

# Elizabeth Smart on Survivorship, Hope, and Faith: The 26th Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award Honoree

*By Kaitlynn Ely (she/her), Development and Public Relations Assoãate*

Almost 20 years after her abduction and a decade-long career in national advocacy work, Elizabeth Smart’s greatest achievement is simply surviving. “There are many things that I’m proud to be a part of – like AMBER Alerts and other safety legislation being passed,” Smart said during the virtual BBS event held via zoom on May 12th. “But I’m most proud of who I’ve been able to become in my adult life.”

Elizabeth Smart was the 2022 recipient of the 26th Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award. In 2002, Smart was abducted from her home at the age of 14. For the next nine months, her captors controlled her by threatening to kill her and her family if she tried to escape. Since her rescue, Elizabeth has become an advocate for change related to child

abduction, recovery programs, and national legislation. She is the founder of the Elizabeth Smart Foundation, an organization out of Salt Lake City seeking to end the victimization of sexual assault and abuse through prevention, recovery, and advocacy.

The virtual event began with an introduction by CEO & President Nathalie Nelson who recognized the commitment Barbara Boggs Sigmund and her family have made to the Womanspace mission since the organization’s inception. Elizabeth Smart then gave a powerful retelling of her kidnapping followed by a Q&A led by Immediate Past Board President Rev. Matt Rhodes.

Rhodes and Smart discussed how faith can guide survivors through their healing journey: “I grew up very faith-based and it made a huge impact on my survival when I was kidnapped. Knowing there was an all-powerful God on

my side was a comfort. As an adult, faith is still a big part of my life. Whatever brings you a greater peace is where you should be,” Smart said.

The conversation then led to Smart deciding to write her published book *My Story*. “For years I didn’t speak about my story. I had zero desire to ever write or speak about it,” recalled Smart. “When [the trial] finally happened, I was twenty-three and I had to spend multiple days on the witness stand. The next day I went to the grocery store with my mom and I remember looking at the magazine rack and seeing my face on every magazine. I glanced through one thinking ‘this is a list of facts and not my story’. If these facts are out there, I might as well give it context and meaning in my own words.”

Smart also addressed the #MeToo movement and the need for further education on the impacts of sexual harassment: “Sexual abuse is nothing new – it’s always been here. We have a gaping chasm in this country that we’ve been sweeping under the rug for years. These conversations can be really uncomfortable and triggering – but they are also so important and necessary to have.”

Finally, Rhodes and Smart wrapped up the Q&A praising advocates, volunteers, and professionals who support survivors. “I am so grateful for organizations like Womanspace. I have the deepest appreciation for

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# In Social Media News...



33 reactions, 4 comments, 1 share

Womanspace had the great privilege of being a part of a Women's History Month press conference at Trenton City Hall. CEO & President Nathalie Nelson spoke on the latest accomplishments of our organization. Check out the news clip below from the noon broadcast of 6 ABC! <https://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx...>



4 retweet, 6 likes



@WomanspaceInc is decked out in jeans for #DenimDay2022 #DenimDay Send us your pictures to support denim day!



24 likes

“

NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH

Social Work is an empowering profession. I am not here to light your path. I am here to show you how bright your own light can be. That is the beauty about the work we do.

- WOMANSPACE COUNSELOR

”

March is National Social Work Month, and Womanspace is forever grateful for the impact our social workers make in our community! #NationalSocialWorkMonth

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every individual who takes on work in the field of domestic and sexual violence prevention.”

The Womanspace team thanks Elizabeth Smart for sharing her story with our community. Her heartfelt words of wisdom are making a difference in the lives of survivors. A mas-

sive thank you to our volunteers and donors who dedicate their resources to help victims of abuse in Mercer County. This night would not have been possible without our sponsors, volunteers, and staff members. We look forward to seeing everyone in person at next year's Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award Event.

## Thank you to our Auction Donors!

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# Recent Grants

By Erin Hartshorn (she/her), Director of Grants and Contracts

We are proud to announce Womanspace has been selected as the recipient of a two-year \$100,000 grant from the **Bunbury Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation** for its project entitled *Organizational Development in Support of Equity in Service Delivery*. This capacity-building project seeks to help realize Womanspace as an Anti-Racist organization by developing the capacity of the Board of Directors and Staff to more effectively center anti-oppression work both internally and in the community at large. This funding will enable us to better connect with traditionally underserved populations. We are grateful to the Bunbury Fund for the confidence they have placed in Womanspace through this substantial investment.

