Safe Communities

Saving Lives Together

2025 Annual Report

Safe **Communities**

Safe Communities cares about the health, wellbeing & safety of all people in our community. By engaging a coalition of advocates, including those with lived experiences, we empathetically provide support & resources to vulnerable populations. **We are saving lives together** by confronting our community's top safety concerns – Older Adult Falls, Traffic Crashes, Suicide & Drug Harm, through innovative programs.

Our **Mission**

Safe Communities fosters safety and wellness for our community.

Our **Vision**

Safe Communities
sets the standard for
community safety as
a trusted catalyst that fosters
innovation & collaboration

Our **Focus**

Falls Free
Traffic Safety
Suicide Prevention
Drug Harm Reduction

Dear Partner for a Safe Community:
I'm grateful for the opportunity to share Safe Communities' 2025 Annual Report with you. It's thanks to your partnership and support that our coalition met significant milestones last year.

Letter from our former Executive Director, **Cheryl Wittke:**

For 26 years, Safe Communities has helped Dane County thrive through collaboration, compassion, and accountability. Our lifesaving partnerships have grown and impacts multiplied. But **our work together is quiet**, even invisible, unless you consider what could have been lost without it.

This annual report celebrates big impacts that come from **small acts of collaboration.** Without your willingness to join forces with others, none of this would have happened. Given everything else you have going on, this is no small feat. Thank you, and **please consider accomplishments featured here as YOUR accomplishments.**

As Safe Communities' first (and to date, only) Executive Director, I am delighted to see how far we've come. And I'm happy to share that we're at a moment of exciting transition. **In 2026, I will retire and Tanya Lettman-Shue will take over as Safe Communities Executive Director.**

Tanya brings exceptional management expertise, deep knowledge of systems of care and funding structures, and trusted relationships across the nonprofit sector. She is poised to elevate collaboration among nonprofits, government agencies, and grassroots partners to meet community needs in new ways. **Please join me in welcoming Tanya** by considering how we can deepen our relationships and strengthen our impacts toward a safer community.

Letter from our new Executive Director, **Tanya Lettman-Shue:**

I'm thrilled to have assumed the role of Executive Director at Safe Communities, an organization dedicated to saving lives and promoting safety through collaboration across Dane County. It's humbling to step into this role, learn more about Safe Communities' rich history, and **build on the incredible work already underway** in Falls Prevention, Suicide Prevention, Overdose Prevention, and reducing Traffic Fatalities alongside our over 400 community partners. **I'm committed to advancing this work from a community-collaborative, community-first perspective as we Save Lives Together.**

Safe Communities **Timeline**

1998

Over 100 organizations collaborate for the City of Madison Safety and Injury Prevention Inventory Report. The recommendations of this report led to the formation of Safe Communities

1999

Greater Madison Safe Community Coalition hires first employee, Cheryl Wittke to focus on traffic safety

Clean Up the Wash traffic awareness campaign

2001

Launch of the "Slow Down" yard sign campaign

Nonprofit status granted to Safe Community Coalition of Madison & Dane County

2002

Launch of Falls Prevention program including "Safe Home Visits" campaign

2004

First Suicide Prevention Summit

2005

Introduction of pedestrian crossing flags program

2008

MedDrop program collaborates with area communities to reclaim unused or expired medicine

2009

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization welcomed SCMDC into the International Network of Safe Communities

2011

"Only Leaves Should Fall" seminar highlights falls prevention initiatives

2012

Inaugural "Stop the Opioid Epidemic Summit"

2014

"Man Therapy" program introduced to erase the stigma of therapy for at-risk middle-aged men

2015

Safe Communities Madison-Dane County is featured in a National Safety Council publication called A Coordinated Response to Stop the Drug Overdose Epidemic

Our History

2017
Homegrown "Gun Shop Project" partnership with gun shop owners gets national attention as a forward-thinking program in suicide prevention

2018
Recovery coaches guide people from addiction to treatment and recovery

2020
Launched a 24/7 recovery coach helpline in response to Covid-19 pandemic and fentanyl crisis

2021
Offered a virtual Stepping On falls prevention program to better meet the safety and health needs of older adults during Covid-19 pandemic

2023
Replaced QPR with innovative Holding Space training in partnership with The Wildflower Alliance

2024
Nearly 1,000 individuals in the community receiving peer support services annually

2025
Celebrated our first year at the Black Business Hub and 25 years of serving Dane County

2026
Leadership transition with retirement of Cheryl Wittke and new Executive Director Tanya Lettman-Shue

AFRICAN AMERICAN OPIOID COALITION

African American Opioid Coalition (AAOC) founded to prevent drug harm in Dane County's Black community

Many individual programs and very little collaboration: this is what Public Health discovered when it surveyed the Madison/ Dane County safety landscape in 1998. Public Health's study and leadership from City of Madison Fire, Police, Public Health and Traffic Engineering kicked off a planning conference and a commitment by 100 agencies to form Safe Communities.

