



Together we are stronger than abuse.
FORMERLY WOMANSPACE

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Younity's (formerly Womanspace) mission is to prevent abuse, protect families, and change lives through empowerment and a safety net of supportive services. Younity provides quality, compassionate, and nonjudgmental services in a manner that fosters self-respect and independence in persons experiencing domestic violence or a sexual assault. We strive to lead the struggle to end domestic and sexual violence through advocacy and community education. Younity is the leading non-profit agency serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Mercer County, NJ.

SAVE THE DATE!

Younity's **Community Appreciation Day** is coming—a day to celebrate, connect, and give thanks to the community that makes our work possible. Enjoy a free, family-friendly event with food, treats, and fun activities. Stay tuned—we can't wait to celebrate with you!

COMMUNITY APPRECIATION DAY

SUNDAY | JUNE 8TH, 2025 | 1 TO 4 PM
CADWALADER PARK | TRENTON, NJ

FOOD • FUN • FAMILY • FRIENDS • COMMUNITY

YOUNITY
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VOICES OF YOUNITY
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A publication of Younity, a non-profit organization serving adults & children in crisis.

APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

YOUNITY
FORMERLY WOMANSPACE

29TH ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
MAY 15, 2025 | 5:30 – 8:30 PM
THE BOATHOUSE AT MERCER LAKE



The Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award Honoree
Angela Ferrell-Zabala

Join Us for Younity's 29th Annual Awards Dinner! Be part of an unforgettable evening at The Boathouse at Mercer Lake—where cocktails on the deck, a delicious sit-down dinner, and a shared commitment to creating safer communities come together for a night of impact.

This year, we proudly honor **Angela Ferrell-Zabala, Executive Director of Moms Demand Action**, with **The Barbara Boggs Sigmund Award**

for her visionary leadership in the movement to end gun violence. We will also celebrate individuals and organizations whose dedication has advanced our mission with **The Edwin W. Schmierer Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service** and **The Younity Award for Outstanding Community Partner**.

Get Your Tickets—This Event Sells Out!

Last year's event reached capacity, and tickets are limited! Don't miss your opportunity to connect with advocates, community leaders, and changemakers while supporting a cause that provides life-saving services for victim-survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Mercer County.

Become an Event Sponsor

Your sponsorship directly funds emergency shelter, legal advocacy, counseling, and prevention programs, helping victim-survivors find safety and healing. Sponsors receive exclusive benefits, including VIP reception access, branding opportunities, and event recognition.

Secure your spot today—purchase your tickets or become a sponsor now!



JOIN US!

**Abuse is never your fault.
Help is available 24/7.
If you are in immediate danger, call 911.**

For help and information any time,
contact Younity's 24-hour hotline

609.394.9000

Text message hotline

609.619.1888

NJ statewide domestic
violence hotline

800.572.SAFE (7233)

For our secure chat line, visit

younitynj.org

APRIL

IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

First established in 2001, **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)** honors the resiliency and healing of victim-survivors while drawing critical attention to this important issue. This year's SAAM theme is **Together We Act, United We Change**, emphasizing the power of collective action in building

safer communities. When we stand together, **we are stronger than abuse**.

There are many ways to take action—wear teal and raise awareness on social media using **#SAAM**, participate in **Denim Day** by wearing jeans, or join us on April 30th at the **H.U.B.** in Trenton to decorate jeans in

solidarity with victim-survivors. You can also check out the SAAM exhibition at the **Robert J. Hughes Justice Complex** and other community events throughout April. Every action, no matter how small, helps create change.

1 DAY OF ACTION

Wear teal today to raise awareness about sexual assault and show support for victim-survivors everywhere. The SAAM Day of Action kicks off the month with a collective call to wear teal—the color of sexual violence prevention. Whether you're a survivor, know someone affected, or simply stand in solidarity, wearing teal is a powerful way to spark conversation and support change. Share your support on social media using **#SAAM2025**

7 NJ STATE POLICE DENIM DISPLAY

From **March 28 to April 7**, the **NJ State Police Victim Services Unit** will feature a powerful display at the **Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton** for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Younity is honored to contribute denim decorated by our clients, sharing messages of strength and resilience. This effort highlights the importance of awareness and advocacy.

