

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Women's Center Leads Community Efforts to Raise Awareness and Address Rape Culture During Sexual Assault Awareness Month

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WAUKESHA, Wis. – The Women's Center encourages all to take action this month in preventing sexual violence and learn how we, as a community, can come together to address this pervasive crime and create a safer, healthier community that does not tolerate sexual assault.

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About one in three women and nearly one in six men in the United States have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. However, sexual assault is the most under-reported crime – only 23% of assaults are reported to the police. 90% of victims knew the person who sexually assaulted them. Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), held every April, is an opportunity to improve understanding, to dispel myths and stereotypes, and work together to prevent it.

The Women's Center's Executive Director, Angela Mancuso, stated, "This year for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we are focusing on addressing rape culture, which is the values, beliefs, and behaviors in society that trivialize and normalize sexual violence. These are the structures that have enabled perpetrators like Harvey Weinstein to thrive for decades while so many people in his world were very aware of what he was doing."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Angela Mancuso

The Women's Center has coordinated opportunities for community members to:

- Attend the virtual EmPower Luncheon on Wednesday, April 28 featuring Pulitzer Prize winning reporters Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, who broke the news of Harvey Weinstein's decades of sexual assault and abuse for the New York Times. All proceeds from this event will directly benefit adult and child survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, child abuse, and trafficking through The Women's Center's trauma informed, comprehensive programs, which are always offered at no cost.
- Sign up to receive weekly virtual toolkits throughout April, which include resources that you can share to help build awareness about sexual assault such as graphics, sample text, and display materials. Register as an individual or a company at: www.twcwaukesha.org/events/saam.

- Participate in Denim Day on April 28 by wearing jeans to show solidarity with sexual assault survivors and as a statement that a clothing choice never excuses sexual assault. Info on the history on this global movement can be found at: www.denimdayinfo.org.

As the only agency in Waukesha County providing supportive services to those affected by sexual assault and abuse, including trafficking, The Women's Center is proud to be a community leader in advocating for survivors and invites the public to join the conversation.

"We want everyone to know that help is always available, whether it is immediately after an assault, months, or years down the line, through our 24-Hour Hotline and advocacy programs. Survivors of all genders, ages, and backgrounds will be supported, welcomed, and respected at The Women's Center," stated Mancuso.

The Women's Center leads a wide range of initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual assault. These include violence prevention and community education programming, which can be tailored to school groups, businesses, and civic or religious organizations; 1:1 support and advocacy within legal, housing, healthcare, and other systems for adult and child survivors of sexual violence; rape crisis response for sexual assault survivors at Carroll University and four area hospitals.

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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, confidential and comprehensive programming including: emergency shelter and 24-Hour Hotline; domestic violence and sexual abuse 1:1 support; legal advocacy; transitional living and housing assistance; rape crisis response; employment coaching and life-skills development; community education, violence prevention initiatives, and more.