



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

Monica Beck,
The Fierberg
National
Law Group

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2021

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Do Not Discriminate

By Monica Beck

The facts are surprising, even uncomfortable. What we know about men as the victims of sexual and domestic violence should help guide our community toward resources, with more understanding.

Yes, men make up a sizeable portion of sexual assault and domestic violence survivors. One in 33 American men have experienced an attempted or completed rape. The latest statistics from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence show nearly 26 percent of men in Michigan will experience some form of intimate partner abuse in their lifetimes. **One in 4 men have experienced physical violence, one**

in 7 men here have suffered severe injury at the hands of their partners. One in 18 men have been stalked by a partner to the point of fear for their lives.

For those who work professionally on behalf of abuse survivors, we understand that sexual violence cuts across all lines – economic, race and, as the numbers prove, gender. Too often, though, in my experience, excuses and rationalizations replace action when males are the victims of abuse. I have heard serious crimes described as “boys being boys,” “horseplay” or “things just went a little too far.”

For men, the horrors of abuse can be intensified by cultural stereotypes regarding masculinity, which often drive the talk, or lack of it. Sexual violence can also serve as an assault against ideas about what a man is “supposed” to be. In too many families, victims of abuse are categorized as “weak,” and other dangerous, damaging labels. This high potential for stigma contributes to a particularly difficult situation for men who

survive abuse, providing obstacles to disclosing sexual abuse, even for survivors who try to get the help they need.

For the men of our community, as with women, surviving sexual assault and domestic abuse is all about recognizing, reporting and resources. As neighbors, we must learn to recognize the signs of abuse with male victims, so that we can help identify crimes when they are committed. The courageous men and boys who step forward to report their abuse to authorities deserve the same respect as women who survive abuse. And we must support the resources available for survivors to help them live after sexual and domestic violence, break its dangerous cycle and ensure that no survivor remains alone.

Unlike some communities in Michigan, we have those resources in the Grand Traverse Area. The Women's Resource Center puts survivors first, regardless of gender. The same resources that are provided to

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WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

Giving is easy.
Use the enclosed
envelope to mail
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WRC, give online
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are life-changing.

www.womensresourcecenter.org
231-941-1210



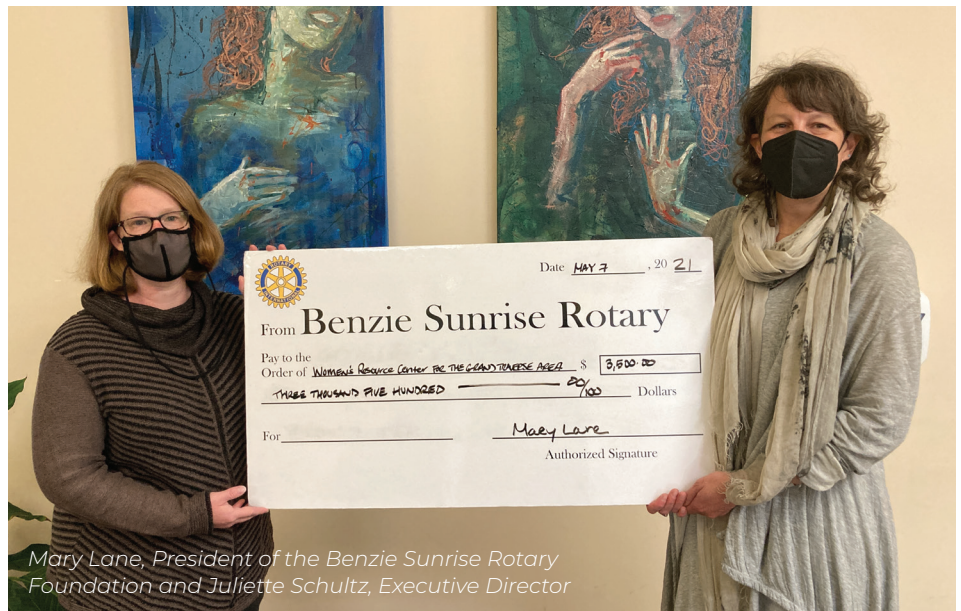
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women are available to men, including WRC's confidential, 24-hour crisis line at 800 554-4792. With WRC professionals, there is no shame and no stigma, just the services and support that every survivor needs.

Doing the math from the statewide statistics, we can learn there are more

than one million men in Michigan who will be the victims of abuse. They deserve our attention and our support.

Monica Beck is Managing Legal Counsel at The Fierberg National Law Group (www.tfnlgroup.com) in Traverse City and a member of the Women's Resource Center's Board of Directors.



