



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

NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2023

Understanding How Personal Protection Orders Keep Our Community Safer

By Carl Mormann
WRC Director of Advocacy

***Increased understanding of how
Personal Protection Orders (PPOs) work
will benefit survivors of domestic and
sexual violence and increase the safety
of our entire community.***

In our region, there is a lack of training regarding PPOs. There are many misconceptions about who qualifies, how they are obtained, and how they are enforced.

Simply put, a PPO is not something that can be used against a loud or obnoxious neighbor. This is something far more serious, often life-threatening. In order for you to seek protection from an individual, essentially convincing a judge that someone's rights need to be taken away or limited, there needs to be, as a basis, a domestic relationship, or a behavior of stalking or sexual assault. Examples of a domestic relationship includes a spouse, a former spouse, someone with whom you have a child in common, if you live in

the same household, or have had or have established a dating relationship.

Importantly, if you request a PPO, there must be an Immediate risk of injury or loss or immediate or imminent risk to your personal property. The alleged behavior or threats must be current or ongoing. PPO petitions go in front of Circuit Court judges for consideration. Often, a petitioner can ask the judge to issue the PPO "ex parte," which means that a decision is based on the petitioner's request alone. But too many people believe such a request is automatic when the reality is different. A respondent (the accused) can also request a hearing and state their side before a judge makes a final ruling.

As a former police officer, police chief, and in my role now at the WRC, I have seen what happens when people don't understand what a PPO is and what it does. The process is more complex than most people realize, and it is crucial to get it right.

Attorney Deyar Jamil of the Fierberg National Law Firm in Traverse City provides some legal perspective and advice on what to think about before submitting a request, "PPOs can be a powerful tool that allow police to arrest an offender they would otherwise have no authority to arrest. The key is to specifically list the type of contact to be prohibited. For



Carl Mormann

example, if an assailant harasses someone by email, then the PPO should specifically prohibit contact by email. That detail will empower the police to act against the assailant for sending an email, before the harassment escalates to violence."

Ultimately, it is imperative to communicate clear, organized statements to the court, be truthful, don't be vague or overreaching. Please do not be afraid to ask for help. If done correctly, it can save a life.

The most important thing for anyone who finds themselves in a dangerous situation is to get help in drafting a petition for a domestic relationship PPO. The Women's Resource Center provides this service free and confidentially.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

Empowered and Understood

Eva Nienhouse, Guest Contributor

The importance of cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed care

For someone to feel empowered, first and foremost, they must feel understood. At the Women’s Resource Center, Empowering survivors is our goal. Understanding survivors is our Mission.

Being understood comes in so many forms, and everyone finds it in different places. While one person might feel it in a conversation with a trusted friend, another might find it through the comfort of a much-needed hug, or through a shared story that in some way, big or small, connects to their own. Another person might feel understood in listening to a healing playlist, or after a quiet meditation in a safe space.

Sometimes, understanding comes in the form of an unexpected, meaningful gift.

In December of 2022, a representative of **Uniting Three Fires Against Violence (UTFAV)** reached out to the Women’s Resource Center. UTFAV is a domestic violence and sexual abuse coalition devoted to supporting Michigan Tribes and Indigenous communities throughout the state. They also work closely with other advocacy programs and survivor agencies to ensure that their accessible, culturally

appropriate resources reach tribally affiliated survivors.

UTFAV wanted to provide the WRC with several Smudge Kits. UTFAV is aware that, due to our geographical location, we are particularly likely to serve survivors who are tribally affiliated. In fact, just a day prior, a Native American survivor had arrived at our WRC shelter.

When we offered our new client the Smudge Kit, she became emotional. She shared with staff that a gift with such spiritual meaning made her feel seen and understood. It was a special, impactful moment. We were so grateful we could help her in a way that honored her culture. Having resources and materials such as Smudge Kits on hand allows us to meet survivors where they are and offers them an opportunity for more holistic healing. We deeply appreciate this collaboration with UTFAV and our local Tribal partners.

At the WRC, we strive to demonstrate trauma-informed care and cultural sensitivity with all our clients. We are committed to serving all people impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Our goals are to provide a safe space for survivors, identify specific needs, and then explore resources and community support that can meet those needs.

The reassurance, peace, and power that understanding delivers are basic needs that every person deserves to feel and find. At the WRC, for every survivor, it’s our Mission to help provide this, whether it’s through a safe, quiet space, having a thoughtful person willing to listen, or be given a meaningful gift, presented at the right time.

For more information on Uniting Three Fires Against Violence, visit unitingthreefiresagainstviolence.org.



What is a Smudge Kit?

Smudge Kits cleanse spaces of their negative energy, making room for positive energy and healing. They typically contain medicines sacred to Native American culture and bundles of herbs and wood, such as sage and cedar. These can be burned to refresh the body and mind and revive the spirit and soul. Smudge Kits may also contain feathers or shells. They have been used by Indigenous peoples for centuries.

