



SAFE

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

News and Events October 2024



We loved seeing so many of you at Franklin Harvestfest this month!

NEWS AND NOTICES

A complete list of SAFE [programs](#) and [events](#) can be found on our website.

Medication Take-Back Day - 5 Locations

Drop off all unwanted liquid, powder, and tablet medication for safe disposal. Norfolk, Millis, Franklin, Medway, Wrentham 9-11 Sat Oct 26. See SAFE website for more info.

Franklin Public Library Trunk or Treat

Stop by for treats, no tricks! Franklin Public Library, Sat. Oct 19. 10:30-12:30

Girl Scout Diaper Drive

Stop by SAFE with a pack of diapers, any size, or box of wipes to support the community service efforts of our helpful local girl scout troop! 6-7pm Tues. Nov. 12.

Narcan Training

Interested in learning how to administer lifesaving medicine that reverses the effects of overdose from opioids like fentanyl, heroin, morphine, and oxycodone? Join an [upcoming SAFE Narcan training](#), free to the public and no registration required.

Nov. 1, and Dec. 1:

- Norfolk Public Library, 9–10am
- Medway Public Library, 10:30–11am
- Wrentham Public Library, 11:30am–noon

Or stop by the SAFE office for a 30-minute training session between 10am–1pm, Mon–Thurs. [Email us](#) to schedule a session.

We Need Diapers!

SAFE Diaper Bank provides diapers and wipes free of charge to anyone in need and our supplies are critically low ([need diapers? click here!](#)). We can also repack opened packs and accepts diapers at every size. All sizes and styles appreciated. [Email us](#) to arrange a drop-off or [purchase on our Amazon wishlist](#) to ship directly to SAFE.



Our Doors are Open

Drop by SAFE Cafe on Fridays 8:30am-12pm to share a cup of coffee, see SAFE's space, meet a member of our team, and discover offerings that work for you

SAFE SPOTLIGHT



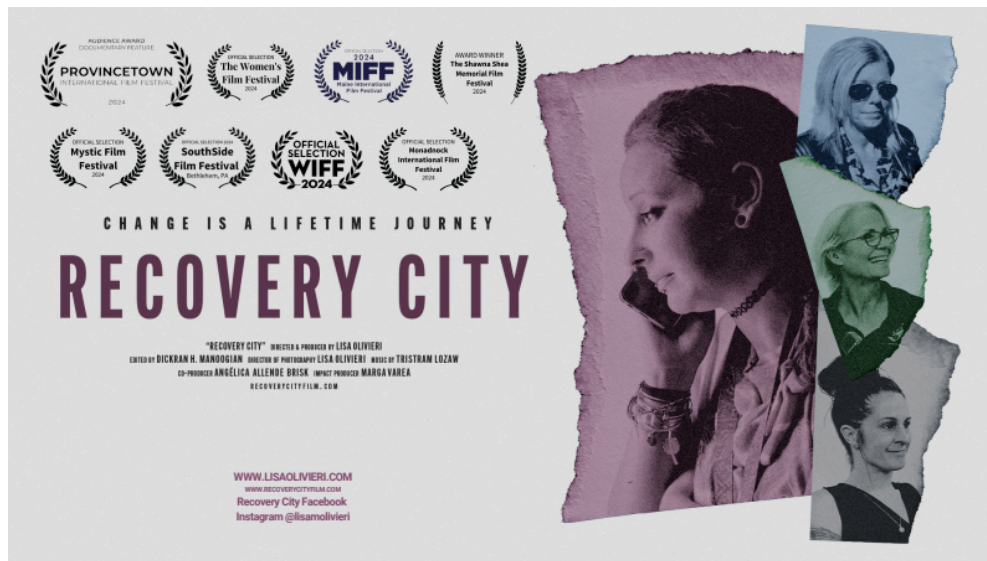
We cannot stop singing the praises of our Dean College interns Lacey Migliaccio, Morgan Gregoire, and Zoe Sousa. These women have taken true ownership of the SAFE mission and furthered our projects in ways seen and unseen. From personally delivering diapers to a parent in crisis to setting up our entire gala by hand (and arriving in full glam mere hours later), bookending their internships with volunteer hours, overhauling our diaper bank, swag stash, tucking small, sweet inspirational quotes into the front desk and so much more, we are eternally grateful for the impact these three have made on our work—and us all. Simply put, they've put their hearts and souls into SAFE in ways that go way beyond the call of an internship.