Mary Lane, President of the Benzie Sunrise Rotary Foundation and Juliette Schultz, Executive Director

With Gratitude

We needed you, and you were there. Your generous contributions helped us provide free and confidential life-saving shelter and advocacy to those who need it in our community.

Survivors have been comforted and encouraged by the outpouring of generosity and support from extraordinary people, organizations, community groups, small businesses and corporations that have stepped up to support our Mission: to protect, shelter and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Thank you for answering our call for help, YOU made a difference in the lives of others, and together we can continue to provide

services with inclusion, integrity, compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence.

Thanks to our most recent supporters from:

- Presbyterian Church of Traverse City
- Carls Foundation
- Networks Northwest
- Benzie Sunrise Rotary
- Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
- Wilfred and Joan Larson Endowment
- The Les and Anne Biederman Foundation
- Traverse City Rotary
- Zonta Club of Traverse City

Partners in Action

By: Ginger Kadlec, TBCAC Executive Director

It was a long, tense drive across state lines to an unfamiliar place. Nerves were shattered. Wounds were raw. There was, however, a flicker of relief inside the car as a mother and her children fled from years of domestic abuse and violence. Their destination was the WRC for emergency shelter. During the intake process, child abuse was suspected and a report was made to CPS, which led to child forensic interviews at Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center (TBCAC). The family now had the support of two powerhouse organizations.

Domestic violence and child abuse often share the same households. When they do, the trauma-informed staff at WRC and TBCAC collaborate on how to best help and

empower the victims and nonoffending family members. Although many of the immediate needs are the same—safety, shelter and advocacy—the legal and healing processes are not. The expertise provided by the advocates and therapists at both WRC and TBCAC are critical for seeking justice and healing the deep wounds of being hurt by someone you know, love and trusted.

While WRC helped the mother get a job and locate a home to rent, the trauma-informed therapists at TBCAC counseled the children weekly using their specialized training and skills to help the kids overcome PTSD. Christmas was fast approaching and TBCAC counselors knew this family, although safe, had nothing in their unfurnished home. Staff put the word out that a mother and her children were in need. Well, before you could say “Merry Christmas” Mike Mahn and his staff at Today's Golden-Fowler Home



Furnishings donated bedroom, living room and dining room furniture plus bedding, dishes and other household items that most of us take for granted; TBCAC Board member MSP Trooper Travis Kirschner and his wife donated a van full of gifts, including a Christmas tree; and TBCAC staff collected money for gift cards.

The flicker was turning into a flame.

The children received months of trauma-informed therapy at TBCAC to overcome their hurt and confusion and the mother was supported by staff at WRC. Progress was made and this family now has dreams and hopes for the future instead of fearing the day. Truly an example of community collaboration.

To learn more about Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center please visit www.traversebaycac.org or call the office at 231-929-4250.

Board Member Spotlight

Say “Hello” to Dennis Piskor



Dennis enjoys the Traverse area and loves the culture of Northern Michigan. He appreciates the opportunities for personal growth and the natural beauty that our region offers.

Dennis is currently serving as the Board President of the WRC. He has been an integral part to the WRC for almost 20 years and an ambassador for the Mission.

Juliette Schultz, Executive Director described his involvement, “Dennis’ history with the WRC and leadership as the Board Chair have

been very important to the WRC. He’s also not afraid to roll up his sleeves and help! We feel lucky to have him on our team!”

Dennis’ long career in the financial world especially trust and investments have provided important knowledge and skills. Being in the business world has given him an understanding of the difficulties that many women face in balancing their career aspirations, providing financial security, and the loving care of their families. It seemed to Dennis that women had to work harder in order to prove their value. He shared, “life can have its ups and downs, but you can learn from your mistakes and experiences, grow stronger and be a better person—more prepared for the future.” These are some of the reasons he likes working with the WRC because it helps give people another chance at life.

Dennis often thinks of his upbringing and the influence of his mother, where he inherited the belief, all people should be treated equally and given a fair chance to use their talents to take advantage of the

opportunities that lay ahead. This and his close connection with his wife and daughters have made him more aware and sensitive to women’s issues. He believes the WRC is the fundamental support link for women facing domestic violence. It’s all about the “Mission” ... something we can be proud of and dedicated to.

Dennis and his lovely wife Barbara have lived here for over 45 years. As they have retired, they feel fortunate to have traveled the world and have a better understanding of people and cultures. But nothing can replace the love and joy of their grandchildren. Both Dennis and Barbara love the backbreaking hobby of gardening and landscape design when not resting and looking out over Cedar Lake.

Fun fact... Dennis says he is a real Polack, “just give me some Polka music and pierogis and I’ll be content.”

Are you interested in becoming a Board Member? Please give us a call at 231-941-1210.



Thanks to Allegra for their generous support, and printing this newsletter