**The Lawrence Township Community Foundation** has granted Womanspace \$1500 towards the repainting of

the client living area at our Safe House. Our Safe House serves over 150 survivors and their children each year, providing a safe, secure, and confidential temporary space for them to begin to recover and plan for a violence-free future. Thank you LTCF, for your steadfast support!

**The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton** has provided an Outreach Grant of \$1500 towards the purchase of a new washer/dryer for Barbara's House which is where clients in our transitional housing program reside. For 6-24 months, survivors of domestic violence and their children live in their own apartment while receiving support services such as individual and group counseling, financial education, linkage to community resources and career assessment and direction. We are grateful to UUCP for their commitment to our mission!

# Women Supporting Women: Introducing the Womanspace Women's Initiative



The Women's Initiative addresses domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking in Mercer County. The group began by many women coming up to leaders of the organization asking "how can we make our voice heard at Womanspace?" This became the foundation of a sustainable group to support the organization. This membership-based collaboration benefits Womanspace's network of supportive services. The funds raised by this new initiative will go towards supportive services to help women enter the workforce and establish financial independence.

If you wish to become a member, you may support at the levels listed below. Please note: This is an annual membership, you must give each year in order to sustain your commitment.

- **\$2,000 Founding Members 2022**

Listing as Founding member on our website, annual report, social media and newsletter. Includes free Womanspace swag.

- **\$1,000 Sustaining Members**

Listing as a Sustaining member on our website, annual report, social media and newsletter

- **\$700-\$900 Survivors**

Listing as a Survivor member on our website, annual report, and social media and newsletter

- **\$300-\$600 Guardians**

Listing as a Guardian member on our website, annual report, social media and newsletter

**Save the Date!** The Women's Initiative Kick-Off Luncheon will take place November 17th. **Please contact Lauren Nazarian, Chief Development Officer if interested in joining the Women's Initiative at [lan@womanspace.org](mailto:lan@womanspace.org).**

## Thank you to our BBS Sponsors!



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# Recent Donations



Amazon employees with Kaitlynn Ely, Development & Public Relations Associate



Nathalie Nelson, CEO & President with Rider University Students.



Representatives of Shalom Missionary Baptist Church in Mt. Holly with Rebecca Leoni, Executive Assistant.



Pepsi Co. employees with Erin Hartshorn, Director of Grants & Contracts

A poster for a Women's Initiative Kickoff Luncheon. The poster features a central graphic of two women hugging, with the words "SUPPORTING WOMEN" written vertically on either side. Below the graphic, the text reads "Women's Initiative Kickoff Luncheon" in a large, bold font. Underneath, it says "Thursday November 17th, 2023". At the bottom, it provides contact information: "Contact Lauren Nazarian, Chief Development Officer at lan@womanspace.org for more information." The entire poster is framed by a decorative border of black dots.

# Womanspace's Summer Reading Corner: Wolves at Night by Sara McDermott Jain

Hundreds of miles of Alaskan wilderness...Hungry timber wolves...An outlaw ex-lover...Deadly con men...And one young mother with a toddler.

Eleni, with her asthmatic two-year-old in tow, secretly ventures to a remote cabin in the Alaskan wilderness to reunite with the child's father, Ben. Ben has been on the run from the law for almost

three years, and Eleni, who believes in his innocence, wants him to see his son for the first time.

What she doesn't know is the area is swarming with deadly timber wolves, the terrible criminals Ben wronged are looking for him, and the "love of her life" might just turn out to be the greatest predator of all.

Find out whether Eleni will win the fight to keep both herself and her child alive.



*Sara McDermott Jain is an award-winning, produced screenwriter and published author. Her passion is moving readers through fear and into empowerment via the thriller and horror genres. She is a survivor and supporter of Womanspace.*

## Thank you, Alison, for 20 Years of Service!

It is with immense gratitude that Womanspace thanks Alison Daks for her 20 years of service to the organization!

Alison was first connected to Womanspace as a volunteer child care provider. When she went on to graduate school to complete her MSW, she interned at Womanspace and became the first Sexual Assault Support Services Coordinator. Most recently, Alison expanded her role to become the Director of Victim Support and Prevention Services.

Please join us in wishing Alison much luck in her future endeavors!



## Save the Date! Communities of Light 2022

### Launch Event

Tuesday, October 25th 2022

Location TBD

### County-Wide Lighting

Monday, December 5th 2022 at Dusk



Visit our social media  
pages & website for more  
information coming soon!



