

**PRESS RELEASE  
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## **DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE SERVICES CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

Agency Reflects on Accomplishments and Plans for Future

**Southwest, MI-** Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> marks the 99<sup>th</sup> annual International Women's Day. It is a celebration of women's past, present and future accomplishments economically, politically and socially throughout the world. What began as a day of recognition for the women's suffragists throughout the United States and Europe, is now an international holiday that is celebrated across the globe.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services (DASAS) commemorates International Women's Day this year by looking back at the evolution of the agency and planning for the future. Twenty-five years ago, the agency began as a small, grassroots, organization staffed solely by volunteers. Today, the agency has 20 employees, an emergency shelter for women and their children, an administrative building, and a satellite office in Dowagiac. The agency now serves St. Joseph, Cass and Van Buren counties.

Though thousands of survivors of domestic and sexual violence have received services from DASAS, there is still much work to be done. Looking to the future, DASAS plans to continue providing the much needed services such as shelter, counseling and court advocacy that are essential for healing for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. However, instead of focusing primarily on working with survivors after the abuse has occurred, DASAS also plans to spearhead prevention efforts in Southwest Michigan by working with youth and younger adults. DASAS will work to teach teens about healthy relationships and empower them seek help if they are in an abusive relationship. DASAS will continue to challenge the social norms that excuse or normalize violence against women and violence within relationships.

This International Women's Day, DASAS encourages you to take time out to thank or reflect on the women in your life and their accomplishments.

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***Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services is leading efforts to end domestic violence and sexual assault in Southwest Michigan. DASAS assists domestic violence and sexual assault survivors in clarifying their options, accessing community services that support personal choice, and providing a safe place for survivors and their children. Please contact us at 269-273-6154 or [dasasinfo@dasasmi.org](mailto:dasasinfo@dasasmi.org). Serving Cass, St. Joseph and Van Buren Counties. 24-Hour Helpline 1-800-828-2023***