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## Milwaukee's Domestic Abuse and Sex Trafficking Prevention Organization Opens Its Doors



Antonia Drew Vann, CEO and Founder

After over two decades of providing services in Milwaukee for victims and survivors of domestic/sexual violence, sex trafficking victims, in-custody/post-incarceration, abusers/batterers, families of victims/survivors, [The Asha Project](#), a domestic abuse and sex trafficking prevention organization, had to end operations in 2016. The cause for its closing was a loss of a major source of funding. But, in 2017 new funding came in and Antonia Drew Vann, CEO and Founder of the program, will reopen the doors of the project's Sherman Park location.

The open house will be on Wednesday, May 17, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 3719 West Center Street in Milwaukee.

*"We are excited to welcome community members and partners back to Asha," said Antonia Drew Vann. "The journey to reestablish services by, for and of African Americans has been long. The Asha Project staff and I are proud to be opening our doors to the community because we endeavored to keep Asha going for our community."*

The open house will be an opportunity for neighbors, friends and allied organizations to reconnect with the Asha Project and see the agency's new materials and its new logo. The logo, which features a phoenix rising from the flames, symbolizes the agency's rebirth and the transformations that happen when survivors of abuse work with Asha's advocates.

**Key Services will include Domestic violence victim/survivor case management, crisis intervention, advocacy, safety planning, abuser/batterer counseling, parenting classes, anger management, and job training.**

According to experts, community-based, culturally-specific abuse prevention organizations are critically important. The 2014 - 2020 Long Range Plan for a Safe Wisconsin Report from the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse and [End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin](#), notes that,

***"Survivors feel most comfortable coming forward to get help when they share common values, experiences, native tongues and traditions with the advocates they confide in," and "advocacy for victims is stronger when it organizes and leads a community's response to domestic violence from within."***

Drew Vann agrees with that statement. *"Asha is embedded within our community, and that is our unique strength,"* she said. *"The experiences of African-American survivors are filtered through layers of current and historical trauma, discrimination and disparities. Our advocates are in touch with these deep layers of experience and can, therefore, better establish supportive and healing relationships with our fellow community members who have been abused."*

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**Antonia Drew Vann, Director of the Asha Project, is available for interviews. (414) 252-0075**

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From its website: The Heart and Pulse of Asha is Culturally Specific African American Programs. Asha's Design Rationale: Many underlying problems such as poverty, which later manifest themselves in drug and alcohol dependency, domestic and sexual violence, incarceration and child abuse and neglect are often times socio-culturally anchored. As a result, when traditional agencies and methods attempt to meet the needs of some individuals and families from the African American community, the underlying currents, which are actually factors in the cause of the problems, are not adequately addressed, understood or even respected. The issue of domestic violence is complex within the African American community. This complexity is further compounded by problems along racial lines, historical trauma and discrimination, a lack of access to services in the community, and providers' inadequate cultural knowledge of daily issues for victims of abuse residing in the community.

About Asha: [Asha Family Services](#), Inc. believes in the existence and provision of culturally specific methods to better address the elimination of gender-based violence and the sexual exploitation of women and children in African American communities. Our belief is that in order to adequately address family and intimate partner violence and promote healthy living, we must address the truths of historical and daily life trauma experiences of the community. Further, we believe that we must simultaneously confront intersecting socioeconomic and other factors that contribute to or aggravate violence and abuse between intimates, in homes and in the community. Contact The Asha Project at [info@ashfamilyservices.org](mailto:info@ashfamilyservices.org).

*"I am an Advocate who fights for victim's rights and against injustice. I am a voice, a social changer who raises awareness and encourage actions to reverse unjust and inhumane situations that everyday people find themselves in." -- Antonia Drew Vann*