# A Letter from Sandy Ewell on JUNETEENTH

June 2022

*An open letter to my friends and associates who are African, Black and members of the Caribbean, South and Central American diaspora, and to the Indigenous people whose stolen land we occupy. I also share this letter with my friends and associates who are Jewish and White allies in this struggle for racial justice. This is just a historical snapshot of events surrounding Juneteenth. The full history is available to you to discover.*

JUNETEENTH. Also known as Freedom Day or Jubilee Day. JUNETEENTH is the longest running African American holiday, commemorating the date news of the end of slavery reached the enslaved people in Texas and other southwestern states. President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, issued on January 1, 1863, was intended to bring an end to slavery. However, it was not until the Union Army marched into Texas, a full 2 ½ years after Lincoln's Proclamation, that there were enough troops to enforce an order to end slavery in that region. On June 19, 1865, General Order #3 was issued in Texas and neighboring states that *per the Emancipation Proclamation, all slaves are free.*

So what did this "freedom" really mean to the formally enslaved? For many it meant the freedom to travel. It meant an opportunity to have a normal family life without fear of separation. It meant farming land and keeping the profits and bounty from their labor. It meant forming communities, building schools, businesses and churches. It meant the right to self-governance. It meant being called by your first and last name. It meant that Black men, women and children were to be entitled to the same basic rights and privileges that White people enjoyed.

Reconstruction (1865-1877), the period after the Civil War, made credible attempts to implement full freedom and constitutional rights for African Americans following emancipation. There was passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th Constitutional Amendments that guaranteed entitlements as a free citizen of the US – including the right to vote. Black congressmen and senators were elected to Congress. The Freedman's Bureau was set up to help the newly freed transition their new reality.

However, there was a bleaker side to "freedom." We should not forget that the formally enslaved started out with zero capital. They had no money and no land. For 250 years, all of the profit from their labor went into someone else's pocket. Once "freed" and without means to survive or thrive, there was mass starvation and mass homelessness.

The abolishment of slavery and the short lived era of reconstruction when Black folks began to see some prosperity, led to White rage in the form of

Jim Crow laws (1878-1965).

Slavery was a business in the south that was too big to fail. The war devastated the southern economy. Under the 13th Amendment, *slavery was abolished except for the punishment of a crime.* So new laws (Jim Crow Laws) targeting Black people were placed on the books so that slavery under another name could continue. What was once considered a misdemeanor was now a felony offense subject to years in prison.

- ✓ Talking too loud around white women was a crime.
- ✓ Walking next to the railroad tracks was a crime.
- ✓ You were considered a criminal if you did not have a job and declared a vagrant.

Once incarcerated, the state could and did lease Black prisoners out to industries for no pay and deplorable working conditions. White people continued to build wealth on the backs of 15,000 Black prisoners. It is well documented that roads, railroads, buildings, communities, hospitals and most of the infrastructure in Birmingham, Ala. alone were built by leased Black men falsely or unjustly accused of a crime.

And yet we are still here. That is why we celebrate JUNETEENTH. We celebrate the resilience and strength of African Americans. Understanding JUNETEENTH means that we are willing to investigate and examine the events that came before and after JUNETEENTH that have shaped the policies, laws, and attitudes toward African Americans and of all People of Color. Understanding JUNETEENTH means that we understand that the end of slavery did not mean that it was an end to white supremacy. White supremacy was actually strengthened and used fear, violence, brutality and terror to support an unjust society.

Part of any Juneteenth celebration must include reflection and gratitude. We have little understanding of what was endured. It is important to know and to remember the horror of slavery and what our ancestors experienced. We must find grace and honor in the human stories of the enslaved, in the stories of our ancestors, and give our voice to their story.

As you prepare the Juneteenth Celebration, be sure to embrace with gratitude the existence we experience that is removed from slavery. Any celebration should include a pledge to move toward wholeness and liberation for all.

I remain yours in Peace and Solidarity,

Sandy Ewell

Founder and President at Common Ground Institute, LLC

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## Six Self-Care Tips on Overcoming Abuse-Related Trauma

While trauma is a terrible thing for someone to go through, that doesn't mean that you have to live with it for the rest of your life. Recovering from abuse-related trauma can be incredibly challenging, but it is possible. Here are six tips you can do to help you in the healing process.

