

## SafeNet

**F**ounded in 1974, SafeNet provides free and confidential shelter, counseling, legal advocacy and education to victims of domestic violence and their children.

In Erie County, one in four relationships experience domestic violence.



Domestic Violence, also called relationship violence, is any behavior used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner through fear. Domestic Violence impacts more women than diabetes, cervical cancer, and breast cancer combined and is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 20 and 44.

But abuse can happen in any relationship whether married or dating. It can be inflicted on a person of any race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or income level.

Experts agree that children are significantly affected by witnessing domestic violence. Children growing up in abusive homes are 75% more likely to become an abuser or end up involved with an abuser. Domestic Violence is a learned behavior and children are the key to stopping this generational cycle of abuse.

Of the 500 individuals served annually in shelter, half are children under the age of 12.

SafeNet has never received grant funding specifically for the needs of children, yet those needs have never been ignored.

Thanks to our donors and volunteers, SafeNet has been able to house, clothe, feed and even plan parties for children, as some children find themselves in shelter on their birthdays and even on Christmas morning.

Please join us in our mission. Contact us at [www.safeneterie.org](http://www.safeneterie.org) or 455-1774.

## StringsforaCURE

**T**wo-time breast cancer survivor, music lover, and jewelry designer Elisa Guida founded StringsforaCURE® in 2010 after her own experience with breast cancer in order to provide education, support, and financial assistance to cancer patients, primarily those with breast cancer.



The organization's largest program is its gift card program which provides \$100 gas, grocery and pharmacy gift cards to patients across the country to help ease the burden during treatment. Eligible patients within a 60-mile radius of Erie can receive one-time medical assistance grants to cover doctor co-pays and lymphedema garments. Comfort baskets are delivered to women in the Erie area after surgery or treatments and educational books are provided to cancer patients to help promote healthy living.

Fund-raising for their programs comes from private donations, Pennies2Patients collections, an online Virtual Quilt, their annual Pickin' On Cancer Fundraiser and, of course, the StringsforaCURE® jewelry.

Jon Bon Jovi, Willie Nelson, Melissa Etheridge, Chris Daughtry, and Erie's own Pat Monahan are just a few of the more than 100 musicians who have donated guitar strings to be transformed into one-of-a-kind jewelry. "My love for making jewelry intersected with my love of music — a simple idea that is now changing lives," Guida says.

In less than four years, the organization has distributed more than 600 gift cards, awarded more than 35 medical grants and provided comfort baskets and books to 500 patients. That's over \$75,000 in financial assistance that has gone directly to cancer patients. No small task for a small organization!

## Blended Spirits Ranch

**S**itting on 10 acres in Fairview, Blended Spirits Ranch is a safe haven not only for the horses it rescues but for the individuals it helps through its Equine Psychotherapy Program.

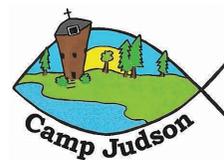
The ranch offers the area's only Equine Assisted Learning/Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAL/EAP) program, a proven methodology that helps individuals who suffer from emotional or mental issues. Clients are taught how to care for, communicate with, and ride horses, which in turn has been shown to help build their self-esteem and confidence, develop their self-control and self-awareness, provide them love and companionship, and teach them responsibility, empathy, and a sense of caring for others. Tests conducted before and after the program showed that 97 percent of youth showed a decrease in depression and 96 percent showed a decrease in disruptive/oppositional behavior after completing the program.

"It has been said that one session of equine therapy is equal to five sessions on a therapist's couch," says Sandra Long, co-founder of Blended Spirits Ranch. "Our goal is to be a place where people and horses can interact to help each other overcome the difficulties and turmoil they've faced in their lives."

Along with the people it helps find a new start, Blended Spirits helps abandoned and neglected horses find one, as well. Since the ranch opened seven years ago, it has rescued and rehabilitated nine horses from abusive or unwanted environments. The horses were trained through natural horsemanship techniques to prepare and utilize them in the EAL programs.

## Camp Judson

**F**or more than 60 years, Camp Judson has been "the place where faith and fun meet on the shores of Lake Erie," providing camping and retreat opportunities to people of all ages with an emphasis on Christian values.



Camp Judson's biggest focus is its summer residential and day camps for youth in grades two through twelve. Between 550 and 600 campers are expected at the 113-acre camp this summer to spend time in the outdoors while developing Christian values.

"We want to help our campers grow spiritually, emotionally, and socially," explains Kevin Saxton, the camp's managing director. "We believe that as Christians we're called to live in a way that it's important to love and care about people. We model that for the kids so that when they go home that's something they can take with them."

In addition to daily Bible studies and devotions, campers take part in activities like kayaking, canoeing, sailing, zip-lining, horseback riding, jet-skiing and tubing, just to name a few.

"Kids can come to Camp Judson, spend some time with nature, in God's creation, and learn new things about themselves and what they're capable of," says Saxton.

In keeping with that spirit, Camp Judson does not turn away children who are unable to afford the cost of the camp. Around 20 to 25 percent of campers receive assistance from the camp's scholarship fund. Saxton points out that all matching funds raised through the Erie Gives campaign will go directly to the scholarship fund.