



To protect, shelter and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual assault.

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2020

The Real Meaning of: Essential

By: Juliette Schultz

Living in this unprecedented time of a global pandemic has posed unique challenges. At the same time, we have been given the chance to pause and reflect, collectively.

Taking a deep breath. Going inward through meditation or some other form of mindfulness practice. Evaluating how we are spending our resources and our time. Making conscious decisions to consume less. And to give more.

Today as I reflected, the word essential came to mind. The word essential is

derived from the Latin word *essentia* meaning “being, essence.”

To a lot of us, this word has come to have a whole different meaning. What I thought was “**essential**” Before Covid-19 (BC) seems inconsequential now. Buying that new raincoat to replace my slightly worn (second-hand one)? **Not essential.** Making time to play scrabble and be destroyed by my teenager? **Essential.**

Our Client Advocates continuing to answer calls to our helpline 24/7 from people impacted by domestic and sexual violence? **Essential.**

As we wrap up the fiscal year, I have been humbled and inspired by our Client Advocates' steadfast focus on the Mission (check out: *Walk A Mile in Their Shoes*) during a very uncertain time. They never wavered. As one proudly shared with me

“no survivor has slid between the cracks.” Please join me in thanking our Advocates. For being the heartbeat of the WRC. **For being essential.**



WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

With Gratitude

We couldn't do it without you!

"Recently, the Women's Resource Center for the Grand Traverse Area had the pleasure and honor of receiving a \$50,000 grant from the Carls Foundation in support of our expanded Thrift Shop operations. For every \$2 spent at the Thrift Shop, \$1 is returned to support the Mission of the WRC, to protect, shelter and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Thrift Shop operations are a vital resource in our community and with the support of the Carls Foundation we can now have a more significant

impact and provide additional services to those who need them the most. The Carls Foundation has provided support at a time when we needed it the most. As the only agency in our community providing vouchers for free clothing and household essentials to those in need, our community will be leaning heavily on us to provide the support needed as we begin to move through the uncertain times created by COVID-19. Thank you, Carls Foundation, for making an impact in our community."

The WRC is grateful to our supporters who help us care for survivors:

Golden-Fowler Furnishings (print ad to raise awareness), Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Urgent Needs Fund, Schmuckal Family Foundation, DTE,

The Presbyterian Church, Cherryland Cares, the Biederman and Oleson Family Foundations! A special shout out to all of the community members who stitched hand-made masks for our staff.

The WRC is always grateful to be included in Community Giving projects. We sincerely thank Pour For More for including us as a 2019 recipient, and The Good Bowl for honoring us as their first quarter local charity recipient. And of course, the WRC also thanks our community of supporters for participating in these giving opportunities.

A special shout out to all of the community members who stitched hand-made masks and donated sanitizer for our staff.

Opening Summer 2020

Our second Thrift Shop is located at 1331 S. Airport Road.

Offering a convenient donation drop off area with easy access from South Airport Road.



Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Kimberli Harris

Kimberli Harris recently retired and wanted to "give back" to the community. She participated in our Volunteer Training Program, liked what the organization represented, and immediately knew she wanted to help support our Mission. Kimberli is our front desk receptionist at the WRC's main office on Mondays. Together with her husband, Neil, they are vital volunteers, supporting many non-profit organizations in our community. They have worked the past seven years as dual Facility Managers for Safe Harbor, another non-profit organization, crucial for providing emergency shelter to adults experiencing homelessness. Kimberli also volunteers for Jubilee House, a day shelter for the homeless and Neil is a volunteer firefighter for the Elk Rapids Fire Department.

When asked what motivated her to start volunteering at the WRC, Kimberli commented, "I have seen a lot of women come to Safe Harbor that were also victims of domestic violence and I wanted to be of service to those women too."

Our community is fortunate to have the Harris's kind and loving support. Kimberli expressed, "I feel that now that I'm retired, my passion in life is my volunteer work. I'm so blessed that I was able to retire early and that I have the opportunity to give back to people in my community. I truly feel that I get more from them than they do from me."



In their free time, Kimberli and Neil love to travel, camp and enjoy their motorcycles together. The couple recently returned from a trip to Alaska to visit their son, daughter in law and first granddaughter Magnolia Mae aka Maggie. In Kimberli's own free time, she and her girlfriend's scrapbook.

