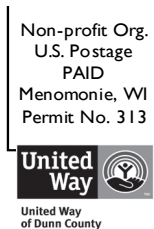




The Bridge to Hope
P.O. Box 700
Menomonie, WI 54751



Advocacy services for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and human trafficking

Return Service Requested


Providing a bridge to hope that creates a safer, more just and compassionate society

SAVE THE DATE:



Designer Purse Bingo

April 30th @ Off Broadway Banquet Center



HELP HOMELESS

The Bridge to Hope will be participating in The Family Radio's yearly *Help for the Homeless* hygiene drive running February 13th through March 6th.

There will be a collection box in Walgreens here in Menomonie. Items needed are personal hygiene products, toilet paper, and paper towels, diapers and household cleaners.

All the donations directly benefit us!



Thank you to the Menomonie Lion's Club for their donation of food and kids toys for Christmas!



December 2021 Newsletter
Editor: Brittany Olson

When will it end?

We continue to be stunned by news stories of yet another case of domestic violence. Many folks were riveted by the Gabby Petito search, (while similar cases of victims who were people of color received little media attention). The recent parade tragedy in Waukesha was preceded by a domestic assault the day before. The victim had been hit in the face, and her partner had tried to run her over with his vehicle. There is a strong correlation between those who commit acts of mass violence, and those who assault their partners. 60% of the mass shootings in the past six years were committed by men who had histories of domestic violence. This violence affects entire communities, and illustrates how domestic violence is not just a "private matter."

The recent Netflix series, "Maid," gives an amazingly realistic view of the barriers faced by a victim. When asked by a social worker if she's a victim of domestic abuse, the character looks surprised and offended and replies, "No, he's never hit me. I don't want to take a bed in a domestic abuse shelter from someone who really needs it." Like many folks, she had a limited understanding of what domestic abuse looks like. She thought that domestic abuse was just physical violence. It's much more complicated than that. It's the partner who doesn't care if your car won't run, who "forgets" to come home in time to watch the kids while you go to work, and who constantly undermines all your efforts to be anything other than who they've decided you are. The effects on the victim are cumulative, and they eventually have such a low opinion of their own worth and value that they give up trying to be who they really are.

Domestic abuse won't end until we embrace the right of everyone to basic human rights. The United Nations, in 1948, issued a Universal Declaration of Human Rights that stated, "Recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. It is a basic human right to be free of tyranny in our own homes." As we gather with family and friends this holiday season, may we be willing to express our concern for those who live in fear and are being bullied. May we have the courage to speak up when we hear friends or family disparage other groups as being less than human, and may we strive to embrace all people as our sisters and brothers.

We can do this...together.

