

Safe Families Information from Meeting on January 12, 2023 at the Neighborhood Church at 525 So 7th St. LaCrosse. Attended by Carol Knox and Alice McGuire Backlund along with 4 other members from other churches or the organization.

- Safe Families for Children seeks to keep children safe and families together. This organization is rooted in faith, fueled by radical hospitality, disruptive generosity, and intentional compassion, to build a network of caring and compassionate volunteers to support families facing social isolation.
- Goals are to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce the number of children entering the child welfare system, and support and stabilize families
- Nationally this organization began in 2003. Locally it was started in August of 2020.
- There have been 52 families served in our area and 95 children.
- This organization provides informal support for families needing additional support.
- Coulee Recovery has connections with Safe Families. They are welcoming mom with kids. These parents may need transportation; maybe a parent who has a job or going to school and the child needs transportation to get to Head Start. Safe Families have car seats if needed. Some parents have children that are medically challenged and parents just need some respite time or if mom is going to school and has classes to attend.

-Questions from RNP SJC were:

**Liability policy:** they have insurance to cover after personal insurance is used. if there is an abuse claim, the child is removed and S.S. looks into what happened.

**Training for volunteers:** there is an online application that needs to be filled out first. Then there is an email that one would receive with forms to fill out regarding Safety There is an official Interview and home safety check. Not as in depth as being a foster parent though. At this time they would inquire and to what kind of children you would be interested in helping out with.

**What about last minute availability:** their business hours are M-F, 8-5. If someone is needed for support, they would be contacted a few days in advance. You can always decline as a volunteer. A request is put out to all volunteers to see who would be available. There is always support available if you would need it though. And, there is no rushing into a placement. A full intake from the family for their needs is taken prior to any placement.

-What can Roncalli Newman / Blessed Sacrament Parishes do?

We can always offer prayers for Safe Families Organization and the volunteers and families they care for.

We can put information in the bulletin regarding what is happening under Social Justice We could provide donations to Safe Families to help with supplies needed, some kids don't have clothes or shoes or socks.

We could be a resource church for them and provide socks or freezer meals. Since we already do this for other organizations at times throughout the year, **I volunteered our parish as a quarterly donation resource for them.** Anyone with freezer meals can contact Tracy and she will arrange pick up of the meals. [tracy@safefamilieswi.org](mailto:tracy@safefamilieswi.org) or call or text 608-780-1269. We can put information in our bulletin quarterly prior to a sock or meal drive so that we get information out there and see what kind of response we get. We can also put in our bulletin when special events are happening for Safe Families Organization.

**On March 23,** There is a free movie afternoon for the kids and there will be coffee and support for parents involved.

**April 20** is National Safe Family Day. This is a Sunday and there could be a live broadcast and or resources for parishes if desired.

**May 6:** Safe Families Soiree which is a Fund raising event with a "Roaring 20's" Theme. The event is on Saturday, at Court Above Main, LaCrosse. There will be invitations sent

out, but if people cannot make it, they could always just send a donation. At the Soiree there will be a dinner, presentation and dance.

They would like to have a "Learn to Swing" before the event begins. I sent an email to Fr. Billy to see if he'd be willing and available to help out with this. They are trying to get Tom Thibodeau, Servant Leadership Professor, to speak at this event.