The Fustini Impact

Fustini's has graciously hosted four Party with a Purpose fundraising events for the WRC. Donations raised through Fustini's Corporate Sponsorship and your generous gifts have provided more than 210 nights of shelter for those in need. The commitment to our Mission that Fustini's and our family of donors validates to survivors—their lives matter.

"We had such a good time at the Fustini's fundraiser for WRC. The food was superb, and we enjoyed talking to the other attendees. The highlight for us was hearing a survivor speak of the services the Women's Resource Center was able help her with so she could get a fresh start in her life. It was compelling indeed. Thanks for all you do."

—Judith Weaver



FUSTINI'S

Walk a Mile in Their Shoes

Walking a mile in the shoes of a WRC Advocate, isn't as much about the walk or the shoes; it's being able to think like they think, feel what they feel, and understand why they are who they are. Every step is about the Mission. It starts with diligence, resilience and a respectful compassion for the people that walk through their doors, day in and day out.

The role of a WRC Client Advocate requires flexibility and empathy. Advocates empower domestic and sexual violence survivors providing them with non-judgmental emotional support and resources. This can include: emergency shelter, safety planning, one-on-one counseling, assistance with drafting Personal Protection Orders, referrals for

community resources, crisis intervention, facilitating support groups, and being present during court proceedings.

Advocates provide free and confidential support to survivors, meeting them where they are to complete a service plan that outlines their goals and needs. They help survivors navigate community resources and provide emotional support during the healing process. They answer crisis calls and meet with new and existing survivors every day. To be an Advocate requires flexibility. Between meeting with survivors and responding to walk-ins, an Advocate's day can be stressful and unpredictable.

Helen's House, the WRC's emergency shelter provides safe haven for women and children fleeing a violent and sometimes deadly situation. The house is staffed 24/7 with Advocates who are on-site to live the Mission and provide survivors with non-judgmental support while assisting them with any other referrals they may need (legal, housing, etc).

Advocates working in the shelter are also responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the home including: shelter--security checks, cleaning, preparing meals, shelter entrance screening, and crisis intervention.

"The biggest reward for me is to see survivors and their children in a safe environment and watch them flourish and become more empowered in the process. This is no cakewalk for our clients, so I have an abundance of admiration for those who are able to get on their feet and work towards their personal goals."

— Mikela Wilson, Shelter Advocate

No day looks the same for an Advocate. The challenges of each new day require the ability to have a sense of calm confidence, emotional strength, and an overall love of our Mission. It is not an easy walk in their shoes, but a very necessary walk in the fight for people who are looking for hope.



Check Out Our New Look!

To Reflect our Legacy, Focused Mission, and Services.

The initiative to refresh the WRC brand came about during a strategic planning session with Board Members and staff. The ultimate goal was to increase awareness of the WRC and engage the community. It was time for a refresh, a time to take pause and re-evaluate the external expression of the brand, especially the current identity. Our brand identity hasn't changed since the organization was founded, and given the revised focus of the mission of domestic violence and sexual assault, the expansion of services and the opening of the second thrift shop, the timing felt right.

Board Member Maggie Stafford and two other brand professionals, Kory Felker and Tarra Warnes, volunteered their time to this project, as they all felt a deep connection to the cause. **"The intention of the refresh was to update the WRC brand, being very clear who they serve, what they stand for, with additional direction to modernize and leverage the compelling stories of survivors,"** explained Stafford. Part of the process for the refresh was to assess the current state of the brand, through both an audit of existing

brand assets and communications as well as interviews with stakeholders, staff, and advocates. Through this process, the team was able to identify key themes that came up during conversations with key stakeholders.

Some of the key themes:

- **Legacy:** honoring and celebrating the rich history of the WRC. The idea that this organization was founded by the act of a few women doing a very brave thing back in 1975.
- **Empowerment:** the clients the WRC serves are strong and capable, whether they've realized their own strength or not. It's the job of the WRC to help them discover their power.
- **Equality:** That the WRC serves any individual impacted by domestic violence or sexual assault.

Stafford also shared, "We heard a lot of messages about hope and about optimism and helping survivors on their journey." They felt it was important to create a brand refresh, that reflected the messages of hope and renewal – but never at the risk of minimizing the violence or experiences that these individuals have endured. **These themes ultimately helped to shape the brand promise of the WRC – that "you don't have to face this alone",** something that the staff, supports and advocates of the WRC promise with every interaction and every experience.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

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