



# 45 Years of Empowerment



**FY2024  
IMPACT  
REPORT**

# OUR MISSION

**My Sister's Place (MSP) shelters, supports and empowers survivors of domestic violence and their children, while providing leadership and education to build a supportive community.**



Grounded by the experiences and needs of the survivors we serve, My Sister's Place provides:

## **Safe Housing:**

Emergency shelter and transitional-to-permanent housing through rental payments for up to two years.

## **Personalized Support:**

Trauma-informed and survivor-centered 1:1 case management, cash assistance, workforce development, and financial literacy programs to build self-sufficiency.

## **Alumni Care:**

Ongoing support through referrals and peer groups to ensure long-term stability and independence.

## **Our Vision:**

Our vision is that every survivor who enters our doors is greeted with immediate, personalized, compassionate care and the resources needed for healing and achieving independence.

*"MSP has been the only help—**my village**—that that I have had. I never thought this support was possible.*

*From a very young age, I never had the support I needed in every aspect of my life, including my childhood. I didn't realize how much help I needed until it was provided by MSP. Through MSP I have completed parenting classes and therapy, and just really take care of myself.*

***It's not easy, it's a day-by-day thing, but I am here to say I am grateful, and I appreciate the support.**—MSP Client*



# Forging Our Path, Then and Now

## A Letter from the Executive Director, Mercedes Lemp



Forty-five years ago, a group of determined women came together, unaware that they were laying the foundation for a future where safety, autonomy, and hope would become a reality for thousands of survivors.

Valle Jones, one of My Sister's Place's founders, recently shared with me her reflections on the early days of the organization. She recalled that the founders didn't see themselves as counselors or social workers—they **called themselves advocates**:

*“Our job, if nothing else, was to say, 'We trust you, we trust your judgment, and we are here to help you do what you have identified in this moment is best for you; and if it changes tomorrow, or in a week, or in a year, we'll be here to help you do what you have decided is best for you in this next moment.'”*

Valle's beliefs remain at the heart of my vision for My Sister's Place today: **meeting women where they are and supporting them through their toughest moments.**

Honoring the founder's original mission, our commitment goes beyond supporting survivors in moments of crisis—we **seek to restore independence without constraints.**

Too often, financial barriers trap survivors in unsafe situations, exacerbating both ongoing physical abuse and financial hardship. **In 2024, with the help of funders and our community, we took significant action to address barriers like financial insecurity and unemployment** by launching individualized and person-centered initiatives aimed at directly building economic stability for survivors and their families.

- Our **NEW Workforce Development Program** provides survivors with targeted job training, as well as certification and degree programs, to assist them in securing meaningful employment.
- Our **guaranteed income program, RISE Trust**, is unparalleled in delivering monthly unrestricted direct cash disbursements to survivors. Select families in our transitional housing program receive \$500 each month for up to two years, along with financial education.

With your support, we're not just addressing immediate safety needs—we're **creating long-term solutions for sustainable independence. Our vision for the next five years is to expand and institutionalize our cash assistance, financial education, and workforce development programs** so that all survivors at MSP have the tools they need to achieve self-sufficiency. With your help, MSP will continue to passionately advocate for survivors and empower families to realize secure and fulfilling lives for years to come.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. Lemp".



# TOP MOMENTS

## Honoring MSP's Successes in FY2024



**640**

**Survivors**  
served across all  
programs



**6,375**

**1:1 case**  
**management**  
**sessions**

*"My children and I are truly thankful to have been connected with your agency! Because of your services, we've been able to focus on growing emotionally, mentally, physically, and most importantly healing! We no longer have to manage ourselves on 'survival mode' and that is truly peaceful! From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU!"—MSP Client*

### **Client Success Spotlight** **Mara's Story**

Mara and her children became homeless during the COVID Pandemic due to domestic violence, and entered MSP's care in May 2023. Her MSP advocate connected her to community resources related to employment, education, income, and access to childcare. With the assistance and support of MSP, Mara set goals for obtaining employment and participated in an 8-month Police Academy program through a local community college. She graduated in October and was hired as a police officer with a local police department. Best of all, Mara and her children recently transitioned into an apartment of their own where they now live safely and independently.