Over the last 26 years, our role has expanded to become a community catalyst and collaborative leader across Dane County and beyond. Safe Communities is saving lives together with over 400 public & private partners of government and social services agencies, local businesses and health care providers, faith communities, schools and neighborhood associations.

Safe Communities

Our **Collective Impact**

The Data Behind our Work

1st in the nation
to connect gun shops and health care systems to offer safe places to store guns during a suicidal crisis

- 400+ partners across Dane County involved in our coalition work
- Sources of Strength Secondary Program reduced the overall odds of new suicide attempts by 29%

150+ Overdose Aid Kits (OAKs) distributed
throughout Dane County

- 18 MedDrop locations in Dane County making it possible for all residents to be within minutes of a safe drop-off site

Stepping On evidence-based falls prevention workshops **reduce falls by 31%; over 1,500 older adults** have participated in the program in Dane County

- Nearly 900 people served through our Peer Support Services
- Falls Free coalition received a statewide grant to expand Balance Stamp of Approva across WI

23.75 tons of unused medicine safely disposed
of by MedDrop partners

- Yield-to-pedestrian rate among motorists is 89% with pedestrian flags vs. 11% without

76% of drivers
surveyed reported slowing down upon seeing a Slow Down yard sign

- Suicide Prevention & Harm Reduction Coalition (SPHRC) includes over 130 community partners

Community Coalitions

Falls **Free** Dane Coalition

Suicide **Prevention** & Harm **Reduction** Coalition

Organization Programs

Traffic **Safety**

Our programming engages partners, including members of the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission, to improve road safety and reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities.

Falls **Free**

Our programming helps older adults stay independent, healthy, and able to live the lives that we all want to live as we age.

Suicide **Prevention**

Our programming supports people who have attempted suicide, those who experience thoughts of suicide, and those who have lost loved ones to suicide.

Drug Harm **Reduction & Recovery**

Our programming ensures anyone who has been impacted by substance use experiences has a compassionate network for support, resources, and harm reduction tools.

Drug Harm **Reduction & Recovery**

The Drug Harm Reduction & Recovery program led by Safe Communities ensures anyone who has been negatively affected by substance use challenges has a compassionate network for support, resources, and harm reduction tools. Through close collaboration with partners and meeting community members where they are, we create innovative solutions to reduce drug harm. We provide direct services through community based peer support programming, harm reduction education and initiatives, and school based primary prevention programs.

Our Collective Impact

- 1,000+ peer support referrals
- 899 people served through our Peer Support Services
- Partner organizations and resources were recommended over 635 times
- 95% of survey respondents were very likely or likely to recommend our Peer Support Services
- Survey respondents rated the impact of our Peer Support Services program an average of 9.36 out of 10
- 11 Narcan trainings administered
- 125 people attended the African American Opioid Coalition (AAOC) Black Recovery Rally at Penn Park
- 500+ boxes of Narcan (1000 doses), and 130+ fentanyl and xylazine test strips distributed to the community
- 400+ medication lockboxes distributed in the community

Falls **Free**

The Falls Free program led by Safe Communities helps older adults stay independent, healthy, and able to live the lives that we all want to live as we age. By addressing falls at both the system and grassroot levels we streamline processes to increase access to balance-enhancing programs so older adults are equipped with knowledge, resources, and support to prevent falls. We implement Stepping On, an evidence-based falls prevention program, serve as a hub for balance-enhancing programs and engage a coalition of community partners.