2022 in Review



3,649

nights of safe care provided



102

women and children housed



5,303

crisis hotline calls answered
(5% increase over 2021)

Supporter Spotlight

By Jamie Bell, Women's Resource Center Development Coordinator

Working in this industry, we hear a lot of heart wrenching stories. Very personal stories. Every day we are reminded of how many people are connected to the Mission of the WRC. We are grateful to get to know some of the people who give and help us support survivors. Among these donors there is a common thread. That thread is love.

Tom has been a consistent donor over the years. Like many, he gives to honor the memory of a loved one, his dear wife, Julie. Julie believed deeply in the Mission of the WRC. She was a schoolteacher in Benzie County, a mother, a friend, and a bright light in the lives of everyone she met. She was adventurous, energetic, and compassionate. She was a supporter of

the WRC, and an advocate for anything that supported the improvement and wellbeing of humanity. In 2018 many people mourned Julie's unexpected passing. Today we are still experiencing the loving impact of Julie's legacy.

The day I met Tom he came in with a very generous check. The check was from a local gun shop. This was interesting, because we know that there are strong parallels between gun violence and domestic violence. In fact, according to The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, 4.5 million women in the United States have been threatened with a gun. Tom explained that he had a collection of antique guns, and for a long time, it collected dust. This year, on the 5-year anniversary of Julie's death, Tom traded in his family's collection and donated the proceeds to the WRC.

We talk about guns at the WRC every day. When a survivor calls to create a safety plan, one of the first questions we ask is "Does the perpetrator have a gun". There is a clear link between domestic violence and gun violence. Women are five times more likely to be murdered by an abuser when the abuser has access to a gun.

We are inspired by Tom's gift. The collector memorabilia that could be seen as a symbol of violence can now be seen as a symbolic gesture of love.



Julie and Tom

Thrift Shop Fire

By Jamie Bell, Women's Resource Center Development Coordinator

On December 8 a man charged with domestic violence set fire to a dumpster at our US 31 Thrift Shop. The fire spread, resulting in damages to inventory and the building, and making the WRC unable to accept donations.

"We were lucky." In the days that followed, this was the mantra that we said and heard over and over again. We were lucky



that no one was hurt, that the whole store wasn't destroyed, and that the response from the fire department, police, and community was immediate.

The word "lucky" is a consistent part of the language here at the WRC. "She was lucky that she had a support system." "They were lucky the police showed up in time." "She was so lucky he didn't kill her." Very Lucky. We know that the work it takes to leave an abusive situation requires support, planning, and resources. Not just luck.

When a survivor flees an abusive home, it is often leaving with nothing but the clothes on her back. She will lose access to any shared financial resources. She will have to completely start over. Our Thrift Shops are a free resource to help people rebuild and start fresh. Anyone who is in need can ask for items, and receive them free of charge, no questions asked. For our general community, pricing for donated items is fair and affordable. Every month \$8,000-\$10,000 in necessary goods are given back to community members.

WRC Thrift Shops are for everyone. Half of the sale of every item goes right back

into the mission. The other half keeps the agency in operation. This cycle of donating, selling, giving, and supporting is a part of the health of our community.

When the WRC is attacked, it is an attack on the community and some of the most vulnerable people in it.

We are currently raising money to have a fire suppression system installed at the US 31 Thrift Shop this spring. The sprinkler system is estimated to cost over \$100,000. We have been hard at work and have already raised \$42,000. This investment is vital as the WRC Thrift Shops are the largest form of revenue for the WRC. Without it we couldn't continue to do the work we do. Please consider supporting as we continue to make up for this loss. We need your support because "Good Luck" is not enough.

Help us put in a
sprinkler system!
Donate now.





Become a Sustaining Member of the WRC: Give Monthly

Help support survivors by becoming a Sustaining Member. Receive special updates, be a part of our community, and make a lasting impact.



- \$30** One month of financial assistance for a survivor staying in our safe shelter
- \$50** One week of surveillance/security at our safe shelter
- \$80** One day of covering basic costs to keep our shelter open
- \$100** One day of answering our 24-hour crisis hotline

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.

- The Hair and Beauty Lounge
- Taproot
- House of Dank
- Yen Yoga & Fitness
- Mawby Vineyards
- Little Fleet
- Earthen Ales
- The Filling Station
- Arie Restaurant & Lounge
- Higher Grounds Trading Co.
- Traverse City DDA: Shop Your Community Day
- Consumer's Energy Foundation
- Earthen Ales
- Brew Traverse City

- EVO Athletics
- Sugar 2 Salt
- Team Elmers
- Uniting Three Fires Against Violence
- Holiday Needs Volunteers
- Holiday Needs Donors
- Cherry Republic
- Traverse City West Middle School
- Traverse City Country Club
- Glen Arbor Women's Club
- DTE Foundation
- A.A. Van Elslander Foundation
- Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
 - Campbell Endowment
 - Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation Youth Endowment
 - Boys and Girls Club Endowment
 - Genuine Leelanau Endowment
 - Suttons Bay Endowment
- Timken Foundation of Canton

If you would like to know more about how you can support the WRC, please contact Jamie Bell at 231-941-1210 or jbell@wrcgt.com.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

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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

Main Office
 720 South Elmwood, Suite 2
 Traverse City, MI 49684

Phone: 231-941-1210
 Web: womensresourcecenter.org
 24-hour Helpline: 1-800-554-4972