



# ASTOP News

Fall 2021



Mark your calendars!  
 At 7:00 p.m. on  
 February 18, 2022,  
 our friends from  
 Second City  
 will join us at the  
 Fond du Lac PAC

## The Second City returns to Fond du Lac in '22

Here they come! Their visit will mark ASTOP's largest and most important fundraiser for 2022. Please help us promote and prepare for this special event.

By December tickets will be sold online. For a special Christmas gift, why not buy a night out for yourself and someone you love? Keep checking our website for details: [www.astop.org](http://www.astop.org). If you would like an emailed reminder of when tickets go on sale, please call 920-926-5395 or email our office manager: [chasity@astop.org](mailto:chasity@astop.org).

This year's performance will include an added

feature: the chance for you to go home with one of the prize packages on display in the lobby. Here is how it will happen: purchase a winning raffle ticket or make the top bid in a silent auction. At evening's end, winners will be announced so they can leave with their packages when they go.

If you cannot attend the show yourself, then please consider another option. Buy a ticket for one of our ASTOP clients or volunteers. By December 31, simply send your tax-deductible donation in any amount to ASTOP/Fun for Others, 21 S. Marr St., Fond du Lac, WI 54935.

In January we will hold a special drawing for all clients and volunteers who would enjoy having free tickets. Soon after that, you will receive in the mail a short note of appreciation from one of the lucky ticket winners.

The Second City troupe always includes elements of local color in their performances. They also have some amusing ways of inviting audience participation. You won't want to miss out on all the fun! (Remember, though, that *some* of the humor is meant only for persons 17 and over.)

See you at the show!

### 2019 service stats

**We answered 564 calls on our 24-hour crisis line.**

**We assisted 166 persons reporting an assault to law enforcement or seeking care at a medical facility.**

**We helped 200 individuals navigate through the criminal justice system.**

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## The heart of an ASTOP volunteer

Our volunteers give several nights and weekends a month just to answer a stranger's call for help. A crisis line volunteer offers a kind heart and a listening ear to any caller in the grips of some new or old pain. At a moment's notice, an advocate suspends all other activity to meet with an assault victim at the police station or the hospital ER. Who *are* these people? To learn more about them, we recently interviewed a few of them, and here is what they had to say.

### ASTOP: Why did you begin volunteering for us?

Sal: I saw an advert, and I thought, I wonder if I could do that.

McKenna: Volunteering is a big part of my life.

Kathy: I was new in town and needed volunteer opportunities to fill my time.

Sally: I wanted to walk alongside others to support them, to listen to them, to encourage them, and get them resources they may not know are available to them, some for free.

*(continued on p. 3)*



**Whenever needed, staffers spend a day together for reflection and renewal.**

**STANDING:** Jessica Bielmeier, Sydney Barrueta, Nicole Krause, Terri Alexander, Rhianna Zuleger

**SITTING:** Sarah West, Chasity Bolden, Michelle Boodry

**Chasity brings to ASTOP her other work experiences at an adolescent foster home and Fond du Lac's Solutions Center.**

**As certified life coaches, Sydney and Sarah hope to broaden ASTOP's available services for adult survivors.**

## Meet our newest staff members

*by Patrice Rog, CSA*

Life beckons us to new adventures, and that has impacted the staff of ASTOP in recent months. Reasons for recent staff departures include moving out of town, becoming a new mother, and completing a master's degree.

Enter Chasity Bolden, Sarah West, and Sydney Barrueta. What attracted these new employees to ASTOP? Besides appreciating the organization's mission, all are impressed by the welcoming, supportive atmosphere they have experienced in their new workplace.

Chasity grew up in Chicago and came to Fond du Lac for college. She knew of ASTOP from her years at Marian University, where she attended various presentations by our staff. Her degree in social work and psychology provided an excellent foundation for her tasks here, as well as her additional part-time work for Solutions Center and an adolescent foster home.

She said, "When this job opportunity opened, I already knew this would be the kind of organization I would want to work for. I have worked with the domestic violence population, which unfortunately often goes hand in hand with sexual assault. I find helping and supporting others most rewarding. I have a passion for the happiness and well-being of others, so when I meet those who are hurting or in need, my natural reaction is to figure out ways to extend myself to help."

Sydney also comes from a large extended family in the suburbs of Chicago. Her interest in this new position for ASTOP stems from "the efforts that were being put into helping the Hispanic/Latinx community. After meeting some of the staff, I knew I had to work here because everyone was so welcoming and supportive. Most challenging for me is when a client doesn't follow up with services. Sometimes people aren't ready to work through their experience," she admitted. But her concern for their continued healing is obvious.

Sarah's background has prepared her for her role as a client advocate. She says, "I provide support to clients by sitting with them (and educating them) during medical exams, having conversations about reported sexual assaults, accompanying them to law enforcement interviews, preparing them for court appearances, and offering emotional support during times of confusion or crisis."

Educating victims of their rights is important for Sarah. She says the most challenging aspect of her role is instilling in each person the sense of being validated, seen and heard while "doing this without stepping on their own growth and journey in life."

With such dedicated persons as Chasity, Sydney, and Sarah on-board, ASTOP's future remains in good hands.

## The heart of an ASTOP volunteer *(cont.)*

### **ASTOP: What has surprised you about your work for ASTOP?**

Sal: The positive relationship between the hospital, police, and ASTOP.

Kathy: I learned how calm I can be with someone in a crisis.

