

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Take a break from sweatpants and leggings -- wear jeans for a purpose on April 29, Denim Day.

Tomorrow, Wednesday, April 29 is Denim Day, a world-wide movement to stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual assault by wearing jeans to address erroneous attitudes of victim blaming. Locally, The Women's Center observes this day annually with their EmPower Luncheon, which, like so many other events, had to be cancelled this year due to COVID-19.

In past years, speakers like Terry Crews, Aly Raisman and Elizabeth Smart have addressed audiences of almost 900 community and business leaders, advocates and survivors, many of whom dressed in denim jackets, jeans, and even denim shoes to show their support for survivors of sexual assault.

This year, The Women's Center is encouraging the community to EmPower Survivors from home through an online campaign to raise awareness and funds for their work to provide safety, shelter, and support to empower survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Individuals can wear denim and post a photo to social media to help build awareness, or donate online to support The Women's Center's work. Template posts and images to share are available on The Women's Center website at www.twcwaukesha.org.

This campaign is especially timely, as across the country, domestic violence has increased during the COVID-19 outbreak, proving that shelters and programs like The Women's Center are essential to the communities they serve.

The Women's Center's 24-Hour Hotline has seen a 12% increase in calls over the past month when compared to the same time last year. Advocates are spending more time with each caller as the situations they are seeing are also increasingly complex and often highly lethal. More widely, dispatchers in Waukesha County have reported 33.8% more calls about domestic violence incidents since the COVID-19 Safer at Home order took effect, compared to the same time last year.

The Governor's order makes a special provision for those whose homes are not safe places: "Individuals whose homes or residences are unsafe or become unsafe, such as victims of domestic violence, are permitted and urged to leave their home and stay at a safe alternative location."

The Women's Center has remained open and available throughout the order and continues to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking by providing emergency shelter, a 24-Hour Hotline, and over the phone counseling and advocacy services, as well as helping with restraining orders. These services are free and confidential to anyone who needs them.

Call The Women's Center's 24-Hour Hotline at 262.542.3828 or toll-free at 888.542.3828 to be connected to services, or visit their website at www.twcwaukesha.org.

For further information or to schedule an interview, contact Angela Mancuso, Executive Director, at 262.522.3809 (direct line) or email her at angelam@twcwaukesha.org.

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About The Women's Center

Founded in 1977, The Women's Center serves adult and child survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and trafficking. The Women's Center offers free and comprehensive programming including: emergency shelter & 24-Hour Hotline; legal advocacy; family counseling; domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse counseling; substance abuse and mental health support; transitional living; community education and violence prevention; and employment counseling and life-skills development.