities such as walking pets, mowing yards and specific things to help the families, but it is usually for respite of a caregiver or just helping the patient not to feel alone. If you are interested, please reach out to Abbey Britton at 217.876.4696 or by email at britton.abbey@mhsil.com.

Meals on Wheels is still looking for people to deliver meals to homebound seniors, especially during the winter months. If you are interested in helping, please reach out to Elizabeth Morthland at 217.422.6611.

Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restricts their activities. **A Matter of Balance** is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels. On Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at First Presbyterian Church, 204 W. Prairie Ave., Decatur, there will be a training from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on how to teach A Matter of Balance to seniors who need this. Lunch is provided. You would then agree to teach eight two-hour sessions once a week for eight weeks, or twice a week for four weeks, to 8–10 participants who need to learn fall prevention and management. To register or for more information, contact Tara Voorhees at 217.428.0013 or email her at voorhees_dec@cc.dio.org.



MLK Day of Service: The Macon County RSVP Advisory Council wanted to offer materials for a short project for MLK Day to a couple of local schools and organizations. We purchased copies of a book called "We Dream of a World..." which suggests ways to make the world a better place, and then has blank pages with some activities for kids to complete on ways they would like to make the world a better place. We delivered the books, activity packets and example copies of the activities on Thursday, January 25, to John's Hill Magnet School and American Dreamer STEM Academy. The activity was geared for children between kindergarten to fourth grade.

WISH LIST FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

- latex-free vinyl gloves (size large and xl)
- Clorox wipes
- full size bath towels (new only)
- nightshirts- women, all sizes (new only)
- sweat suits- unisex, all sizes (new only)
- gas gift cards
- Walmart gift cards
- Kroger cards for gas and food
- Aldi gift cards for shelter food
- Aleve or naproxen
- Benadryl (or generic)
- non-drowsy allergy meds (Zyrtec/Claritin/etc)
- cold and flu medicine
- Tylenol (or generic acetaminaphen) for infants and/or children
- Orajel
- cold and flu medicine for infants and children
- baby wipes
- Vaseline
- cotton swabs
- cotton balls
- shampoo
- conditioner
- African American hair care products (shampoo/conditioner/etc)
- hair grease
- hairbrushes – natural and nylon bristles
- hair gel and spray
- board games
- card games
- planners
- journals
- pens



You can support Dove by participating with the Kroger Community Rewards Program!

To use the Kroger Community Rewards Program, simply visit <http://www.kroger.com>

Once logged into your Kroger account you can search for DOVE INC either by name or DK772 and then click enroll.

Dove Food Pantry



**Tuesdays
& Thursdays
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
803 W. Leander, Clinton**

- This is a free service to anyone in DeWitt County.
- You can utilize the pantry once a month.
- When you arrive, you will need to show your ID.
- We also have diapers if you have a little one in your household - child must be living in the household.