### 1. Recognize the Effects of Trauma

Many effects of trauma stem from abuse. Common effects include:

- Trouble sleeping
- Panic attacks and anxiety
- Substance use
- Eating disorders
- Flashbacks of sexual/physical violence
- Feelings of self-hate and low self-esteem
- Fearing people and relationships
- Suicidal thoughts

If you notice any of these warning signs, it is important to address your trauma and seek professional help.

### 2. Understand the Importance of Healing

It's important to know that healing is key to overcoming trauma. Healing is

different for everyone, but for any person, requires the intention to release past traumas and recover. This intention can:

- Allows survivors to focus on themselves. Negative thoughts and feelings can be overwhelming at times. But with healing, survivors can take their attention away from the negativity and focus on what their needs are.
- Allows survivors to develop closer relationships with other people. It's important to allow your friends and family to serve as your support system as you take part in the healing process.
- Helps survivors relieve their pain by finding different avenues to cope, such as taking up a new hobby, returning to once-abandoned hobbies, getting out more, etc.
- Helps survivors experience their feelings again after releasing all the emotion trapped within from past traumatic events.

### 3. Embrace Positive Affirmations

Refocusing the subconscious mind starts with "forcing" positivity. The negativity — or the inner critic — can stir self-sabotage and hold you back from embracing positive things.

Refocus the inner critical voice by putting in place a system of positive

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# Pride Month Q&A with Johanna Durazzi (she/her)

Johanna Durazzi (she/her) is the Technical Assistance Coordinator at the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence (NJCEDV). She develops trainings and workshops on various topics relating to Social Justice, including, but not limited to LGBTQ+ Competency and Inclusivity, and racial justice.

**Q:** NYC Pride's theme this year is "Unapologetically Us". How do you interpret this theme?

**A:** To be unapologetically oneself is to not feel like you have to make yourself smaller or less authentic to accommodate the pallet of someone else. Historically queerness has been accepted in moderation. Mainly white, gay, cisgender, able-bodied and neurotypical men with aspirations to have a nuclear family have been the "poster children" of pride as it's become mainstream. The white gay couple has been the most palatable for the mainstream due to the privilege and relatability of folks who are commonly represented in our society. To be unapologetically us is to celebrate all of our community members, who do not fit the strict privileged archetype that folks are most comfortable with. It is to be loud, queer, diverse in identities, and to not have to make space for the cisgender heterosexual comfort levels.

**Q:** Not many people know the history of Pride Month and the Stonewall Riots. Why is it so important that we teach about LGBTQ+ history and make activists like Marsha P. Johnson household names?

**A:** History is not merely a chain of events told in narrative form. History is the explanation of why we are where we are at this very moment. Black trans women of color are still in danger as an intersectional identity at terrifying rates. We cannot ethically celebrate rainbows and free queer love without acknowledging that Marsha P. Johnson's murder is recreated at the life expense of trans women of color, just like her, all the time. Pride is a celebration, however it started as a call to action. We must tell the stories of our Queer founding parents because their legacy cannot be rewritten to exclude the violence and demand for justice that we still fight through.

**Q:** Research shows that the LGBTQ+ community experiences higher rates of intimate partner violence than cisgender, heteronormative couples. Can you talk more on the societal stressors that cause this increase in domestic violence?

**A:** LGBTQ+ folks are more likely to experience familial trauma and homelessness during their youth than their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts. This level of isolation and survival creates trauma bonds, and without the love

and support of family members to teach them skills about relationship building, as well as the lack of self-esteem or self-worth created as a result of familial rejection, intimate partner violence becomes present. It's important to always see social issues such as IPV as an effect of a culture built on power and control. LGBTQ+ folks, and all oppressed and marginalized identities experience the effects of a power and control at much higher rates, not because of something they are doing wrong as a community, but because of the rejection and isolation that is created in grander society.

**Q:** Victims of sexual assault often do not report to the police – and LGBTQ+ survivors are even less likely to report their assault. This can lead to serious mental health impacts for the victim. Can you elaborate more on these trends?

**A:** Unfortunately, reporting to police oftentimes worsens the mental health impacts for survivors. Without trauma informed care and ongoing examples of authentic compassion and justice provided to survivors, we will continue to see few survivors reporting to police. We must hold all officials accountable for their trustworthiness in communities. If folks are not comfortable reporting to police, the onus is on police to make reporting a safe and affirming option. For most, they enter the police station feeling as though they have to prove their victimhood, which is traumatizing. For many queer, black, and brown folks especially the police are not a symbol or space of safety. It is important to invest in strong and healing communities that can connect survivors to the healing methods focused on their well-being rather than punitive action, if they so choose.