Thank you for all your help, big and small!

SAVE THE DATE: MOVIE SCREENING

Recovery City

Thursday 11/7, 6:30pm



Registration is now open for SAFE's screening of upcoming feature film [Recovery City](#)! Recovery City is an intimate, unflinching portrait of four women refusing to let themselves or their community give in to the stigma and despair of addiction. Set in Worcester, MA, the film follows the lives of women reflecting different facets of addiction and recovery.

Ribbons for Recovery art installation also on display at this event. Doors open at 5:30pm

Q&A with director Lisa Olivieri and the four women featured in the film to follow

[Register Here](#)

The 2023 Annual Report Out Now!



Read the 2023 SAFE Annual Report

THE BIG STORY

SAFE's 'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren' Group Offers One-of-a-Kind Resources and Connection



SAFE's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group is one of only two in the area helping transgenerational caregivers find community, seek support, gather advice, and share resources.

Held the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at Bernon Branch YMCA in Franklin, with free childcare for children up to 8 years of age, the group provides a safe and supportive environment for relative caregivers. The group offers Zoom attendance as well.

The group is led by Laurie Brown, who in addition to her work with SAFE also brings experience and resource knowledge from her work as a Family Partner for Adult Clinical Care Services at Riverside Community Care, serves on the advisory board of the Commission for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, and builds on her own lived experience raising her granddaughter.

Brown says the challenges facing grandparents raising young children are immediate and intense. "For me, it was an overnight jump into action. Rescue the child, do what you can do, and figure out as you go," Brown says. "I all of a sudden had a 7-month-old baby, a diaper bag, my fulltime job, and my daughter's issues to navigate on top. It was a lot, and no one around me had any idea how to help."

Because the group is comprised and led by peers, it is uniquely positioned to offer a quiet break from the immediacy and urgency that comes with jumping in to care for a grandchild. "There is no roadmap," says Laurie. "Our sacrifice often doesn't cross our minds when we jump into action. We want to give the children safety, self esteem, opportunities, security, peace, a sense of family and unconditional love only a grandparent can give. We want them to thrive and be okay."

This is where a targeted support group comes in. Meeting twice a month, group members discuss, among other things, common logistical issues like legal support, guardianship, different financial resources, DCF, school enrollment, daycare, and more.

They also address the ever-changing issues that come with having an adult child going through substance use, mental health issues, homelessness, court, or jailtime. "When you assume custody, you don't know if it will be for 3 months, a year, or a lifetime," says Brown.

And there are the accompanying emotions to unpack as well—for your own life change, for your adult child and their struggle, and for your grandchild. "People sometimes walk into their first meeting like a deer in headlights. Emotionally drained, financially drained, no idea where to go," says Brown. "We don't have answers for everything, but we do have

empathy and compassion. We can listen and offer our connections and support.”

For many, the connections forged in this support group sustain them through extraordinary highs and lows. Brown remembers a grandparent who once called to say she wouldn't be coming due to the passing of her child from overdose. “Right away, she called back to say 'Actually, I am coming. That's exactly where I need to be.'”

Ultimately, what knits this group together is not just tragedy, but powerful, unbreakable love. “It's always different. Outcomes are always different,” says Brown. “But the one thing we have in common is love and joy, because we have these grandkids in our lives, and these rescue missions we're undertaking bring us together.”

For Brown, that sense of community is one of most critical forms of support a group can offer. “When you're in it, sometimes you can't even think straight. If you can go somewhere where someone can help you calm down, listen, and help connect you, you will be alright,” she says. “I connect them with what I know. But most of all we listen and help people know they're not alone.”

To learn more about Grandparents Raising Grandchildren or receive the Zoom login, visit [our website](#) or contact info@safecoalitionma.org.

Grandparents *Raising* Grandchildren



SAFE
YOU ARE NOT ALONE

6:30–7:30 PM
2nd & 4th Thursdays

Free childcare!

