



**GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER**  
*Building Today For A Safer Tomorrow*



January 12, 2022

Jim Mielke and Russ Kottke  
Dodge County Administrator  
127 E. Oak St.  
Juneau, WI 53039

Dear Dodge County Board Members:

Since 1978, PAVE has been providing shelter and comprehensive programming and support for those experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault in Dodge County and more recently, in Jefferson County, as well. PAVE is a vital part of the community safety net, working in partnership with employers, healthcare providers, schools and the criminal justice system. PAVE supports children, teens, and adults by providing emergency shelter, outreach, prevention education, and advocacy. We also work with victims affected by human trafficking by providing safe shelter and intensive supportive care. Human trafficking is an industry that targets cities with large venues for hosting concerts, sporting events, and festivals. Human trafficking has become a tragic reality in Dodge County, as we are located at the midpoint of the largest cities in Wisconsin.

Sadly, you don't have to look far to find a family that has been impacted by domestic violence and/or sexual abuse in some way. In fact, the economic impact of domestic violence affects the entire community. Domestic violence shelters serve a critical need for victims and their families to find safety and to begin a life free of abuse.

As Dodge County's only domestic violence emergency shelter, PAVE answered 3,000 crisis calls and provided more than 10,500 nights of refuge over the last three years. We frequently operate at capacity with a waiting list and are forced to find other options for victims seeking shelter.

Our current shelter has served PAVE well for the past 30 years, but as an older single-family private residence, accommodating up to 22 people in five bedrooms and two bathrooms, it is grossly undersized to meet the increased demand of those in need of victim services. Our current facility can't meet the current and expanding needs of the program, nor is it consistent with best practice in providing a suitable environment of healing for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It is PAVE's goal to create a shelter experience that focuses on the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of our clients and one that empowers victims and survivors.

After a comprehensive feasibility study, we have determined that it no longer makes financial sense to invest in costly repairs to our current aging, inadequate shelter. Therefore, we are moving forward with our ***Growing Stronger Together*** capital campaign to create a new larger facility to allow us to provide shelter for more victims and survivors experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault. We will also be able to meet the specific needs of individuals, families, elderly, and the LGBTQ community, and expand our community programming. The new facility will also offer updated security, larger living spaces, and a larger kitchen for preparing and sharing family meals. Other benefits of the new space will include a safe exchange area for co-parenting circumstances, indoor and outdoor play areas for children and accommodation for family pets, which are often used as pawns in domestic abuse situations.

The ***Growing Stronger Together*** campaign seeks to raise \$3.3 million dollars for the purchase and renovation of a building to serve as a new shelter. Our new building, located at 111 E. Burnett St. in Beaver Dam, is centrally located to provide access to needed services and support for victims. To date, we have raised approximately \$1.4 million through pledges from private donors and philanthropic foundations, demonstrating the community's recognition of the need for and their support of our project.

For years, Dodge County has been an invaluable financial supporter of PAVE, providing funds to cover a portion of our operating expenses, and for that we are very grateful. We have recently learned that according to WI State Statutes, Dodge County not only has the authority to “make payments to a nonprofit organization that has as a primary purpose providing assistance to individuals who are the victims of domestic violence and related crimes” (Wis. Stat., §59.53(3)), the county may also “borrow money and issue bonds to finance any project undertaken for a public purpose” (Wis. Stat., §67.04(2) (a) and). To this end, we are requesting the Dodge County Board to consider financing 24% of our total project equaling \$800,000.

Our entire community is safer when we can provide the kind of prevention, refuge, education, and outreach that PAVE offers twenty-four hours a day.

Thank you for taking the time to consider supporting this vital project for Dodge County. With your support we can create a community that’s empowered, educated and equipped to break the cycle of violence. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this project at greater length with you and answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley Welak".

Ashley Welak  
PAVE  
Executive Director  
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