Women’s Resource Center
To protect, shelter, and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

The Ripple Effect

Every act of giving causes a ripple effect

The facts are breathtaking. One in four women will be the victim of domestic violence in her lifetime. One in six women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. As a result, survivors face ongoing and challenging physical, emotional and financial effects.

The good news is no survivor in the Grand Traverse area has to be alone. The WRC is here to shelter, protect and empower survivors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The staff and advocates of the WRC don’t do this alone, though. The WRC has a powerful team surrounding us who make our work with survivors possible. That team is you. You, our donor. You, our community. You, the local business leader, the philanthropist, the person living next door.

When you give to the WRC, your gift acts like a pebble cast into water. Its ripples have far-reaching effects.

First and foremost, contributions to the WRC provide safe shelter, warm meals and professional support for women and children fleeing domestic violence. From babies held in their mother’s arms, to survivors who need our wheelchair accessible bedroom, your gifts have opened the doors to brighter futures for thousands of local women and children.

Here’s what just one survivor said about her experience:

“I am forever grateful for the WRC. My life has changed so dramatically in the past ten years. It’s hard to remember sometimes the shell of a person I was when I turned to the WRC for help years ago but I clearly remember the strength, confidence and conviction I found myself leaving with that have helped me find within myself again the happy and successful woman I am today.”

Donor contributions helped make that survivor story a success, and because our community has remained committed to helping support survivors of domestic and sexual violence, hundreds of new survivors are able to start new, violence-free lives each and every year.

If you’ve given in the past year, your gift helped one or more of the 83 women, and 57 children, who stayed at Helen’s House. If you gave in the past three months, your gift helped support over 850 nights of shelter, 592 hours of individual advocacy and ensured someone was able to answer over 1200 crisis phone calls.

While WRC donors may never personally know who they help, behind each number is a real person, grateful for the door being opened for them. Grateful for the safety. Grateful for warm meals and a place for their children to sleep. Grateful for the professional help given as they navigate unfamiliar and frightening days. Grateful for the donor support – your support – making all these things possible.

The WRC thanks you too. Your gift is one from the heart, and it truly does cast ripples far beyond today. Your gift has the power to make the world better for generations to come.
He is the first person you meet when you walk through the doors of the Women’s Resource Center on Monday mornings. Brian greets clients with a warm smile, manages incoming calls and schedules appointments for our Client Advocates. His connection to the WRC is very emotional. He lost his best friend to Domestic Violence a year ago. Leading up to that point, Brian said he did not know how to help his friend. “I didn’t know how to help her at all. It was foreign to me that a very smart person didn’t know how to help her at all. It was foreign to me that a very smart person wasn’t able to just walk away. It really opened my eyes.” Brian came to the WRC to learn more about domestic violence and began volunteering. He has enjoyed learning about the WRC and feels it inspiring that Traverse City has this resource for people to get help. Brian has a kind voice and loves helping clients on the phone. “When this tragedy happened, I was unprepared and now I feel like I could help someone.”

In his free time, Brian enjoys cooking and loves to swim. His bucket list includes a visit to Vietnam and bungee jumping. We feel very fortunate to have Brian as part of our support team.

Emily Sioma is a 2016 graduate of the University of Michigan with a degree in Women’s Studies and a minor in Law, Justice, and Social Change. Emily plans to work with educators to develop comprehensive curriculum that will give students the education they need to develop respect for their bodies and others. Emily is also Miss Michigan. Her career goals, and personal experience as a Sexual Assault survivor, greatly influenced her Social Impact Initiatives as Miss Michigan: “I Believe You” is both a statement of solidarity and a call for action. As a survivor herself, Emily leads discussions on how communities can better support survivors of sexual violence by posing questions that ask people to think deeper about how they would respond to a survivor. Emily will be speaking this April at Milliken Auditorium. This Sexual Assault Awareness Month special event is also a benefit for the WRC. For tickets please visit mynorthtickets.com/events solace-and-solidarity.

Emily Sioma, Miss Michigan 2018

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Solace and Solidarity Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence

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Looking for My Destiny

How TC Rotary Club, the WRC and an Exchange Student Made History

In January 2012, Luciana Rios traveled to the United States from Argentina on an international youth exchange program hosted by the Traverse City Rotary Club. What Luciana learned while living in our community, and the incredible people she met while here, helped create the foundation for a remarkable story of change.

Luciana was the first exchange student ever sent abroad by the Rotary club in her hometown, Ituzaingo - a suburb of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Just before leaving, Luciana’s sponsor handed her a folder entitled “Looking for My Destiny.” Luciana knew very little about the contents of the folder, only that it was a project her local Rotary Club was working on.

A few weeks after arriving in Traverse City, Luciana read the contents of the folder and discovered her hometown Rotarians were striving to open a domestic violence shelter for women and children.

Luciana contacted Rotary counselors in Traverse City, and with the help of many Rotarians, including Kennard Weaver, Al Bonney and Carolyn Collins, she began meeting with clubs in the area to solicit support to restore a building earmarked for the shelter.

“Kennard Weaver was instrumental in applying for a grant through Rotary’s International Grant Projects that would help aid in the restoration of the building,” says Luciana.

Luciana was touched by the outpouring of support but realized she still had work to do. She began volunteering at the Women’s Resource Center, spending 2-3 hours every day shadowing staff, attending training sessions and engaging with the women who lived at the shelter. Her goal was to bring all the resources and information she learned back to her hometown shelter. Lucina was particularly impacted by the WRC’s comprehensive volunteer training program, which helped her understand the cycle of domestic violence, and how to use the Empowerment Model to help women on their journey of healing.

“It was a moving process for me, especially because I came from a family that had never experienced anything like this. And because I was so young – only 16 years old - it was hard seeing real faces of women suffering domestic violence and how they were fighting against it,” says Luciana.

Ultimately, a building for the shelter was donated by the City of Ituzaingo. The Rotary Club of Ituzaingo purchased and donated materials and labor to restore the building. Donations from northern Michigan Rotary Clubs and Rotarians, provided enough funds to furnish and equip the interior; including all furniture, plumbing fixtures, kitchen equipment and other items needed to open what was destined to become the first domestic violence shelter in Argentina!

Today, Luciana is working and living in Italy but she stays in close touch with her hometown Rotary Club and reports the shelter is running well and helping many survivors.

“Working on the project made me grow up so much and it really made me understand what we can do to help each other. Because at the end of the day the world is only one and the problems we have are basically the same.”

Luciana shared that she is grateful for the incredible experience, and the amazing things that two organizations like Rotary and Women’s Resource Center can do when they join forces. Destiny – it’s a remarkable thing.