

Women's Resource Center

Winter 2016 Edition

FOR THE GRAND TRAVERSE AREA

From the Director's Desk: Goosebump Moments

There are times when you listen to leaders in our community speak about initiatives and programs that shift paradigms and set new standards — such forward thinking ideas that you literally get goosebumps knowing the positive impact they could have on people and our community.

When it happens to me, I know that such people are true leaders and have a passion for doing the “right thing,” along with the commitment to make it happen. You know their initiatives will be a seismic shift toward good.



Recently, I heard the Chief of the Traverse City Police Department (TCPD), Jeff O'Brien, share his intent to take a zero tolerance position against domestic and sexual violence in our community. As he shared the story about a domestic incident that happened between a man and his girlfriend and how it was reminiscent of when he joined the police department years ago, he became impassioned about his steadfast commitment to changing the conversation in our community. *There were the goosebumps.* Chief O'Brien is a man on a mission. Read his note on page two for more on how we are partnering to better support victims and survivors.

In December, after embarking on an agency-wide strategic planning process, the WRC Team and Board of Directors approved our newly refined mission: **To protect, shelter and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual violence.** When I shared the new mission with the Chief and Captain James Bussell, their enthusiasm and commitment for our new mission was unmistakable. As we continued our discussion, it became clear that working together toward this common goal was going to be powerful. And there they were again — *goosebumps!*

The WRC and the TCPD are taking a zero tolerance position against domestic and sexual violence. This newsletter is dedicated to our partners in law enforcement and the leaders, donors and volunteers in the community who join us in making that commitment.

WRC Turned 40!

We celebrated 40 years of helping women and families with a reception attended by donors, staff, community supporters, founders and former leaders of the WRC. It was a night of celebrating the past, looking to the future, and reconnecting with all those who have worked to make the WRC such an important resource in our community. Thank you to all... *goosebumps!*



It was great to see longtime friends and former WRC leaders in October. (L to R): Marge Roman, Peg Brace, Char Kirchner, and Pat Pritchard.

All of our donors change lives...

Whether you adopt a family through the Holiday Needs program, are one of our generous donors, or volunteer your time with us, your spirit and support ensures that victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence can continue to reach out to us for help. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts — *your generosity gives us goosebumps.*

Leaders who give us goosebumps...

Governor William Milliken, William Milliken Jr. and members of the Three Generations Circle of Women Givers (3G) joined with the WRC to celebrate the contributions of Helen Milliken to the Women's Resource Center. A dedicated champion of women, Mrs. Milliken was instrumental in making Helen's House Emergency Shelter a reality.

Much has been accomplished by dedicated women (and men) such as Helen Milliken and our 3G members. We—and the hundreds of women we have provided shelter and advocacy for—are forever thankful. Still, much remains to be accomplished as we work to end domestic and sexual violence in our community. We are motivated and energized, and look forward to the great things the Three Generations of Women Givers and the Women's Resource Center will accomplish together.

Many thanks to Robert, Joni and Ed of Brengman Brothers Winery for their generosity in hosting the reception and to the anonymous donors who provided food and wine for an amazing afternoon.



Governor William Milliken hugging Residential Facilities Coordinator Jenny Allen after she spoke to the 3G group.

Big thanks to members of the Zonta Club of Traverse City for initiating the first annual Take a Stand and Stop Violence Against Women Day with a march down Front Street culminating in a demonstration at the Open Space. Though the temperatures were freezing, it didn't stop more than 40 marchers from breaking out their orange and standing in solidarity against violence.

2015 Holiday Needs



Friend of the Court Office staff, (L to R) Carol Rose, Sally Raths, Tammi Willoughby and Eric Salani, collect items for Helen's House Holiday Needs.

Our caring and generous donors made this season's Holiday Needs program a wonderful success once again. More than 80 donors adopted over 110 WRC client families, providing holiday gifts for all ages. The outpouring of giving was so heartwarming and inspiring. As families came in to pick up their donated gifts, they were genuinely thankful and moved.

We'd like to share a portion of a thank you letter from one of our clients:

Dear Angel,

I have been thinking of how to say thank you, but I don't think words could describe how you have allowed for me and my boys to have a Christmas. I hope one day in heaven we meet face to face. The way I will know you is by the glow of your heart. Thank you so much and I hope one day I can pay it forward.