# BY PROGRAM

Our impact in **FY2024**

**138**

**WOMEN AND CHILDREN**  
housed in our  
emergency shelters.

**236**

**WOMEN AND CHILDREN**  
found safety in our transitional  
housing programs.

**310**

Requests for funds fulfilled  
for clients through our  
Fresh Start Fund.

**86**

**FAMILIES**  
exiting our programs  
received aftercare support  
to ensure they were able to  
maintain their success.

**165**

**FAMILIES**  
in DC's Family Rehousing and  
Stabilization Program (FRSP)  
received trauma-informed  
case management and  
supportive services.

**33**

Life Skills, Workforce,  
and Educational  
Workshops  
hosted for clients.



# Workforce Development

## Removing Obstacles *for New Beginnings*

We proudly launched our **Workforce Development Program (WFD) in 2024**, which provides holistic support to survivors with skill building, career guidance, and job placement support, in collaboration with local employers and job training providers.

### Success Stories

#### Paid Internship Success

A client secured a paid internship with an information technology consulting firm after completing an MSP-sponsored COMPTIA+ certification course identified by our workforce development specialist.

#### Vocational Achievements

One client completed special police officer training and licensing, securing employment with a security services company.

Three clients passed their dental assistant certification exams, with two already receiving job offers from local dental practices.

#### Breaking Barriers to Employment

A client struggling to find employment was hired by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), beginning her training in December.

Through these initiatives, MSP is bridging the gap between survivors and sustainable employment, continuously advocating for them to achieve independence and stability.

## Program Metrics



### 2 Job Fairs Hosted

Over half of the participating clients walked away with job offers or enrolled in job training.



### 150+ 1:1 Consultations

Over 150 one-on-one workforce development consultations held with 50+ clients.



### Monthly Workshops

Hosted monthly workshops to build essential career readiness skills.

The RISE Trust program is a first-of-its-kind universal basic income (UBI) initiative designed for domestic violence survivors. Families in MSP's transitional housing programs receive \$500 each month, along with financial education, for two years. This program aims to disrupt the cycle of abuse and address systemic economic barriers.

Because **99% of domestic violence survivors report experiencing financial abuse**, supporting financial independence is a major factor in allowing survivors to leave, and stay away from, violent relationships.

MSP's first cohort of families graduated from RISE Trust in 2024, with the second cohort beginning in 2025. The Urban Institute partnered with MSP to measure the impact of the first RISE Trust program cohort. Their findings reveal the life-changing impact for survivors:

*"Thanks to MSP and the RISE Trust program, I've been able to provide a healthier environment for my child and work toward a better future. The \$500 may not seem like a lot to some, but to me, it has been life-changing. I'm becoming a better mom, and I'm grateful for the support that has helped me grow personally and professionally."*  
—MSP Client and Rise Trust Participant



## Impact Highlights



Improved Well-Being

**19%**

decrease in reports of nervousness, anxiety, or depression.



Financial Stability

**41%**

of participants are now employed full-time, up from 32%, while debt levels dropped to 26% from 38%.



Enhanced Access

**81%**

improvement in healthcare access, while childcare accessibility increased by 25%.



Safe Housing

**76%**

of families transitioned to safe, stable housing by the 18-month mark.



Basic Needs Met

**24%**

of funds were used for utilities and bills.

**19%**

for basic needs.

**13%**

for transportation costs.



# A MILESTONE CELEBRATION

## MSP's 45th Anniversary Event

The energy in the room was palpable as over **200 community members**, supporters, staff and clients gathered for a shared purpose: celebrating 45 years of My Sister's Place's unwavering service to survivors of domestic violence. Hosted at the historic Decatur House, near the White House, this extraordinary evening recognized the organization's profound legacy and the united commitment of dedicated supporters and staff to our mission.