Naomi Cummings, Executive Director

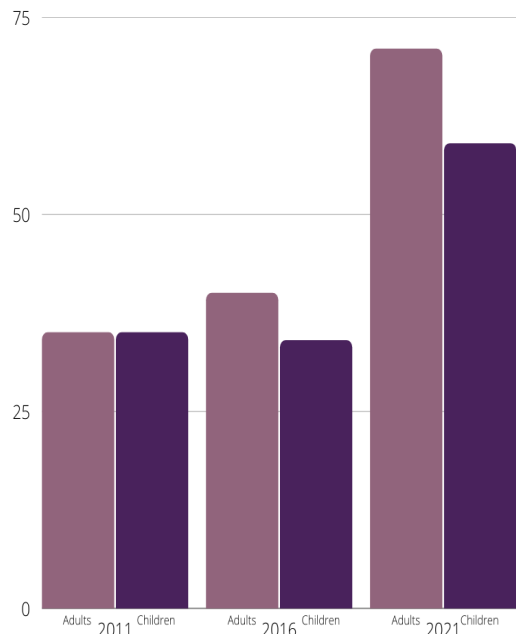


RETIREMENT

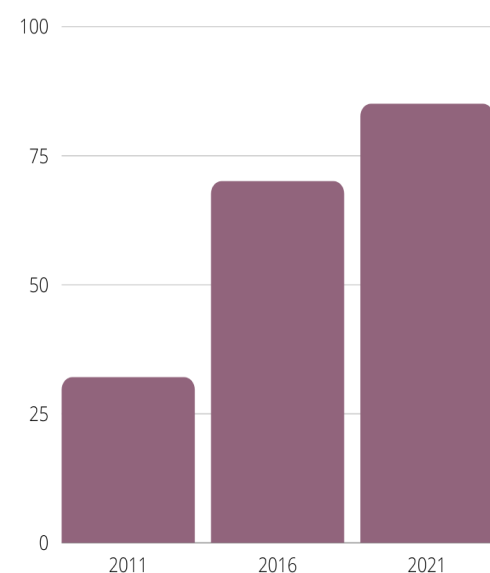
Naomi Cummings Announces Upcoming Retirement

After almost 12 years as Executive Director of The Bridge to Hope, Naomi Cummings recently announced that she is planning to retire in May. *"I would like to shift gears and slow down a bit, and pursue some of my other interests. It has been such an honor to be the director of this agency; I've been very grateful to have this opportunity. I'm very proud of our community, and how they have opened their hearts to meet the needs of victims and survivors. We have such an excellent staff and Board of Directors that I have no doubt that The Bridge to Hope will continue to fill a vital need in our community."* Naomi said.

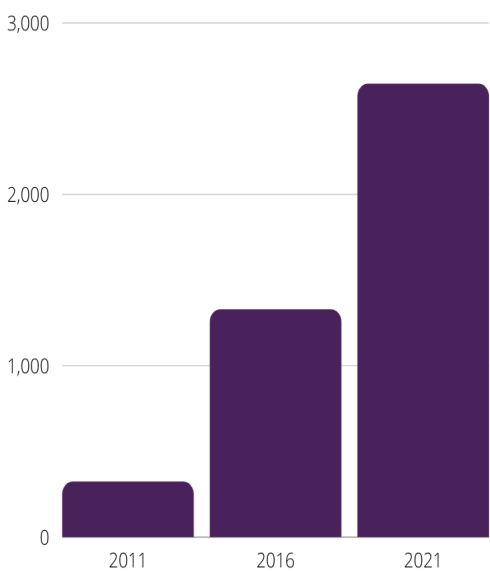
10 Years of Growing Services to Victims



Shelter



Restraining Orders



Hotline Calls

“Maid”

What would motivate a mother to take her three-year-old child in the middle of the night and leave their home with only the clothes on their backs and \$37.00 in cash? Does a mother normally do this not knowing where she will have a place to stay, or a place to find food, or a way to support herself and her child? What happens when she finds a job as a maid, but then loses her transportation and she can't get to work?

"Maid" is a mini-series on Netflix, based on a true story, that takes us into the life of a mother and her daughter who are going through the struggles that many women in our society face every day. "Maid" also helps us to understand what leads a mother to go back to the abuser because he says that he has changed, only to realize that it doesn't take long and she is in the same situation that she was in before.

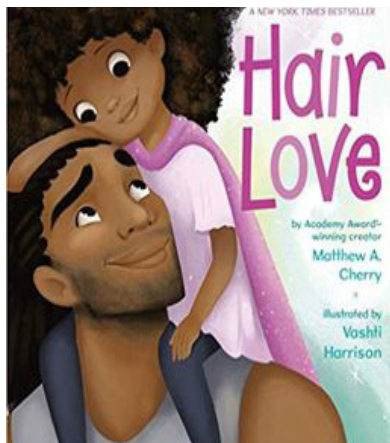


David Natzke, Board Member

Offering Diversity through Books

Here at the Bridge to Hope, all are welcome. We want to show this in the books we provide for families to read. Please check out our Amazon book list if you are interested in ordering a book to help show kids that they are unique and loved. You can have them shipped to us at PO Box 700 or drop them off here anytime. Thank you!

- Rainbow: The First Book of Pride
- It Feels Good to be Yourself
- C is for Consent
- A is for Activist
- The Proudest Blue
- Iron Widow
- Hair Love
- Brown Girl Dreaming
- Chlorine Sky
- The Colors of Us



Words from Our Board Chair

I am not much of a “writer” so I will just speak from the heart. As you may or may not know, Naomi will be retiring spring 2022. Naomi has been instrumental to the continued growth of our services offered and financial stability. I have been on the board for three years now and have learned so much from her and about her. There is so much she does for not only our clients but the staff as well. All without expecting any recognition. It’s just who she is. I have been so impressed by her management style; I am almost speechless. Naomi ensures the staff not only serve our clients but that the staff maintain their mental health, work, and home-life balance.