Bernon Branch YMCA
45 Forge Hill Rd
upstairs meeting room

Online option available

Email info@safecoalitionma.org
to register or to receive Zoom login



We Need Fall Volunteers!

We need your help to bring care and awareness to our community this fall season. Check out our volunteer events calendar today and sign up for a time and place to make a real difference in someone's life.

[Learn More](#)

FAMILY RECOVERY CORNER



Letting Go(d)

by Robyn Heisey

I met with Lori on a sunny fall morning in the SAFE offices, both of us sharing a comfy couch to talk about her experience with Families Anonymous. Her cheeks were flushed. Hazel eyes shining.

Two years ago, a friend asked Lori to join them at the annual SAFE gala. A bit begrudgingly (since it was a work night), Lori accepted the invitation. After dinner SAFE co-founder Jim Derick stepped onto the stage. He told the story of Jack, his son, who less than a year prior had died from an accidental drug overdose. He also talked about the daily struggles both he and his son, who not only suffered from addiction but mental illness, endured while Jack was alive.

Lori found herself riveted by Jim's story and couldn't stop crying. Not only for Jim and his son, but for herself and the ongoing emotional distress she felt regarding her own son. God, Lori believes, led her to this gala, which in turn led her to an hour-long call with Jim, which finally led to her first Families Anonymous meeting.

At the age of seven, Lori's son was diagnosed with several learning disabilities including severe dyslexia, processing speed deficits and dysgraphia. At age ten he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. As the years ticked by, he was still unable to read beyond the third-grade level.

His lack of impulse control led him to dangerous behavior. Throughout his teenage years and beyond, he was in motorcycle, ATV and car accidents, causing several concussions and resulting Traumatic Brain Injury.

Because of his struggles, Lori did everything she could for him (along with working full time). She made his appointments, ordered his medication and made sure he took them, provided housing and

monetary support, all the while reasoning that her now-adult son, unable to hold down a job for more than six weeks at a time, simply was not equipped to do for himself.

Almost every day Lori found herself pushed to the brink emotionally and felt taken advantage of. Instead of appreciating his mother's efforts, her son reacted with ongoing emotional volatility, incessant lying and manipulative behavior.

Lori attended her first FA meeting with her husband (her son's stepfather), who has been her anchor, by her side for this entire journey. And she left that meeting feeling like she found a place she belonged with people who immediately understood her struggle.

During a meeting some weeks later, a member said something that sent a shiver of realization down Lori's spine: "Our helping is not helping." Lori listened in hard.

She secured a sponsor and dove headfirst into the 12 steps, re-establishing a relationship with her higher power (who she refers to as God). Quickly she saw that in order to change how her son's actions were impacting her life, she had to change her thinking and work on herself.

She began setting boundaries. Instead of giving her son money, she bought him groceries. When his drug of choice shifted from marijuana to Crack cocaine and he got kicked out of the housing she had secured for him, she didn't come to the rescue. As a result, he went on a rampage. Realizing her powerlessness over her son's actions and behavior, Lori took a deep breath, prayed, read from Today a Better Way and marked another page with a sticky note.

Although her son seemed to be sinking, Lori now had the tools to "Let go and Let God." She realized that her son needed to be held accountable and face the consequences, no matter how dire, of his own actions. No matter how challenging a hand he's been dealt, Lori now knows that she simply cannot change that hand.

What she can do, though, she does. She points him to resources and services, such as a Recovery Advocate, Mass Rehab Commission, and the State Head-Injury Program. Should he choose to use these tools to aid in his recovery, the help is right there in front of him.

Lori is thankful for the recovery and fellowship that she holds fast to. "It's all because of God. The gala. Meeting Jim. Everything," she says. Her life these days, no matter how well her son might be, no matter how hard his struggle, has far more moments of serenity than chaos.

For anyone considering attending an FA meeting, Lori has this to say: "It's a very welcoming group. Come and listen. And share when you feel comfortable sharing."

PHOTO GALLERY

THIS MONTH AT SAFE

A HUGE thank you to everyone who volunteered and visited our booth at Franklin HarvestFest.