The presence of the original founders, who envisioned a better world in 1976, evoked a powerful sense of reflection. In an era of change, these determined women transformed their call for justice into a lifeline for survivors, and their legacy continues today.

Our keynote speaker, Cynthia Smith, is a part of this legacy. With great resonance, she began to tell her story—one that is too familiar to many survivors. She spoke of her heart-wrenching experience that involved escaping her abuser, who was never held accountable, to facing a system that continuously failed her. She lost custody of her children and was not able to access her marital assets.



Yet, she continued,

*"When I found myself trapped in a cycle of abuse, feeling helpless and alone, it was My Sister's Place that offered refuge and safety when I needed it most. My Sister's Place provided me with dignified housing in their RISE Plus program, cash assistance through the Fresh Start Fund, furniture through their Move In Program, and supportive services like Art Therapy.*

*Tonight, I stand before you in celebration of survival, able to speak my truth as someone who has faced one of life's most harrowing challenges and has emerged as more than just a survivor."*

We extend our immense appreciation to Cynthia for her passionate dedication to survivors and her tireless advocacy. We are also profoundly grateful to our community of supporters—**together we raised an inspiring \$157,840 for the families we serve.** This generosity is a reflection of our community's collective strength and the belief that survivors deserve a safe path toward renewed **independence.**



# RISING ONWARD

## A Look Ahead

Our vision for the future continuously affirms the strength and autonomy of the survivors we serve, like Cynthia, who is now an advocate and strong leader in her community.

Looking ahead, we seek to increase and improve the many ways we support our clients, My Sister's Place will be enhancing services **specifically designed to break down the economic and systemic barriers that survivors encounter**. This coming year MSP will:



Launch in-house  
Financial Literacy  
Programming



Provide a Resilient  
Futures Program  
for MSP Alumni



Grow RISE Trust  
and Fresh Start  
Fund programs



Expand our  
Workforce  
Development  
Program

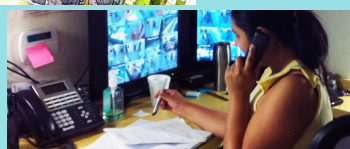
## Charting Our Growth and Future Vision: Our Milestones

1976



MSP opens its first shelter.

Expansion to a 24-bed residential shelter and launch of hotline services.



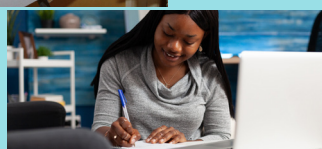
1994

2012



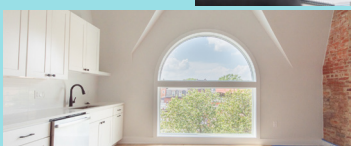
Construction of Sanctuary Plus and launch of RISE, a transitional-to-permanent housing program.

Fresh Start Fund launched to cover emergency expenses, employment, and education requests from clients.



2020

2022



Construction of Sanctuary II. Launch of RISE Trust, the first guaranteed income program for survivors of domestic violence.

Launch of in-house Workforce Development Program.



2024

2025



Launch of in-house Financial Education Program and Resilient Futures Program for MSP alumni.

# BREAKING THE SILENCE

## Revitalizing Outreach, Uplifting Voices

As we ventured into community spaces, our outreach efforts focused on amplifying often unheard voices and creating safe spaces where survivors can reclaim their stories and access support.

### A Year of Growth: Expanding Outreach Efforts

In FY24, we added a dedicated outreach associate, enabling us to engage more community members and strengthen key partnerships. Through these efforts, we continue to build a foundation of trust and

accessibility in our community, with our outreach serving as a reminder that we are here, **we believe you, and we will always be there if you ever need to call us.**

We participated in

**39**  
events  
reaching over  
**1400**  
individuals

“

*"It is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken."*  
—Audre Lorde

”

Interested in having MSP attend an upcoming community event or training? Contact us at [Development@mysistersplacedc.org](mailto:Development@mysistersplacedc.org) to learn more!