Although we all know that no one is perfect, she comes pretty darn close. I know I can speak for the current and past board members when I say she has made an incredible impact. We will be forever grateful. We wish Naomi nothing but the very best on her next chapter in life.

I would also like to welcome our newest Board of Directors members – Marsha Harrison and Marni Waznik. Marsha has extensive experience in marketing and event planning, Marni has a vast amount of HR experience as well as non-profits. Both have strong community ties and bring a wealth of knowledge. We are extremely fortunate to have them join the board. Welcome Marsha and Marni!



Please have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

– Mary Osteraas, Board of Directors Chair

LOOKING TO DONATE?

WE ARE IN NEED OF THESE ITEMS:

- Culturally Specific Hair Products
- Bath Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Pillows
- Tampons
- Razors
- Nail Clippers
- Q-Tips
- Laundry Soap
- Dish Soap
- New Socks and Underwear
- L, XL, XXL Sweatpants, Sweatshirts, Pajamas
- Full-Size Shampoo/Conditioner



The Bridge to Hope Board of Directors

Mary Osteraas: **Chair**
Janice Neitzel: **Vice Chair**
Stacie Breitung: **Treasurer**
Mickey Boyle
Corita Forster
David Natzke
Dr. Megan Bayrd
Jennifer Knutson
Marsha Harrison
Marni Waznik

Thank you to the wonderful community members that answered our request for blankets for our SANE bags. We received 75 blankets!

Thank you to Mary Marin for felting wool snowfolks for our shelter clients!



Our heartfelt thanks to Mary Osteraas, who is completing her second year as Chair of our Board of Directors. We are so grateful for her leadership, good cheer, and willingness to go the extra mile on behalf of survivors. Her leadership in streamlining and updating our Employee Handbook was invaluable, and she always made our meetings fun. Fortunately, she will continue as a board member, sharing her wisdom and experience.

Thanks Mary!



Gifts Recieved Since Our Last Newsletter (as of December 9th)

Anonymous
in memory of Ruth Cook

Anonymous
in honor of Catlin Canon

Anonymous
Liddy & John Achter
Ellen Adler
in memory of Peter, Jim, Helen, Dorothy, and John

Barb Anderson
Jennifer Anderson
Pat & Pete Avery
Pam & Mike Baier
Bill & Mary Ann Bailey
Carol Bakke
K.A. Baumgardner
in memory of my mother

Patricia Bilse
Richard L. Biondich
Georgia Blanchard
in memory of Don Blanchard

Keena Bolton-Holz
Fred & Margaret Breisch
Stacie Breitung & Steve Bodart
Pat & Lisa Brogan
William Burkett
in memory of our sister in-law Kathy Stamper

Eldon & Joan Burstad
Dennis & Antoinette Ciesielski
Dave Cook
in honor of Anne Frantz-Cook

Phil Diser
Leonard & Marian Ellison
LeeAnn Engfer
James & Janice Erdman
in memory of Mary Lund

Dawn Fetter
Corita Forster
Chris & Erin Forster
Celene Frey & Roy Ostenso
Judy Gaier
Glenn & Janice Gehring
Luisa Gerasimo & Mike Helfman
Robert & Laura Giede
Cynthia Gilberts
Carlyle & Ruth Gilbertson
Tracy Glenz
Robert or Karen Goers
Richard & Denise Goers
Barry or Emily Hinds
John & Martha Hove
Vada Husby
Brent and Sharon Husby
John & Judy Jax
Ron & Jan Jordan
Richard & Rita Juhl
in honor of Kat Brogan, our grand daughter

Neil & Marie Koch

Father Thomas Krieg
Carolyn Kuether & Tom Aarrestad
Lanna & Larry Laird
Warren & Marion Lang
Christian or Cheryl Larson
Pat LaVenture
in memory of Florence Barlow

Lynn & Ed LaVenture
in memory of Tom Franklin

Howard & Charlotte Lee
John and Linda Lenz
in honor of Patty Bosse’s retirement

Sandra Lindow
David & Linda Lindquist
Roger and Mary Marin
You folks are awesome! I love the new program you started for students!