We had a blast partnering with Mott MacDonald on their third-party fundraising event! The team hosted a watermelon carry that brought much needed support (and laughs!) to SAFE.

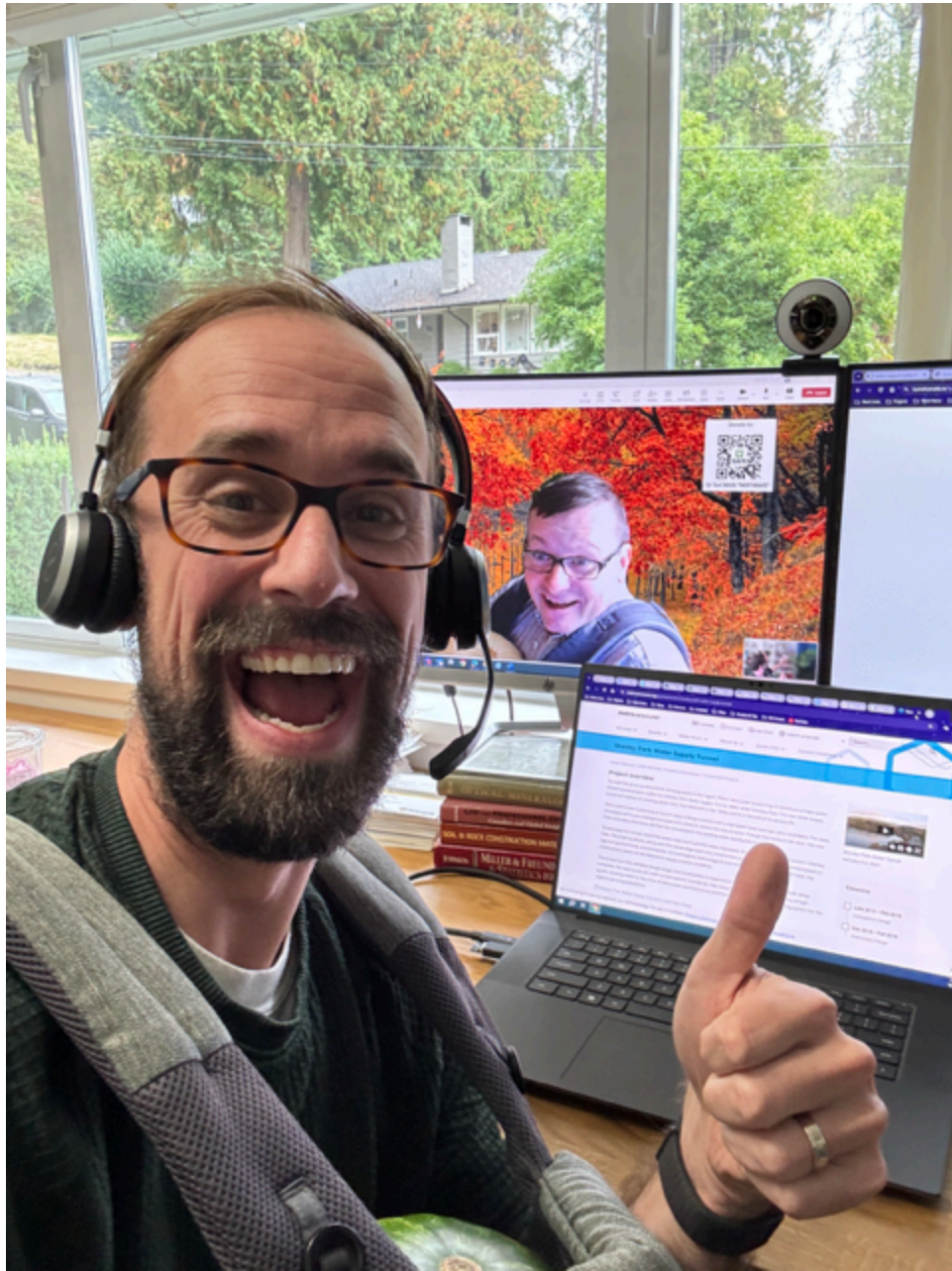












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