Sally: The way more male victims have come forward, how great the prevention educator is who goes into the schools, and the teamwork that happens at ASTOP.

### **ASTOP: How do you feel after you have assisted a client?**

Sal: Peaceful. Alarmed. Humble. Satisfied.

Kathy: I feel the satisfaction of having helped someone through a difficult time in their life.

Sally: I was taught not to be prideful or boast about what I did but God has allowed me to go through a horrendous trauma, which has enabled me to help others get grounded and not follow through on negative thoughts and plans.

### **ASTOP: What was hard about volunteering during the pandemic?**

Sal: Nothing. It made me more determined to volunteer, so the survivor had support.

Kathy: It seemed to me that too many kids were getting abused during that time.

Sally: The pandemic had to be the hardest on our clients. A lot of them enjoyed going out to eat, for a walk, playing cards with their friends, etc., and they were afraid to.

### **ASTOP: What do you think is a common myth about sexual abuse?**

Sal: Abusers are strangers.

McKenna: Abuse is the survivor's fault. Men can't be assaulted.

Sally: She asked for it because of what she was wearing.

### **ASTOP: What do you like most about your work for ASTOP?**

Sal: Receiving positive feedback from survivors and their families.

McKenna: Helping someone who really needs it.

Sally: Getting our clients grounded during crisis calls.

### **ASTOP: What is the hardest part about being a volunteer?**

McKenna: Being afraid I might do the wrong thing.

Linda: When a small child is involved under the age of 7: I cry after each one.

### **ASTOP: What would you tell a potential volunteer?**

Sal: Talk to anyone in the ASTOP office; they will guide you.

Kathy: Don't overthink it. Just do it. You'll be surprised at the good you can do.

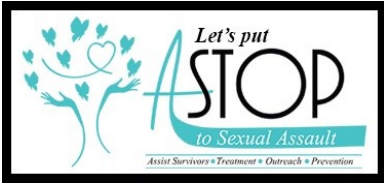
Sally: You don't come in blind. There is training. We are not counselors but we can give victims resources and much more. Volunteering is a way to walk alongside someone and listen.



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counselors but we  
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**— Sally**

*If you would like to volunteer for ASTOP, send an email to [chacity@astop.org](mailto:chacity@astop.org)*



21 S. Marr St.,  
Fond du Lac, WI 54935  
Phone: 920-926-5395

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.ASTOP.ORG  
&  
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ASTOPINC

## ASTOP in the news

**In case you missed it, two articles about our agency appeared in the Fond du Lac Reporter this summer.**

**In the first article, Samantha Geiger gave a general description of ASTOP services, noting that we currently provide help for about 500 new clients every year. ("Here's where survivors of sexual assault can find help in Fond du Lac," Aug. 20, 2021)**

**In the second, Geiger provided the personal story of a 59-year-old who had received more than 15 years of counseling on her path to wholeness. She needed help in resolving traumas rooted in both her childhood and her adult years. The woman's story was a tribute both to ASTOP and her own powerful resolve to live a fuller life. ("Fond du Lac woman opens up about experience with complex trauma, sexual assault, counseling," Aug. 30, 2021)**

For their help  
with our October  
Trick or Trot  
Fundraiser

**Catherine & Joe  
Leventhal**



THANKS TO THESE  
GENEROUS SPONSORS



In 1988 the entire Fond du Lac community was shocked to hear of the suicide of an 11-year-old girl. Later they learned that she and four younger siblings had been suffering from repeated physical, mental and/or sexual abuse. Tragically, Victoria had reached her limit.

People's shock soon turned to grief and grief, to action. Research was done and a needs assessment completed. During this time a glaring fact surfaced: after reporting an assault, survivors had to wait another 6-8 weeks before they could even begin counseling. So great was the backlog of those needing help.

Finally, in 1992, ASTOP was established. It became a place of assistance, treatment, and outreach for survivors of sexual assault, as well as prevention education for school groups and the general public.

Thirty years later, ASTOP services reach the populations of three counties: Fond du Lac, Green Lake, and Waushara.

Follow all the Fond du Lac bingo news  
online at <https://www.facebook.com/FonddulacBingo>



## BINGO! Now there's an idea

Want to give ASTOP a lift and have fun at the same time? Come join us for Monday night bingos beginning in November.

Sometimes grants are greatly reduced or entirely eliminated. Sometimes single-event fundraisers fall short of projections.

That's why our board recently formed a Sustainability Committee to study ways of improving the agency's overall financial picture. The big question was, What would be a good steady source of funding? The committee's answer? Bingo!

All ages can play—as long as children under 18 are accompanied by an adult relative or legal guardian. The bingo hall at Brothertown Indian Nation Community Center is a safe, fun place to play. When the county recommends new covid-related protocols, these are followed. Current seating, for example, maintains social distancing. For a time last year, masks were required. During the worst part of the pandemic, the bingo house closed down entirely. Always, the best interests of workers and patrons are kept in mind.

For as little as \$5, you can buy a 1-face packet good for 17-19 games. Of course larger packets are also available. For another \$1 per face you can play the final two games: speedy blackout and progressive blackout. Progressive prizes can run into the 100s and 1000s. Why not try your luck?

## ASTOP BINGO

**Monday Nights  
Starting in November**

*Doors Open 5:00 pm  
Games Start 6:30 pm  
Games End by 9:30 pm*

*Brothertown Indian Nation  
Community Center  
311 Winnebago Drive  
Fond du Lac, WI*