Peggy & Michael McAloon
K. McCardle
in memory of Dan McCardle

Kelly & Laura McCullough
Arthur & Sandra McNaughton
Jim & LaWanna McSweeney
in memory of Eugene & Jean Nikolas

Diane Mercil
in memory of Jerry Fahey

Jesse Merkel
Amy & Aaron Mittlestadt
Susan Mommsen
in honor of Bonalyn & Dan and Louise & Dave

Ruth Morey
Norman & Donna Mrdutt
David and Nila Natzke
Merlin & Patricia Nevala
Ellen & Fred Ochs
Sharon & Marlin Oebser
Bill & Linda Olson
Resort Report
Ann Pesek
in memory of George A. Pesek

Randy & Patricia Radle
Julee Reckin-Thierer & Michelle Thierer

Kathleen Remund & Diane Light
Donna Rineck
Mary Riordan
in memory of Dan Riordan

Michael & Dori Ritland
Elizabeth Robinson
Edward or Susan Roethke
in memory of Leone Donley

Jo Ann Rucker
in honor of Cedar Falls Building Systems

Jeanette Scheuermann
Lois Schultz
Paul & Lynn Schwartz
in honor of Tim Fitzgerald

Jill & Lee Schwebs

Brian & Debra Shefchik
Bruce & Terry Siebold
Larry & Joan Sinz
Irene & Charles Smith
Randy & Kay Sommerfeld
James & Beverly Spagnoletti
Doug or Chris Stratton
Kris & Bill Tice
in memory of Jo & Ken Iverson

Gail Tourville
in memory of grandmothers

Rita Ulesich
Dominique Vargas
Lorene Vedder & Mike Brandt
Otto & Marilyn Waldbuesser
Gladys Waller
Kathryn Zimmerman & Steven Richter
in memory of Karen Zimmerman

In honor of Lynn LaVenture

Patrick & Jane Culbert
Joe & Margaret Hagaman
Janet & Tom Modahl
Annette & John Taylor

Corrections from our last newsletter

In addition of “in honor of Mary Riordan” by Cindy and Lee Theorin, and other Friends of Mary.

*William and Bonnie DeHoff
In honor of Mary Allison*

In memory of Nancy Schofield

Dunn Co. Master Gardeners Assoc.
Jean Accola & Steven Yata Peinovich
Kevin & Lauren Berg
Jean Biggs
Rick & Mitzi Bolin
Naomi Cummings
Wendy Dittmann
Leonard & Marian Ellison
Michael or Lynn Fekete
Judy Ferguson
Katherine Flug
Susan Foxwell
Ron & Jan Jordan
Sheron Nero & Heather Obenberger
Lee & Mary Jean Nichols
Fred & Ellen Ochs
Joe Plouff & Lavonne Solem
Pat & Dave Reisinger
Ken Schofield
David & Diane Schofield
James Sperstad
Bill & Brenda Swannack
Tracy & Mark Thomas

Judith Varty



Gifts Recieved from Organizaitons

AFL-CIO DBA Greater West Central Area Labor
ARC of Dunn County
for Thanksgiving meals

Andersen Foundation
Cedar Corporation
Cedarbrook Church
Eau Galle Cheese Factory Inc
First Congregational Church
Hay River Lutheran Church Bible Study
Hearst Marketing Resources- Jack Hearst
Hoof & Paw Clinic
Jackie Hunt State Farm Insurance
James Krave, Attorney
Kadinger’s Inc
Little Elk Creek Lutheran ChurchWomen
Loren LaPointe Drywall
Mary Nails
Menomonie Lion’s Club
Menomonie Women’s Group

New Hope Lutheran Church
New Life Lutheran Church
Resort Report
Rock Elm United Methodist Women
The Covia Foundation- Matthew Backman
Tice Appraisals
in memory of our parents