Catholic Charities



GW University



Paint the Town Purple:  
Columbia Heights



The World Bank



Clothesline Project,  
Malcolm X Park

Dacha Beer Garden,  
with the Madison DC



# REVIVING LEGACY INITIATIVES

## Honoring the Past, *Building the Future*

### The Clothesline Project

The Clothesline Project, a historical initiative, was revitalized this year at MSP. The day honored the original national Clothesline Project art installation that draws awareness to domestic abuse and highlights the connections that bind us.

*“Doing the laundry has always been considered women’s work, and in the days of close-knit neighborhoods, women often exchanged information over backyard fences while hanging their clothes out to dry.”*

—Carol A. Chichetto, Chair of the National Clothesline Project Steering Committee

MSP displays t-shirts created by survivors, on clotheslines bearing the weight of so many stories. Passersby are invited to view the shirts and create messages of their own for the clotheslines. The Clothesline Project continues to reclaim survivors' stories amongst the community, and serves as a formidable reminder that survivors, advocates, loved ones, will not be silenced.



### Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)

MSP significantly increased outreach efforts during DVAM, engaging **over 900 individuals across 17 events to raise awareness**, share resources, and strengthen community partnerships. MSP conducted seven training and speaking engagements, including sessions with corporate partners such as Dataminr, Accenture, and the Zonta Club, and participated in panels hosted by American University, NVRDC, and the Department of Child Support Services.

#### DVAM Highlights included:

- Speaking at Alpha Chi Omega’s Sexual Assault Panel for American University fraternities and sororities.
- Presenting to the Department of Health & Human Services' Homeless Youth Division to share critical insights on our programming.
- Tabling at 10 events, including United Way’s Project Community Connect and the Metropolitan Police Department’s remembrance gathering.





# VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## Volunteer Impact

Each year, MSP relies on scores of volunteers to provide services, trainings, donations, events, and more. Nearly **100 volunteers** positively impacted MSP this year.



*"Today's society has highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive support systems, particularly for those affected by domestic violence. My journey is deeply personal... my volunteer experiences have solidified my passion for advocating for vulnerable populations and promoting social justice."*  
—Takira Walker, MSP volunteer and aspiring OBGYN

Most of the clients who enter our emergency shelters are fleeing with just the clothes on their backs and a suitcase. Therefore, we rely heavily on community support to make sure our clients' immediate needs are met. **In FY24, 50 individuals, groups, and partner organizations** came together to fulfill MSP's requests for coats, school supplies, toiletries, diapers, wipes, toys, and so much more.

## Volunteer Spotlight

**The National Children's Museum, Washington Nationals Baseball Team, and Circus Vazquez** collectively provided over 400 tickets to families for events across the city.

**Amerigroup's Backpack Drive:** Amerigroup generously gifted \$30,000 dollars for employment training, education, and workforce development needs. They also hosted a backpack drive and volunteered their time to stuff backpacks with school supplies for every child in our emergency shelters.

**The Lipstick Project:** In collaboration with GW Hospital and Evans Consulting, lipstick tubes containing discrete safety plans for survivors were dispersed into the community. Adrienne, who answered the call for more volunteer support on this project, helped us fill empty lipstick containers with safety plans for those who may be experiencing domestic violence, she shared,

*"Supporting MSP gives us an opportunity to let survivors know there is a community that cares. My daughter and I are honored to partner with MSP and uphold their mission."*



Adrienne and her daughter also organized volunteers to fulfill the entire wishlist for our children's playroom.





# ***In Our Community, We Thrive: Coming Together in Collaboration***



We are honored and privileged for the inspiring community support we received through new and historical collaboration in 2024.