Our Collective Impact

- Stepping On evidence-based falls prevention workshops: 13 total workshops offered across Dane County with 124 total participants
- New Stepping On host site partners: 2 (Plymouth UCC & Colonial View Apts)
- 3 Tai Chi series coordinated at neighborhood/community centers and senior housing (43 total participants)
- WIHA Falls Free WI grant received to expand our coalition work on the Balance Stamp of Approval
- 10 lunch & learn events (not including Only Leaves Should Fall); majority in under-served areas of our community
- 3 Keeping the Keys speaking engagements about older adult driver safety(addressing the correlation between older adult falls and traffic crashes)
- 125 attendees at our annual Only Leaves Should Fall event in collaboration with Madison College and UW Madison
- Speaking engagements/presentations to over 450 Dane County practitioners/partners and older adults annually

Suicide **Prevention**

The Suicide Prevention program led by Safe Communities supports people who have attempted suicide, those who experience thoughts of suicide, and those who have lost loved ones to suicide. Through trainings with schools and organizations that serve youth, we increase protective factors, reduce lethal risk, and expand access to mental health and substance use recovery services. We teach our community to recognize when someone might be thinking about suicide, partner with gun shops and health care providers to promote safe firearm storage and medication disposal, and convene a health care collaborative to support systemwide implementation of the Zero Suicide framework.

Our Collective Impact

- Eight youth-serving institutions have started the Sources of Strength Suicide Prevention Program
- Eight additional institutions are in the early stages of implementation, with plans to launch in 2026
- Over 250 people completed the Holding Space training, learning how to recognize the signs of suicide & compassionately support those experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- Holding Space trainings are now available in Spanish & English
- The Dane County Zero Suicide Collaborative, including members from eight health systems, continues to meet
- 200+ gun locks distributed to the community & partners

Traffic **Safety**

The Traffic Safety program led by Safe Communities improves road safety, and reduces traffic-related injuries and fatalities, recognizing that traffic safety impacts public health, economic stability, and community well-being. By collaborating with the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission and its diverse stakeholders, we utilize data-driven analysis, public education, and law enforcement efforts to address traffic safety issues. Through enforcement efforts, education, training, and community partnerships, the Traffic Safety program works to shift biases and behaviors, ultimately reducing preventable traffic crashes and fostering a sustainable culture of safety.

Our Collective Impact

- 76% of drivers surveyed reported slowing down upon seeing a Slow Down yard sign
- Yield-to-pedestrian rate among motorists is 89% with pedestrian flags vs. 11% without
- Awarded 3 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration demonstration projects and partner on a 4th
- Over 500 Slow Down yard signs distributed throughout Dane County
- Three traffic safety campaigns completed in partnership with the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission, focusing on school zone safety, pedestrian safety, and stop on red
- Over 2,000 citations and 3,000 traffic stops completed through the campaigns

Our **Donors**

See our full list of donors & learn how to become one:

