

Police: Domestic violence increases in 2020

Domestic Violence Awareness Month sheds light on problem, resources

WAUKESHA

By Nikki Brahm

nbrahm@conleynet.com 262-513-2651

WAUKESHA — Statistics provided by **the** Waukesha Police Department reveal that from Jan. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2020, 245 verified domestic-related crimes occurred in **the** city — an increase compared to previous years.

In 2019 during that same timeline, **the** number was 186 and in 2018, **the** number was 232.

Waukesha Police Lt. Kevin Rice said in mid-March **the** police department was working many 12-hour shifts during **the** shutdown due to COVID-19.

“I think what we did notice is most calls for service, **the** volume of calls for service declined significantly, with **the** exception of domestic-related calls and mental illness calls, those two remained **the** same,” Rice said. “If you look at **the** numbers, clearly we had an uptick this year as compared to **the** last three years.”

Rice said what he was able to definitively pull from **the** numbers is that **the** department is at “an all-time high” compared to at least **the** last four years.

The Waukesha Police Department is legally obligated to report to **the** Women’s Center every domestic violence call where there is an arrest. **The** Women’s Center will reach out and work with **the** victims discretely.

If an officer arrives on **the** scene and verifies there is a domestic relationship, if there is probable cause for **the** crime, **the** abuser will be arrested, even if **the** victim does not want an arrest, Rice said.

Rice and **The** Women’s Center Executive Director Angela Mancuso said these situations are often complicated — victims are often fearful to speak out or to recognize they are victims.

“Domestic violence and abusive relationships are very complicated and very complex and there’s so many factors that go into it,” Mancuso said. “A victim knows themselves better than anybody else, and even though everyone around them might desperately want something to change for them so that they’re out of **the** relationship ... they have to come to those decisions themselves.”

See **VIOLENCE**, PAGE **8A**

Violence

From Page 1A

Rice said following an arrest, victims can sign a contact prohibition form to prevent contact between **the** abuser and victim for 72 hours. **The** victim is able to come up with a plan in that time span, such as sign a restraining order.

Rice said callers who report domestic violence can remain anonymous — often neighbors report an incident.

“We’re in full support of **The Women’s Center**, we work with them on a daily basis, literally, and same with **the DA’s Office Victim Witness**, they’re great folks, they’re very supportive, very compassionate, they work with victims and it’s just nice to know that after **the arrest** is made it’s not **the only support** that they get, that’s just **the start of the support**,” he said.

Mancuso said **The Women’s Center** has actually noticed a slight decline in calls to **the center** this year in April and May; however, she believes it’s because **the victims** couldn’t find **the time** or space to get away from their abusers and call for help due to **the Safer at Home** order related to COVID-19.

Mancuso said during that same time frame, **the calls** they received were for more violent situations.

“One in two women will experience domestic violence in an adult relationship, so if we get one phone call, to me that means two people are not calling for help,” she said.

The Women’s Center, 505 N. East Ave., Waukesha, is available to assist victims in any way they need to keep them safe.

“If someone has a 20minute window where they are doing something and they can get away from their abuser, we have had people show up to **The Women’s Center** for a quick safety plan,” Mancuso said.

Mancuso encourages victims to be safe and discrete. **The Women’s Center** 24-hour hotline is 262-542-3828.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. For more information about **the month** and how to get involved, visit <https://bit.ly/3dfOmwo>.

[Copyright © 2020 Conley Group. All rights reserved 10/10/2020](#)
[Powered by TECNAVIA](#)