Here are some highlights:

## ***Alpha Chi Omega***

Students rally for MSP through American University's Alpha Chi Omega Chapter: A longstanding community partner, AXO collectively raises over \$10,000 each year for MSP through their engagement events. The Walk a Mile in Their Shoes event takes place each March at American University, attracting a large gathering of students to raise funds and awareness for MSP.

## ***Community Partners Presenting Life Skills Workshops***

Life skills workshops for survivors occur monthly at MSP. Partner organizations including Ayuda, the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project, and the Office of the Tenant Advocate have presented on topics of particular interest to survivors, including protection orders, family law, immigration law, and tenants' rights.

## ***DC Volunteers Lawyers Project***

MSP Teams Up for Weekly Resource Clinics with DC Volunteer Lawyers Project (DCVLP) at Mt. Pleasant Library. Longtime MSP partner DCVLP hosts a weekly resource clinic to assist survivors of domestic violence and immigrants in accessing legal support. MSP staff tables alongside DCVLP to make sure survivors are aware of the many resources available to them.

## ***Partners Offer Workforce Development Opportunities***

Our Workforce Development Program actively partners with employers and job training and education organizations to provide opportunities for survivors in our programs. Current partnerships include Hope Project, the Latin American Youth Career Academy, Hands on Dental Assistant Training, Department of Employment Services-American Job Center, and Archangel DC.

To find out more about MSP's community partners, please visit [www.mysistersplacedc.org/our-partners](http://www.mysistersplacedc.org/our-partners).

# OUR TEAM

## Where Service Meets Heart

### Our Culture: Nurturing Care & Collaboration

*“Jump in with your success stories and shoutouts,” Amanda, Director of People and Culture, says at every all-staff friday meeting to close the work week. Without fail, hands shoot up as staff share their successes—often the result of their own hard work or team members supporting them, whether through serving as a sounding board or offering information*

*on a helpful community resource. As heart reactions are shared all around, we are reminded of the strength we find in one another.*

*Our culture is grounded in collaboration, where caring for each other is just as important as caring for the survivors we serve.*

### Our Values

Demonstrate Professionalism, Integrity, and Excellence

Support Wellness and Self-Care

Provide Person-Centered and Trauma-Informed Services

Foster an Environment of Trust, Transparency and Respect

Deliver Services Intentionally and Passionately

### Staff Benefits

This year, MSP started allotting funds that teams could use to encourage self-care, recognize the exemplary work our teams do every day, and build rapport between team members. While some teams sent flowers to recognize special occasions or significant accomplishments, others used it for team building activities, such as collage workshops and pottery classes.

*“I’m incredibly proud to call MSP my workplace, knowing the organization creates real, tangible impacts on those in need. I’m grateful for the opportunity to contribute to meaningful and lasting change in the lives of the survivors we serve.”—Ricardo, MSP staff member*



Who knew our staff were such artists!

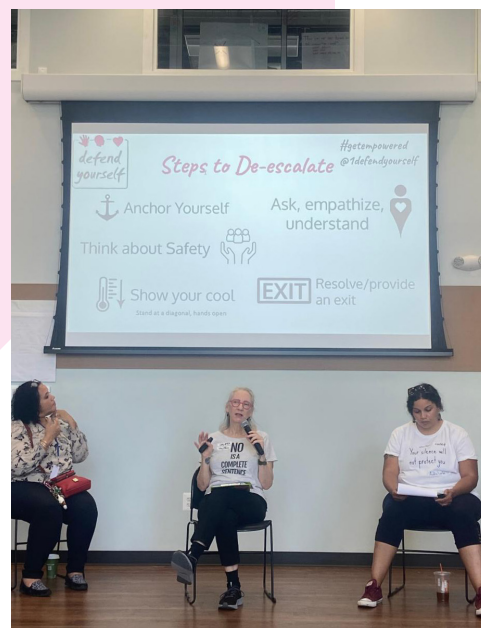




# Professional Development

MSP also provided professional development resources and funding for staff to grow:

- Personalized coaching to support employees with career growth, goal setting, professional development, overcoming workplace challenges, and enhancing interpersonal skills.
- \$2,000 allocated to each employee for professional development. Staff used funding for higher education, conferences, workshops, counseling licensure, memberships, and professional fellowships.



