The Women’s Center’s mission is to provide safety, shelter and support to women and their families affected by domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse and to facilitate their development.

Legal Protection and Advocacy

Legislative Updates

The 2014 Wisconsin Legislative Session saw the passage of three bills which offer additional protections for individuals affected by domestic violence. The Women’s Center celebrates these developments with the hope that those facing abuse will be safer and better supported by the legal system.

The **SAFE (Stopping Abuse Fatalities through Enforcement) Act** creates a procedure which ensures that violent offenders surrender their firearms. If an offender who is served with a domestic abuse, harassment or child abuse injunction does not turn over their firearms, they can be arrested. Laws were already on the books which required firearm surrender, but those laws were not consistently enforced.

**Assembly Bill 176** strengthens restraining orders by expanding the definition of abuse to include stalking, and increases privacy protections for child victims.

**Senate Bill 160** requires that after responding to domestic violence incidents, law enforcement officers inform victims of services available in their area and provide information on safety planning.

The Women’s Center Legal Advocacy

Individuals navigating the legal process can receive support at The Women’s Center. Our legal advocates provide free assistance to people seeking restraining orders for domestic abuse, harassment or child abuse and accompany them to court hearings for temporary restraining orders and injunctions. We also help with safety planning and provide referrals and support.

Legal advocates are located at The Women’s Center and the Waukesha County Courthouse. To speak to a legal advocate call 262-547-4600 or 262-896-8243.

Sandy Sommers pictured with Director of Counseling Services Mary Hennis

The Women’s Center Legal Advocate Honored

Sandy Sommers, one of The Women’s Center legal advocates, received the 2014 Community Service Award from the Waukesha Bar Association. In her role as a legal advocate, Sandy assists clients in a number of ways, from travelling to schools to help juveniles with safety planning, or accompanying women to police stations and hospitals.

“Sandy is a valued resource and is contacted by people all over the state who need assistance.”

-Attorney Elizabeth Bagley

Sandy’s commitment to clients is unwavering. She explains that she is proud to play a role in helping people through their life-changing decisions. In reflecting on what she loves about her job and what she has gained in her 32 years of working at The Women’s Center, Sandy said she has learned patience and to do no harm.

Congratulations to Sandy for this well-deserved award!
Save the Date!

Join us for “An Evening in Paris” - a magnifique way to support The Women’s Center and enjoy a relaxing evening in a beautiful lake setting!

This year’s Summer Evening will be held at Chenequa Country Club, located on tranquil Beaver Lake in Hartland. The event will run from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm and include heavy hors d’oeuvres, cocktails, live music, a 50/50 raffle and silent and live auctions.

Tickets are $150 each. Proceeds benefit The Women’s Center’s free programs and services that help women and children heal and break the cycle of violence. For more information, call Dana at 262-522-3805. RSVP by phone or online at www.twcwaukesha.org. We’ll see you at the club!

Summer Wish List

School’s out for summer, but Fall is right around the corner! We are in need of the following seasonal items for our youth clients.

- School supplies
- Backpacks
- Headphones (not earbuds)
- Swimsuits
- Fall jackets
- Sneakers
- Gift certificates to family hair salons for back to school haircuts

Cell Phones & Smartphones

When you donate your old cell phones and smartphones to The Women’s Center, we keep some for clients to use for emergencies, and the rest we send to Shelter Alliance, a national leader in cell phone buyback and recycling. Every phone is processed through a responsible zero landfill system.

We receive money for every phone donated to Shelter Alliance. Please drop off your phones at The Women’s Center, or consider hosting a cell phone drive to benefit clients of The Women’s Center. Thank you!

A Sweet Thank You to Our Bakers!

Our individual and group volunteer bakers remind us of those very special friends in our lives - the friends who generously and quietly do those little things that make you smile when you really need it.

So many of our weekly support groups are made just a little easier with a pan of homemade brownies or cookies! Our volunteers who give 20 hours of their personal time to attend Advocate Training and learn what they need to know to work alongside our clients are sustained and treated through those hours with endless breakfast treats and afternoon snacks. All of our holiday parties and special seminars have an individual touch which says “someone really cares” in the form of homemade goodies from our wonderful volunteer bakers.

Many thanks to those who have so generously provided homemade treats!
Anniversary Luncheon Keynote Offered Inspiration

The Anniversary Luncheon, held May 2 at the Italian Community Center, encouraged those in the audience to “Embark on a New Journey.” As Executive Director Angela Mancuso explained in her opening remarks, “When someone comes to The Women’s Center, it’s the first step of their journey... but it’s by no means the last. The Women’s Center stays by their side every step of the way.” This year’s luncheon focused on the issue of human trafficking and on empowering survivors to rebuild their lives.

James L. Santelle, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, spoke to the prevalence of trafficking in Wisconsin. His comments provided local context and offered hope regarding legal steps being taken to address the issue. The highlight of the event was an inspiring keynote from Lisa T.D. Nguyen, the founder and executive director of Senhoa Foundation. Senhoa supports vulnerable persons and survivors of human trafficking in South East Asia. Lisa reminded the audience that big changes start small: In order to have an impact, “you can start with one life.” Lisa shared stories of her work with survivors and motivated guests to take action to empower women.

The Luncheon successfully raised $63,542 for The Women’s Center. Thank you to all of our event sponsors, auction donors, emcee Toya Washington, and guests! Event photos can be viewed on our Facebook page.

| American Paper & Packaging | Emergency Medical Associates | ProHealth Care, Inc. |
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| Bead & Button Magazine | Galleria West Shopping Center | Sussex Leo Club |
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The Women’s Center had another successful **Match Day** this year thanks to our incredible supporters! Because of your donations, funding for our free programs and services received a much-needed boost. Thank you to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Brewers Community Foundation, Faye McBeath Foundation and our donors for your generous contributions!
Volunteer Spotlight: Margit Sydow

Margit Sydow is “one of the most outstanding and loved volunteers who has ever walked through our doors” says volunteer coordinator Mary Akers. “Her willingness to do absolutely anything we have ever needed, and things we had not even thought we needed, has won her a place in all of our hearts.”

Margit has been volunteering at The Women’s Center since January 2013. She particularly loves working in the Peace Garden doing landscaping and planting flowers. However, she is more than happy to jump in where she is needed on any given day, whether that’s cleaning stairwells or the shelter floor, sorting donations, or helping at the front desk. She is also great at recruiting family and friends to help out by cleaning carpets or donating trees. If she learns we need anything, she is on a mission to find it for us!

When asked why she chooses to volunteer here, Margit explains, “Volunteering at The Women’s Center gives me a sense of self-worth, purpose and accomplishment. When I first started it was because I felt The Women’s Center had a wonderful mission, and I wanted to learn how I could contribute and help make a difference.

“Once I started getting involved, I realized that the staff members are very special, valuable people. They are very caring, talented people that make a difference in people’s lives on a daily basis. I am honored to be associated with them. I enjoy taking care of some of the behind the scenes work to make The Women’s Center a safe and clean environment to live and work in. I feel I receive more than I give.”

Remember The Women’s Center in your Will

Centerpoint is published by The Women’s Center, Inc., a private, non-profit charitable organization. The mission of The Women’s Center is to provide safety, shelter and support to women and their families and to facilitate their development.

Comments regarding Centerpoint should be directed to Dana at 262-522-3805. As a United Way agency, The Women’s Center encourages you to support the United Way of Waukesha County.