



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

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2022

A Brave Survivor's Story

By Juliette Schultz, WRC Executive Director

***"I'm still triggered...25 years later
I'm ready to tell my story."***

In this job, one of the things I love are the calls I get from people who want to help. I returned one of those calls a few weeks ago from a survivor who wants to help the WRC and other survivors like herself by sharing her story.

Tonya (name changed for anonymity) and I have never met. I could hear and feel her emotion over the phone as her story of abuse spilled out. As she spoke, I got emotional. Here is her incredibly brave story of ***fleeing and continuing to heal***.

Tonya shared that the recent school shootings had triggered her own trauma because she remembered working at a school and having to stop working for a couple of weeks while she was being stalked by her ex-husband. During that time, her colleagues completely relocated her classroom to one that had no access from the outside in order to protect her and her daughter from him.

"They put me in a classroom that was secure and came up with a plan to keep me safe. It was one year after a very high-profile school shooting. It is part of my story as an educator and a survivor. It all comes back when another shooting happens."

Studies show that the prevalence rate of PTSD among domestic violence survivors is between 51% and 75%, compared to about 10.4% of the general population. (American Psychological Association)

Tonya continues to tell me about the abuse she endured, and the guns her ex-husband used to intimidate and threaten her. "He had a lot of guns and was proud of them and showed them off. He never left home without a gun. Even when I had a personal protection order against him."

I remembered something that Attorney General Dana Nessel said during our recent town hall discussion about the intersection between gun violence and domestic violence: *"Even if a gun isn't being actively used, it can still be a threat to someone."*

1 in every 5 homicides of women in Michigan involves a current or former intimate partner with a gun. (Center for American Progress: The Impact of Gun Violence in Michigan, Feb. 2022)

Tonya decided to flee to protect her daughter. "It has been 25-years, and I still

remember it like it was yesterday. I took my daughter who was nine months old at the time, to the airport. I told the ticketing agent I was fleeing an abusive relationship and they rushed me onto the next flight. They did not even ask me for money."

"I knew in my heart that if I didn't leave, I was going to die. There were so many people who helped me leave. My spirit was so broken. I was emotionally, financially, spiritually exhausted and I had a little person depending on me. Thankfully, strangers, neighbors and family members helped me and continued to look out for me after I left."

Recently, her (now grown) daughter received a letter from her father, Tonya's ex-husband. This prompted her to contact the Women's Resource Center to discuss safety and what precautions they might need to take.

"After finally leaving, the years following were sometimes worse because I wasn't able to gauge his mood or watch for triggers. We were scared! The WRC Advocate walked me through what we needed to do and affirmed that we were doing everything we could. We installed a Ring smart security system, started locking the doors at my office, and we took

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WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

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our dogs everywhere with us because in the past, he had abused and killed one of our pets. Calling the WRC was a moment where I had to revisit everything again. After years of thinking everything is okay, and we are safe. BOOM. That's his style. He is going to put me on edge again."

It is obvious through our conversation that Tonya has done a lot of work to heal. She is now a successful business owner. She wholeheartedly agreed to share her story with me, with the hope that it might help someone else. "Thank you Tonya," I say as I hang up, "I hope it does too."



Monica Beck, AG Dana Nessel, Carl Mormann, Juliette Schultz

Attorney General Visits the WRC and Community

On May 26th, we had the honor of hosting Attorney General Dana Nessel for two events.

In the morning, she joined us at the WRC office and 12 other key community leaders for coffee and conversation around issues our community is experiencing with delivering social services to those in need. The AG gave over 2 hours of her time asking questions and listening to our community leaders and offered her assistance and possible solutions.

In the afternoon, the WRC hosted a community town hall to discuss the **connection between gun violence and domestic violence.**

The AG talked about the importance of gun reform and how women and children are more in danger when their abusers have easier access



to firearms. "The connection between domestic violence and guns is clear, and you do not need a graph to see it," stated the AG.

Every 16 hours, a woman is fatally shot by a current or former intimate partner.

We also invited Carl Mormann, WRC Director of Advocacy, and Monica Beck, WRC Board Member and attorney with Fierberg Group, to participate in our panel with the Attorney General.

These events were SUCH a win for the Women's Resource Center and the community we care for. They provided opportunity for future discussions on how WRC can support survivors to prevent tragic gun violence events.

A recording of the town hall event is on our website.

With Gratitude

We would like to thank these community members for helping to raise funds and awareness for the WRC.

Thank you for standing with us. Together we can continue to provide services with inclusion, integrity, compassion, respect and excellence. Together we can help survivors feel heard, understood and safe.

- Brenda Tracy/Set the Expectation
- The Workshop Brewing Company
- Rotary Goodworks
- mAlDen's of Michigan

- Carl's Foundation
- Biederman Family Foundation
- Two Men and A Truck
- Fresh Trippin
- Meg Zammit group
- MSU Federal Credit Union
- Power! Book Bags
- Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
- TC Co-Operative Preschool
- Bubbies Bagels
- Central United Methodist Church
- Cherry Capital Ink
- Doris and Donald Duchane Foundation
- Grand Traverse Veterinary
- Wilfred and Joan Larson Endowment

- Diago North America
- Higher Grounds Trading Company
- Northwoods Tattoo
- Old Mission Women's Club
- Oryana Community Co-op
- Papa John's Pizza Traverse City
- St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Women
- Suttons Bay Congregational Church
- The Presbyterian Church of Traverse City
- Watershed Church
- The Fierberg National Law Group

If you would like to make a donation, please contact Jamie Bell at 231-941-1210 or jbelle@wrcgt.com.

How the WRC Thrift Shops Helped Pave a Better Way...

By Juliette Schultz

"Becoming isn't about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn't end."