*Gratefully,
Anonymous Client*

PROUDLY SERVING THE FIVE-COUNTY REGION SINCE 1975

Our mission is to protect, shelter, and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

A Note from the Chief of Police

My wife and I are natives to Traverse City and in the years that we have lived and raised our family here, we have witnessed a lot of change. Though a lot of progress has been made, in my humble opinion, there is still room to grow.

As a veteran in law enforcement, I have done just about every job there is to do, except narcotics. If you would have told me years ago that I would be the Chief of Police, I wouldn't have believed you. However, as with most things that were meant to be, here I am.

Years of training have taught me a lot and the years working alongside men and women, whom I respect and admire, *taught me even more.*

What I've learned is that the commitment and the love for this community runs deep in all of us. Many people who reside in our community made sacrifices — choosing to be here and raise families here — for a certain quality of life. Living in a safe place is probably somewhere on everyone's short-list when talking about quality of life and reasons to reside in Traverse City. And it should be.

For that reason, we are excited to be working alongside the Women's Resource Center with a common goal of zero tolerance of domestic and sexual violence in this community. Our officers will be participating in training facilitated by the WRC and next month, along with members of other law enforcement agencies, we will be attending the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards "Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence" training hosted by the WRC and co-instructed by a prosecutor, a law enforcement officer and a victim advocate.

Also, with the WRC and members of the Grand Traverse Domestic Violence Task Force, we have been working on an Advocacy-Informed Response agreement for victims of domestic and sexual violence. The primary goals of this approach are: victim safety, offender accountability, system accountability and changing the climate of tolerance to violence in the community. It's one more way we can make this beautiful place we all call home a safer place to work and live...together and for everyone.



Retired Traverse City Chief of Police, Ralph Soffredine, with current Chief of Police Jeff O'Brien at the WRC 40th Anniversary celebration.

Please Join Us

**Wednesday, March 16, 2015
Take Back the Night March
and Rally**

Begins at West Hall, 5 p.m.
Concludes at Oleson Center, 6 p.m.

Join in to support and empower survivors and spread awareness of sexual assault in our community and around the world.

Please check our Facebook page regularly for upcoming events!

“A donation to the WRC Thrift Shop is a gift to our community.”

~ Mary Lee Lord, Executive Director WRC (1991-2006)

Items of Note

- We re-launched our volunteer training program this fall after several dormant years. With up-to-date training materials in-hand, we welcomed 10 new volunteers to our ranks during the first session and just completed another series with 20 additional potential volunteers. Several representatives of local law enforcement attended a portion of the training. Members of the first class are now serving in various capacities throughout the agency. Contact Kelly Fitzpatrick, Program Director, at 231-941-1210 X109/kfitzpatrick@wrcgt.com for more information on volunteer training and opportunities.
- The Utopia Foundation provided Carrie Douglas, our child advocate, with a scholarship to attend the two-day Early Childhood Summit at CMU this fall.
- We hosted the “Voices for Peace and Empowerment” candlelight vigil in October. Over 40 people attended and shared their stories as we honored victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Thanks to the generous support of Chemical Bank, the Old Mission Women’s Club, mAIDens of Michigan, government grant funds and a generous private donor, we were able to go above and beyond to meet the emergency needs of a number of clients this past year, including tires, car repairs, bus passes, housing, moving expenses, prescriptions, supplies for newborn twins, and many other special needs not covered by other assistance programs in our community.
- We owe a large dose of gratitude to Zonta members for the recent \$7,000 grant and to Hagerty Cares for a \$5,000 grant, both awarded to help us purchase a much-needed, new phone system.

We could not do what we do without you.

Thank you!

The WRC Thrift Shop

Did you know that 37% of our funding that supports our day to day work, like our Client Advocates helping victims navigate legal and support services and our shelters that house those who flee a violent relationship, comes from your donated items and purchases from the Thrift Shop? As you clean your closets or basement please remember the WRC Thrift Shop. We also have an active EBay store. The WRC Thrift Shop is located at 3030 N. US 31, Traverse City, just south of Pizza Hut.



*Women's
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