Life Saver $20,000 +

OTTO BREMER TRUST

UW Health University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics

SSM Health

UW Medical Foundation

First Responder $5,000 - $9,999

AAA Wisconsin

Epic

MGE Foundation

Public Health MADISON & DANE COUNTY *Healthy people. Healthy places.*

The McClure Donations Fund

PRL Keystone Foundation

Good Samaritan $1,000 - $4,999

AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE

Village of McFarland *Naturally Connected*

the village of Waunakee

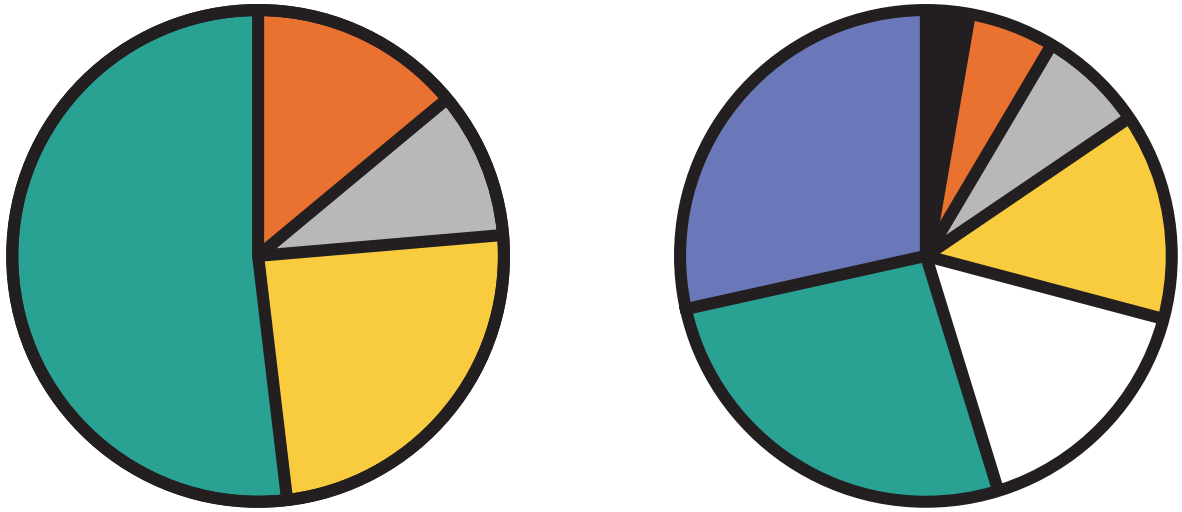
Shorewood Hills Police Est. 1927

Courtier Foundation, Inc

2025 **Financial Statement**

Diversifying Our **Funding Sources**

2020 → 2025



- Jefferson County Funding
- Community Donations & Other
- Corporate & foundation Giving
- Healthcare Organizations
- DCDHS Opioid Settlement
- Federal Funding
- Dane County Funding

Saving Lives. **Strengthening the Future.**

Giving Campaign

For over 25 years, Safe Communities has helped Dane County thrive through collaboration, compassion, and accountability. As the organization moves into its next chapter, building a three-month operating reserve will ensure that strength endures. An operating reserve will **provide the flexibility to focus on solving Dane County's top safety concerns, supporting coalition partners, and investing time where it makes the greatest difference.**

As Safe Communities transitions from long-time Executive Director, Cheryl Wittke to new E.D. Tanya Lettman-Shue Safe Communities is looking for additional support. Your support will provide the resources and stability necessary to plan boldly, support staff, and deepen engagement across Dane County.

Early Action Saves Lives

Timing Matters. Crises don't wait for funding cycles.

2026 Campaign Goal: $150,000

Campaign Phase 1

Build a Sustainable Foundation

Building a modest operating reserve will ensure that strength continues.

Campaign Phase 2

Empower Rapid Response & Innovation

When danger emerges, SafeCommunities must move immediately.

Campaign Phase 3

Fuel a Strong Transition to the Next Generation of Leadership Working

Ready to meet emerging challenges with compassion and collaboration.

Your investment honors the organization's legacy while positioning Safe Communities and its next leader to guide Dane County into a safer, more connected future.

What **We're Working On**

Mission

Safe Communities fosters safety & wellness for our community

Vision

Safe Communities sets the standard for community safety as a trusted catalyst that fosters innovation & collaboration

Focus

Falls Free
Traffic Safety
Suicide Prevention
Drug Harm Reduction

Strategic **Brief**

Finance:
Assure Financial & organizational strength & resiliency →

- Diversify funding sources
- Define a succession process
- Cultivate in-kind support
- Optimize efficiency

Partnership:
Build strong partnerships to pool expertise, resources & action →

- Broaden awareness & understanding
- Build strong partnerships
- Maintain open dialogue with community

Empowerment:
Initiate Community Engagement →

- Make authentic connections
- Educate the community
- Reach at-risk audiences & allies
- Assure DEIB elements are included

Continuous Improvement:
Seek Innovation, Adaptation & Improvement →

- Continuously advance methods & approaches
- Regularly evaluate & develop continuous improvement processes

