



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Time's Up! Take A Stand Against Domestic Violence

PAMELA HELMING October 15, 2019

Did you know that one in three women and one in four men have been victims of physical violence by their partner? These are astounding numbers and underscore that there is still much more work to do in the fight to eliminate domestic violence. However, action is being taken and you can do something to help.

Here in New York State, there are six counties that do not have a domestic violence shelter, meaning that if you or your loved one is a victim, you may have to leave the area to get shelter. This means leaving behind pets, jobs, friends, family, and in many cases, children. This creates a barrier to seeking help and no one should have to make these choices. At a time when survivors often need the most support, they are separated from those who love and care for them. Currently, neither Seneca nor Ontario Counties have domestic violence shelters.

The effort to develop a shelter to serve Seneca and Ontario Counties started three years ago and is coming together thanks to a tireless group of volunteers and staff who understood the critical need for this and spent countless hours raising awareness and funds. Last summer, Lori McConnell, of Waterloo, was murdered by her abuser. This tragic event highlighted the need for a local shelter and her children have fought tirelessly to make this a reality in honor of their mother. Thanks to the work of many people, a new domestic violence shelter is being built that will serve families from both Seneca and Ontario Counties. It is expected that the

shelter will be completed by this time next year.

The new shelter will provide safety and security for victims of domestic violence, their children, and even pets. Its construction sends a loud and clear message that our community has taken a stand and said "Time's Up!" The project is being led by Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes and the incredible team of dedicated staff members there, spearheaded by their Executive Director, Marisa Rube. Additionally, law enforcement, including the Seneca County Sheriff's Department, Seneca Falls Police Department, and Waterloo Police Department, local contractors, the business community, and great partners like Generations Bank have teamed up to bring this idea to fruition.

As State Senator, I was proud to be a small part of this project by delivering \$300,000 in state support to get it off the ground. Working together, we can take on the issue of domestic violence and help victims and their families rebuild their lives.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, I encourage you to call Safe Harbors at 800-247-7273. They have highly trained staff who can assist victims and their families during this difficult time and provide the hope and support they need. Together, we can stand up and send the message that time's up!

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