– Michelle Obama

When I joined the WRC in 2013, our organization was heavily dependent on state/federal funding. In fact, it was our #1 source of revenue. That first year, I remember the sick feeling I got when I found out that there was a "scheduled cutback" of the grant that funds our Client Advocates. A \$50,000 reduction. And then, less than two years later, there was another \$50,000 cutback.

These cutbacks meant that we had to reduce staff. Specifically, our Advocacy staff, the people responsible for answering calls from survivors of domestic and sexual violence 24/7/365.

"There has to be a better way," I thought as my stomach churned. And it turns out **there was.**

Carol Rose, the very first manager of the WRC Thrift Shop on US 31, had been consistently growing revenue for over 35 years. In fact, in 2016, the WRC Thrift Shop was responsible for over a half-million in gross sales!

We became intensely focused on growth at the Thrift Shop with the goal of maximizing revenue to fund our Mission. Carol Rose *was all in*. She started by hiring staff to support the growth, reorganizing the shop, creating new displays, and thinking up ways to get people excited about not only buying, but donating.

For every \$2 someone spends at the WRC, \$1 is returned to fund the Mission: to protect, shelter and empower people impacted by domestic and sexual violence.



Turning Carol Rose loose to hire essential staff was the best decision we ever made. Within one year, she and her dedicated team had increased revenue by \$150,000. In our case the adage *"it takes money to make money"* is true.

In the wake of this success, with a goal of lessening our dependence on unreliable funding and never having to cut essential staff again, we started dreaming bigger. We explored our options including selling our Thrift Shop building, and buying/renting another one, expanding our existing building, renting a building, and opening a second location. We even talked about the feasibility of carving out space at our Main Office (the former All Faiths

With our punch-list of requirements for our new space, (parking, easy drop-off, storage, a sizable sorting area), we started looking for the perfect location for our second Thrift Shop. While we were looking, we launched a campaign to raise money that would support the second shop's start-up costs. Our goal: to not take a single dollar of revenue earned at the existing US 31 shop, away from our Mission.

*Thanks to the community members and Foundations who believed and loved our Mission...*we raised enough money to cover our projected start-up costs. Just over two years after beginning the search, we found the location that met all our needs.

In August of 2020, during a pandemic, we opened our second Thrift Shop located at 1331 W. South Airport Road.

This past April, **gross revenues from our two Thrift Shops exceeded \$1 Million!** The shops are now the #1

source of revenue to fund our Mission. Our Thrift Shops **employ 25 members** of the community. **We give away \$8-\$10,000 in clothing, furniture, and household items every month to community members in need.**

Next time you stop in to shop or donate, be sure to thank the Thrift Shop staff and Carol Rose who has been with us for over 35 years. As Carol says, *"It just goes to prove that together we can do anything."*



Donate to Support Survivors

Drop-Off Times: Monday–Saturday 10am–5pm

Accepted Items: Clothing, toys, dishes, housewares, toasters, microwaves, blenders, jewelry, shoes, bedding, and linens. Furniture only accepted at Thrift Shop located on US-31.

Chapel on Elmwood) for another Thrift shop. Everything was up for discussion.

After a lot of leg work, we came up with an expansion plan, and in August of 2017 the WRC Board of Directors approved moving forward with it. The plan included: opening a second shop so that our organization could continue to reduce its dependency on state and federal funding, retain key staff, and become more financially sustainable.

WRC Heroes

Merry MacGirr

WRC Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Q: What brought you to the WRC?

The work we do at WRC is incredible. WRC staff are Mission-driven—from the Thrift Shops staff to the Advocates in the Main Office to the Shelter staff. I've worked as the CFO for the past two years, supporting the organization, and ensuring all the good work of the WRC continues.

Q: What do you want the community to know about the WRC?

The community supports the organization and has for many years. The statistics of people impacted by domestic or sexual violence are staggering. It's vital to have this type of resource in the community as an avenue for individuals to seek help. The donations brought to the Thrift Shops directly impact our ability to provide services to survivors.



Q: Can we talk about Leroy, our new official WRC mascot?

Leroy is a seven-month-old ball of fun. After losing our beloved Izzy, who lived until she was 13, we decided to not have a dog. However, our work can be emotionally draining for many staff who handle face-to-face cases with clients. We missed having a fur fellow to brighten up our days. Everyone gravitates towards him in the office. He has such a unique personality and has brought so much joy into our lives.

Marylou Zaloudek

Board Member President and Thrift Shops Chair

Q: How did you become involved with the WRC?

12 years ago I owned a gift shop downtown. It was located on Front Street next to an art gallery owned by my friend, Marsha Bellinger. Marsha was leaving the WRC Board and thought I would be a good replacement due to my retail experience. Since then, I've served on the WRC Board as the President and the Chair of the Thrift Shops.

Q: What drives you to stay involved?

I believe in our Mission and want to continue to



offer help to domestic violence and sexual assault survivors in the Traverse City area. I don't think people realize how pervasive these issues are that it happens in our area, and affects people from all socio-economic levels. It's not just the victim who suffers, it's the victim's children, the victim's family, and our community as a whole. The pervasiveness and the breadth of the impact keeps me motivated to continue advocating for change and increased awareness.

Q: What do you want people to know about the Thrift Shops?

The locations are very accessible, it's easy to donate, and we offer a wide range of items to purchase. Donations go towards protecting and sheltering victims and helping those in need. Every dollar spent assists WRC in helping those in our community.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

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Juliette Schultz

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WRC THRIFT SHOPS

Thrift Shop - South Airport
1331 W. South Airport Road
231-421-3033

Thrift Shop US-31
3030 US-31 South
231-946-4180

Monday-Saturday 10am-6pm
Sunday 11am-5pm

CONTACT


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