

## UNTOLD STORIES



We need ways to process grief together—to collectively mourn, rage, and support each other in finding joy and resilience—and ultimately to thrive.

-Marielle Allschwang, 2022 Resident Artist

## A Message From Our Executive Director

Dear friends and supporters,

Reflecting on this past year I am overcome with feelings of renewal and invigoration. Over the course of a year, LOTUS staff, board members, and key community stakeholders worked together to provide input and feedback that guided the creation of a new ambitious strategic plan that will guide LOTUS through the next several years to increase our mission impact. I look forward to working with our brilliant and dedicated staff as they continue to increase access to justice for Wisconsin survivors of human trafficking and sexual violence; to working with the dedicated leadership of our Board; and lastly, to working collaboratively with survivors, partners, and donors to build upon our capacity in a sustainable and intentional way.

I am so proud of the work accomplished at LOTUS each day, from securing life-stabilizing immigration protections for survivors of human trafficking, to advocating for safety and protection in court proceedings on behalf of victims of sexual violence, and to creating safe and therapeutic spaces for survivors to build community and engage in writing and artistic expression. Yet, beyond important individual successes, there is so much more to be done. This year saw the rolling back of individual rights of women, protections and rights impacting our LGBTQI communities, and child labor laws; we must continue to hold our government and its institutions to a higher standard of human dignity, empathy, and equity.

I, and all of us at LOTUS, look forward to working with you to help build more just and equitable communities in Wisconsin, which are free of human exploitation and sexual violence. I cannot thank you enough for your continued support of our mission.

In solidarity,  
Erika Petty  
*Executive Director*

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### **Our Mission:**

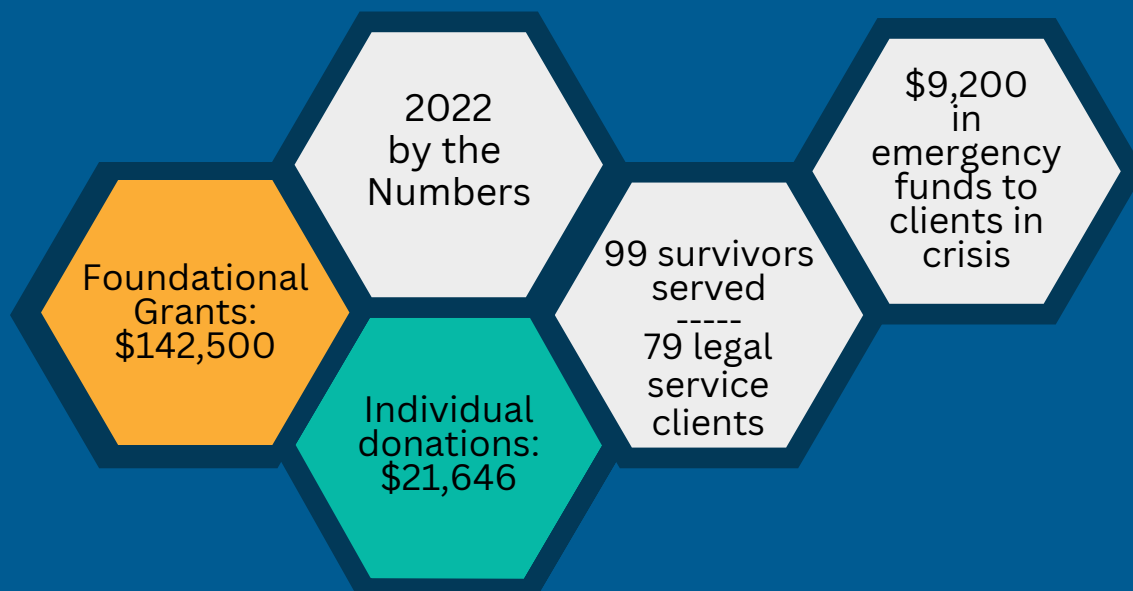
*LOTUS Legal Clinic invests in survivors of human trafficking and sexual violence by innovatively blending comprehensive civil legal services, victims' rights representation, and therapeutic arts programming that results in survivor-driven justice, healing, and systemic change.*