**Q:** How can allies of the LGBTQ+ community support our gay, queer, and trans friends who are experiencing abuse?

**A:** Allies of the LGBTQ+ community should listen and respond to the calls of action from their LGBTQ+ friends and neighbors. This year alone hundreds of anti-LGBTQ+ bills were proposed in state legislatures, mostly targeting trans folks. An ally's place is in doing the work to ensure we are safe. Not speaking for us but amplifying our voices to places and spaces we aren't safe to speak alone. Ally is not a name to put on when it's time to party with your gay bffs. Ally is a title given to someone who believes in queer liberation and freedom to exist without suffering and does the work to get us there.

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affirmations that you can use daily. Positive affirmations can interrupt those disruptive and unwelcome thoughts and turn them into something better.

Here are some positive affirmations that you can try:

- "I love myself."
- "I am worthy."
- "I am beautiful."

#### 4. Exercise

You can also heal the mind through your body. Find at least one form of exercise that you can easily get into that helps you release the grief, rage and hurt that can stem from the aftermath of abuse and trauma.

Here are some great exercises to get into:

- Kickboxing
- Yoga
- Dance cardio
- Running

The best part is that while you're exercising, you can listen to empowering music or positive affirmations. Just remember: Exercise is supposed to be beneficial, not self-destructing.

#### 5. Embrace Creativity

Art therapy has proven to help survivors of PTSD by

having them create and integrate. Creating something can help you to express yourself in a transformative way, thus helping you release the trauma and its negative effects on you.

Here are some great activities that you can do as part of art therapy:

- Writing
- Drawing
- Painting
- Playing and or writing music
- Arts and crafts

By creating something, you have the option of sharing it with the world or saving it as a reminder that you can overcome anything in life.

#### 6. Don't Be Afraid to Seek Help

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, don't be afraid to reach out. Visit our website at [www.womanspace.org](http://www.womanspace.org) to view resources and our online 24/7 chat option, or contact Womanspace's crisis hotline at 609-394-9000. For those who are hard of hearing or deaf, you can text 609-619-1888.

*Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness, January 2021 Blog*

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## SAVE THE DATE!

27th Annual Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award Event

Honoring Troy Vincent, Sr.

EVP of Football Operations at the National Football League, former Eagles Cornerback, and Trenton native.

THURSDAY MAY 4TH, 2023

LEARN MORE AT  
[HTTPS://WOMANSPACE.ORG/TROY-VINCENT-BBS-2023/](https://womanspace.org/troy-vincent-bbs-2023/)

# Upcoming Events:

August 2, 2022	National Night Out
September 15, 2022	Trivia Night Fundraiser
October 25, 2022	Communities of Light Launch Event
November 17, 2022	Women's Initiative Luncheon
November 29, 2022	Giving Tuesday
December 5, 2022	Communities of Light
December 15, 2022	Annual Meeting

## If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are being hurt by your partner, it is NOT your fault. You deserve to be safe and healthy. For help and information anytime, contact:

### Womanspace 24-Hour Hotline

[www.womanspace.org](http://www.womanspace.org)

1-609-394-9000

Text Message Hotline for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

609-619-1888

### National Domestic Violence Hotline

[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

### National Sexual Assault Hotline

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

### New Jersey 24-Hour Sexual Assault Hotline

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### National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)

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Men Shoes: All sizes

Summer Pajama's: Boys & Girls: 2T - 6X

Summer Water Shoes: Boys 1,2,4,8,10. Girls 1,2,4,5,8,9

Summer Shoes for both Boys 1,2,4,8,10, Girls 1,2,4,5,8,9

Kids Sunscreen

Water Play Activities for kids

Bathing Suits for kids: All Sizes

Summer Clothes size 5T, both boys & girls

School Uniforms: All Sizes, both boys & girls

Womanspace affirms its commitment to cultural competency. We recognize and value the ethnic, religious, and racial richness of our communities, and encourage mutual respect and understanding among all people. True excellence in our organization and communities results from identifying, serving, and enlisting the participation of all people who represent this rich diversity.

Womanspace News is published quarterly by the Development Office.

Correspondence and News may be sent to:

Development Office, Womanspace News,  
1530 Brunswick Avenue, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648



[www.womanspace.org](http://www.womanspace.org)

Summer 2022