12 10TH ANNUAL R.O.S.A. WALK

Join **R.O.S.A. (Rising Over Sexual Abuse)** and One Heaven Inc. for the **10th Annual Walk for Sexual Assault Awareness Month at Cadwalader Park, Trenton, NJ**. Walk registration starts at 8:00 AM, and participants can join virtually via Zoom. To pre-register for event, scan the QR code or visit [TONABUCK.COM](https://tonabuck.com). The first 100 registrants get a free t-shirt!



30 DENIM DAY WITH H.U.B.

Wear jeans today to take a stand against victim-blaming and harmful attitudes surrounding sexual violence. Inspired by a 1999 ruling by the Italian Supreme Court that overturned a rape conviction based on the survivor's jeans, Denim Day is a global movement in support of survivors. **Join us for a public event at The H.U.B. (16 W. Front Street, 3rd Floor, Trenton). Follow us on social media for event details closer to the date.**

DID YOU KNOW? National Statistics

53%

OF WOMEN

have reported experiencing sexual assault in their lifetime
source: NSVRC.org

29%

OF MEN

have reported experiencing sexual assault in their lifetime
source: NSVRC.org

80%

OF VICTIMS

are at least acquainted with their offender
source: www.meganslaw.ca.gov

PASSAGE OF NEW LAWS IN NJ HELP VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

SURVIVORS CAN NOW TRACK THEIR SAFE KITS

On January 23, 2025, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law **S715/A908**, known as **The New Jersey Sexual Assault Evidence Tracking Act**, establishing an internet-based tracking system for sexual assault forensic evidence (SAFE) kits. This system enhances transparency and empowers survivors by allowing them to monitor the status and location of their kits throughout the investigative process.

Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, a primary sponsor,

emphasized the importance of this legislation in supporting survivors' rights and promoting accountability within the criminal justice system.

Younity was honored to be present at the signing ceremony, reaffirming our commitment to advocating for victim-survivors and collaborating on initiatives that promote a more just and equitable community.

This law marks a significant step forward in New Jersey's survivor-centered, trauma-informed response

to sexual violence. By granting survivors real-time access to SAFE kit information, the state aims to foster trust and encourage reporting.



SURVIVORS NOW HAVE EXPANDED LEGAL RIGHTS TO SEEK JUSTICE

New Jersey has taken a major step forward in supporting victim-survivors of sexual violence with the passage of **The Justice for Survivors Act (A-4684/S-3564)**. Signed into law by Governor Phil Murphy, this legislation removes legal barriers that previously made it harder for survivors to seek justice.

What does this mean?

- Survivors now have more time to file lawsuits against their abusers, even if the original statute of limitations has passed.
- Nonprofits can no longer claim immunity if they were negligent in cases of sexual abuse, allowing survivors to hold them accountable.
- Public entities, like government agencies, can no longer use

immunity as a defense in civil cases related to sexual violence.

These changes ensure survivors have a fair chance to pursue justice, no matter when the abuse occurred or who was responsible. Younity fully supports this law and remains committed to providing resources, advocacy, and hope for all victim-survivors.

A UNITED EFFORT: Younity & Mercer Street Friends

Younity is partnering with **Mercer Street Friends** to present the *Empowering Community Initiative*, a multi-session training series for Mercer Street Friends staff. Led by Younity Training Specialist Sheilagh Mescal Gunstensen and other expert Younity staff, the sessions help Mercer Street Friends staff recognize and address signs of domestic violence, sexual violence, and strangulation in their client population. As a nonprofit

addressing food insecurity, early childhood education, and family support, Mercer Street Friends works directly with individuals and families who may be experiencing crisis or instability. The training is fostering thought-provoking conversations that integrate the information presented with the unique client experiences and needs that Mercer Street Friends' staff serves.

Younity is delighted to work in collaboration with our community partners for the empowerment of domestic and sexual violence victim-survivors and a safer Mercer County for all.

For inquiries about this initiative and other trainings, **please contact education@younitynj.org**.



Stay Connected. Stay Empowered.

Subscribe to our newsletter for the latest updates on resources, events, and ways to support victim-survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Together, we can build a safer, stronger community **Scan the QR code** or visit **younitynj.org** to sign up today!