Our **Team**

Cheryl Wittke
Executive Director

Ashley Hillman
Director of Program Partnerships

Kristina Vaccaro
Director of Peer Operations

Tanya Kraege
Director of Peer Services

Charlestine Daniel
AAOC Program Manager

Leah Rolando
Suicide Prevention and Harm Reduction Program Manager

Andrea Everett
Peer Services Supervisor

Mathew Teubert
Peer Services Supervisor

Dexter Lane
REX Training and Development Coordinator

Ramona Gomez
Peer Services Training and Development Coordinator

Lilly Roe
Communications Coordinator

Jim Wheeler
Program Coordinator

Ellen Hussey
Programs Assistant

Thomas Duval
Financial Operations Specialist

Elicia Casey
Operations Administrator

Dejuan Walker
Community Outreach Specialist

Maya Robinson
Community Outreach Specialist

Peer **Providers**

Becky Foss
Peer Provider

Lana Hamilton
Peer Provider

Hector Jimenez-Diaz
Peer Provider

Andrew Mullen
Peer Provider

Adria Payne
Peer Provider

Brad Pitzner
Peer Provider

Davita Walker
Peer Provider

Jewel Adams
Peer Provider

Michael Lucas
Peer Provider

Deonte Thompson
Peer Provider

Joseph Grey
Peer Provider

Jason Desecki
Peer Provider

Trever Schmit
Peer Provider

Thad McFadden
Peer Provider

Lisa Fordyce
Peer Provider

Jose Bastida
Peer Provider

Allison Fieber
Peer Provider

2025 **Board** Members

Corinda Rainey-Moore, PhD
UnityPoint Health-Meriter

Joann Solberg
AAA Wisconsin

Jim Christensen
StatOrg Services LLC

Michael Aguilar
Innocorp, Ltd.

Lupita Montoto
Midwest Family Broadcasting

Nancy McLean
State Lab of Hygiene

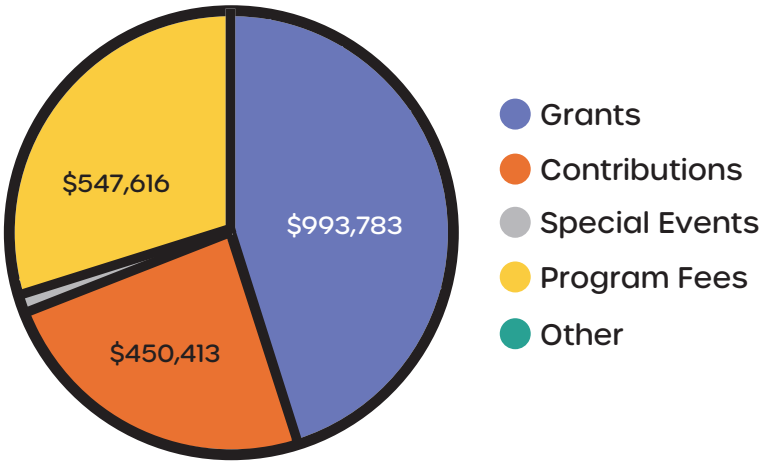
Aurielle Smith
Public Health MDC

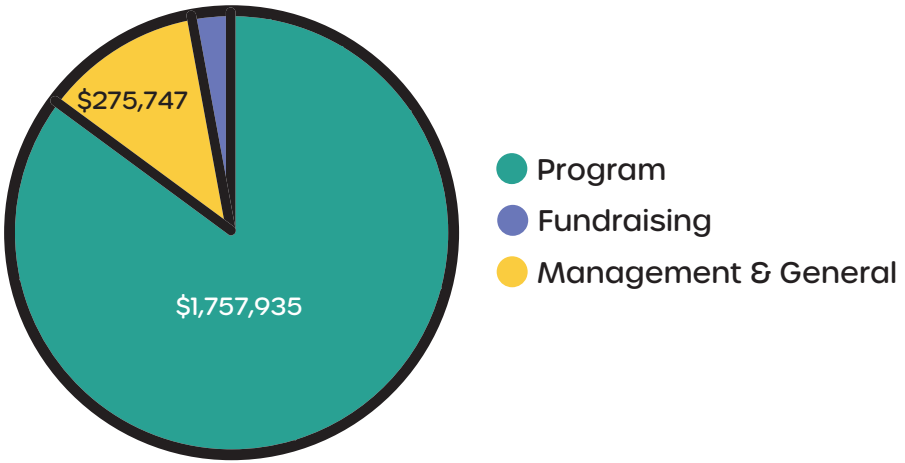
Debbie Brancel
American Family Insurance

John Patterson, Chief
Madison Police Department

Recent **Funding Shifts**

	Unaudited Fiscal Year 2025	Unaudited Fiscal Year 2024
Public Support & Revenue		
Grants	$993,783	$1,092,194
Contributions	$547,616	$450,413
Special Events	$0	$10,894
Program Fees	$603,252	$721,099
Other	$8,341	$886
Total Public Support & Revenue	$2,152,992	$2,275,486
Expenses		
Program	$1,757,935	$1,984,412
Management & General	$275,747	$276,858
Fundraising	$67,800	$65,677
Total Expenses	$2,101,482	$2,326,947
Change in Net Assets	$51,510	($51,461)
Net Assets, Beginning	$265,406	$316,867
Net Assets, Ending	$316,916	$265,406





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