### **Our Vision:**

*An expansive community of empowered survivors whose rights are always honored, whose voices are uplifted, and whose pathways to justice and healing are equitable and self-determined.*

# 2022 Legal Services Impact

- LOTUS attorneys were successful in assisting 13 survivors in gaining vital immigration protections with access to work authorization.
- LOTUS filed a discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on behalf of two immigrant women farmworkers which led to a federal discrimination lawsuit and settlement that resulted in \$180,812.50 in damages to our clients.
- In the spring of 2022 LOTUS assisted a survivor of labor trafficking through his family reunification process, resulting in the arrival of his parents and two siblings.
- LOTUS attorneys provided representation in five different large scale multi-victim labor trafficking cases , assisting these survivors in applying for visas and other temporary immigration benefits to create stability and protection.
- A LOTUS attorney assisted a survivor of sex trafficking in having her criminal record vacated of crimes that she was compelled to commit as a direct result of her victimization. This is an important first step for this survivor to begin her career and build the life she deserves.
- LOTUS provided over 30 survivors of sexual violence with crime victim rights consultations and representation.





LOTUS' therapeutic arts programming continues to evolve and adapt to meet the unique needs of the communities that we serve.

- In partnership with Bader Philanthropies, LOTUS began offering short format and virtual writing workshops in 2022, greatly increasing our capacity to provide services to the survivor community.
- LOTUS provided bilingual writing support to 8 survivors of labor trafficking as they wrote their victim impact statements, increasing their ability to participate in the legal process.
- LOTUS writers were invited back to the state capitol to participate in the 2022 National Crime Victims' Rights Week ceremony where they shared their poetry with an audience of legislators, advocates, and survivors.
- The 2022 Rise and Thrive Spring Concert Fundraiser was an AMAZING success with approximately 100 attendees supporting our writers and witnessing the vocal artistry of resident artist, Marielle Allschwang. This impactful event, which was featured on WUWM's Lake Effect and WORT Madison's "8'oclock Buzz", provided an invaluable opportunity to share our mission with the community and raised almost \$16,000 to support our direct services.

"Taking part in LOTUS' Rise and Thrive program has gifted me with one of the most empowering experiences I have ever had. Austin Reece helped me mold ugly experiences and feelings into cohesive and evocative poems. But more, it showed me my story and voice are important and make a difference. Thank you for this powerful gift!"

**-Jeanne, Untold Stories and Rise & Thrive participant**



# 2022 SUPPORTERS

Foundation and Organizational gifts, as well as Individual gifts over \$250

## ORGANIZATIONS

Bader Philanthropies  
Badger Mutual Insurance Women's Amateur  
Gilles Frozen Custard  
Gingras, Thomsen, & Wachs, LLP  
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Victims of Crime Act, Department of Justice  
Weiss Law Office  
Wisconsin Association for Justice  
Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation  
Women and Girls Fund of Waukesha County  
Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee

## INDIVIDUALS

Charles Blumenfield  
Janet Ellinger  
Susan French  
Kristen Hardy  
Whitney Healy  
Rory Hughes \*  
Ann Jacobs  
Jon & Joan Jacobs \*  
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Sandy Laedtke  
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\*recurring monthly donor



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## torchbearer

-Jessica

When we speak the story our bodies carry,  
we wake the dead,  
we resurrect.

Generations of silenced stories  
move  
through  
us.

Sleeping ones through awakened eyes  
come to light, come to life,  
and through pain  
initiate.

Let us clear the way  
for those long gone and those to come.

Let us release the hands that punish,  
dispel the words that hurt,  
show our scars,  
tell our truth,  
feel strength in vulnerability.

As the old energies burn  
we learn to control the flame.

For those still lost  
we illuminate the way.