All-Staff Training, February

## Our Year: In Review

Lastly, MSP provided multiple opportunities for staff to gather to learn, grown, and have fun together:



DCCADV Domestic Violence Advocate Core Competency Training, June



All-Staff BBQ, July



Safety Training, August



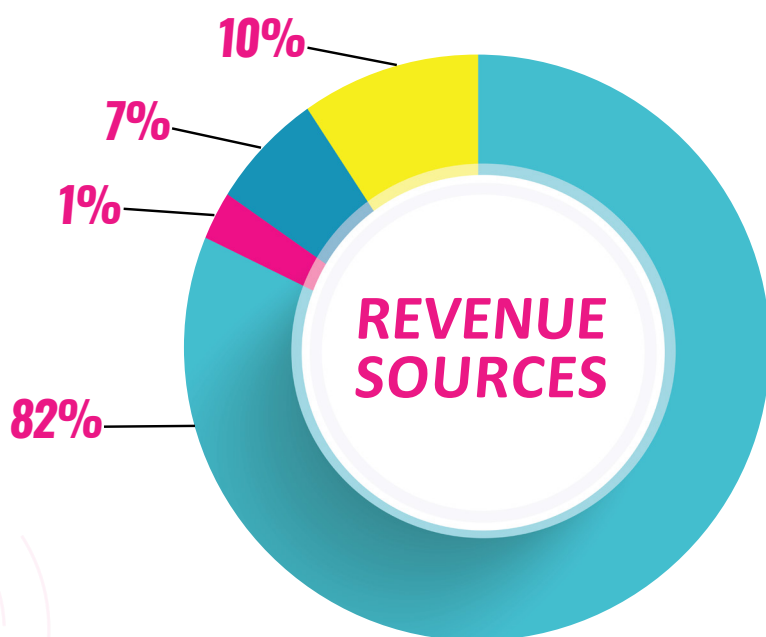
Thanksgiving at Sanctuary Plus, November



Holiday Party, December

# FINANCIALS

Every dollar raised supports our mission to shelter, support and empower survivors of domestic violence and their children.



○ Government 82%

● Foundation 10%

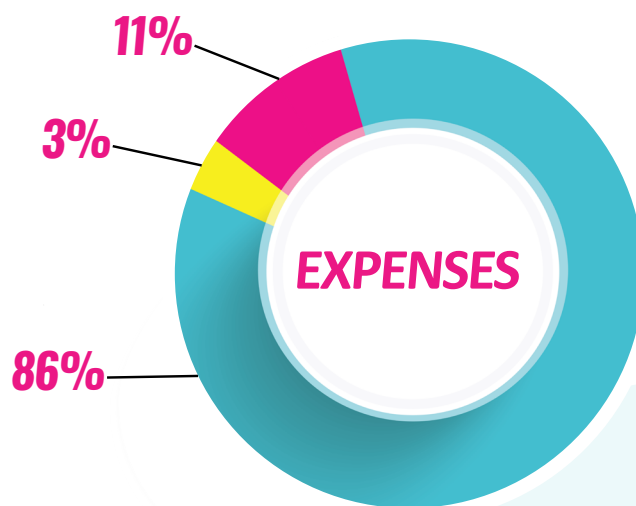
● Individual 7%

● Corporate 1%

○ Programs 86%

● General & Administration 11%

● Fundraising 3%



\* Stated here are unaudited FY2024 financials. Completed audited FY2024 financials will be available later in 2025 and posted at [www.mysistersplacedc.org/impact-transparency](http://www.mysistersplacedc.org/impact-transparency). The financials stated are preliminary and subject to adjustments and modifications after audit completion.



# Corporate Giving & Institutional Partners

My Sister's Place is grateful to the organizations that have generously supported our mission over the years through gifts, grants, pro bono services, volunteering, and partnerships.

## Institutional Partners

Ada and Albert Wibel Foundation  
Alice Shaver Foundation  
Anonymous  
Brendan & Helen Bechtel Foundation  
Christ Church Parish Foundation, Georgetown  
Corina Higginson Trust  
DC Wise  
Dimick Foundation  
Eugene B. Casey Foundation  
Fabrangen Tzedakah Collective  
Giving Together  
Greater Washington Community Foundation  
James Family Foundation  
John T Collins Foundation  
Junior League of Washington  
Lester Poretzky Family Foundation  
Lichtenberg Family Foundation  
Mars Foundation  
Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation  
Philip L. Graham Fund  
Rencourt Foundation, Inc.  
Robert M. Fisher Memorial Foundation  
Rolf and Elizabeth Rosenthal Family Foundation  
Shiffrin Family Foundation  
Sidgmore Family Foundation  
The Alisann and Terry Collins Foundation  
The Bunting Family Foundation Fund  
The Cynthia Herrup and Judith Bennett Giving Tree  
The Deck Foundation  
The Greene-Milstein Family Foundation  
The Rita Adrosko Charitable Trust  
Venable Foundation  
Winky Foundation  
Zonta Club of Washington DC

## Corporate Sponsors

**Champion (\$20K–\$34.9K)**  
AmerigroupDC  
Inter-American Development Bank

**Changemaker (\$10K–\$19.9K)**  
Accenture Federal Services  
National Institute for Healthcare Management Foundation  
Pivotal Ventures LLC  
United Health Group

**Advocate (\$5K–\$9.9K)**  
Johnson Global Advisory  
World Bank

**Ally (\$2.5K–\$4.9K)**  
Blank Rome  
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield  
Department of Commerce Federal Credit Union  
Evans Consulting  
Porchlight Wellness / Woman Warrior  
Peter D. Hart Research Associates  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
Wawa Foundation

**Friend (\$1K–\$2.49K)**  
Bee Fabulous Moments, Inc  
Blue Crab Strategies  
Carnegie Investment Counsel  
Dataminr  
Giant Food Stores  
Hope and a Home  
Hyman, Phelps & McNamara, P.C  
Kaiser Permanente  
Nest/Flock DC



Peoples Bank  
Phenomenal Women  
Riveron  
University of Connecticut  
Panhellenic Council

## In-Kind Donations

Circus Vazquez  
Daughters of the American Revolution, Manor House  
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
LAL Consulting  
Loving 2 Learn Child Care Center  
National Children's Museum  
No More  
Premium Distributors of Washington DC  
Ring  
Slice Out Hunger  
Washington Nationals

*Want to Join MSP's Corporate Giving Program to sustain our core programming and expand our services? Please reach out to our team at [development@mysistersplacedc.org](mailto:development@mysistersplacedc.org)*



***"To my fellow survivors of domestic violence, your journey of unimaginable hardship, has been marked by moments of darkness threatening to consume your spirit. Yet, here you stand, a testament to the human spirit, unbroken by the cruelty inflicted upon you. **Your story is not defined by the pain you endured but by the courage you displayed in the face of adversity.*****

*As you continue on your journey of healing and self-discovery, know that **you do not walk alone.** You are surrounded by a community of love and support, ready to uplift and empower you, and to stand beside you every step of the way.*

***May your journey forward be filled with love, healing, and endless possibilities.*** And may your story be a source of inspiration to all who hear it, reminding us that **within each of us lies the power to rise, to heal, and to thrive.**"—Cynthia, Keynote Speaker at MSP's 45th Anniversary Event, Advocate, Former MSP Client.



Platinum  
Transparency  
2024

**Candid.**



*My Sister's Place is a nonprofit, tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.  
Federal EIN: 52-1263256 CFC #97535 United Way #8449*