UW Stout University Housing
fundraiser from Student Leadership Assistants

Waznik Moseler Group, LLC
from Women’s Golf Outing

Woodwind Park
in honor of Play it Forward, Hunting Widow Wine Walk

Xcel Energy

Van Fundraiser Donors

Abby Terese
Agnes Stipetich
Andrew Leskinen
Anne Juhl Legeros
Barb Schmelzle Memorial Fund
Becky Kneer
Beth Preston
Brittany Dondlinger
Bryan Horwath
Carl Vandermeulen
Catherine Puisto
Cindy Gould Marsh
Colette LaBuda
Colleen Garnevicus
Corinna Korpela
Debra Pollock
Denise Skinner
Donna Rineck
Doug & Ann Larson Family Fund
Dustin Davey
Ed Wiley
Ellen Shafonda Liberto
Frank Garnevicus
Gottieb Harvatine
Heidi Entorf
Holly Barrett
Jane Hulett
Jane Redig
Jennifer Luciani
Jill ZumBrunnen Schwebs
Joe & Deb Feeney
Jose Miguel Schumacher
Julie Bendel
Karen A Miller
Karen Myers Bonander
Kathy Barrett
Kimberly Sullivan
Kim & Gerald Porter
Kris Korpela
Kristen Hoag Billingsley
Kurt D. Larson
Kyle Vandenberg Brush
LeAnne Sass Talberg
Lisa Juhl Brogan

Luisa Gerasimo
Mari Jamieson
Marion Lang
Mary Burkett
Matthew John
Meg Cyr Mangin
Megan Bayrd
Meghan Price
Micah Colvin
Michael Witter
Naomi Cummings
Neil Brown
Niki Rau Yarrington
Nita Fitzgerald
Pat Brunner Rosenberg
Peggy Cramer Qually
Peter Juhl
Philip Diser
Randy Branan
Rebecca Behrens
Rich Homa
Ron Welsch
Ryan Leckel
Sarah O'Grady
Sarah Petralia Harning
Shanon Lehrke
Sharon Lewandowski
Shawna Clough
Shelby Lawrence Hinshon
Stef Jax
Susie 'Watkins' Giertz
Tara Bergeson
The Micah Fund
Toby & Marian Ellison
Vicki Price
Wendy Dittmann



Connections at The ARC of Dunn County

The ARC of Dunn County, Inc. is dedicated to providing quality services that enable people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to achieve their full potential, enhance their quality of life, promote independence and be active participants in their community. The ARC of Dunn County offers several programs that strive to provide social and learning opportunities for individuals with disabilities and their families. One of these programs is the *Connections* program.

Connections is a great way to connect with others, connect with our community and learn life skills. *Connections* meets Monday–Thursday from 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. and provides many opportunities to take part in activities such as: life skills lessons, arts/music, volunteering, cooking, building and strengthening friendships and health and fitness classes. One of the ways in which The Bridge to Hope participates in the *Connections* program is by Angie, the Director of Sexual Assault Victim Services, doing a twice a month group with clients. They focus on healthy relationships, peer pressure, self-advocacy, boundaries, consent, and other empowering topics. This group allows for participants practice their skills and to feel empowered to make difficult choices.

If you would like more information about the *Connections* program or the ARC of Dunn County, you can contact Tawanda by emailing - tawanda@arcofdunncounty.org or calling the ARC office at 715-235-7373.

We are grateful to Elizabeth Eiseth for her generous bequeath to us. We were pleasantly surprised by the donation that we received it in the mail. Her generosity will be greatly remembered through the years.



Thank you Bryan LaVoy and Waznik Moseler group for their donation from their Women's Golf Outing!



Thank you IMT Insurance and Anshus Jewelers for sponsoring two trees for us to decorate at Wakanda Wonderland!



Andersen Foundation has granted us \$3,500 to help stock our pantry with common pantry staples, fresh produce, and additional meat options. We receive most of our pantry items from Feed My People but we wanted to provide a larger variety than what they offered. Thank you Andersen Foundation for making this option possible!

Andersen
CORPORATE FOUNDATION

Mary Nails has been a great supporter of ours. Mary is always willing to help out at her Nail Salon. Recently she donated all the tips from purple nail sets for the month of October; she also matched that donation!

Thank you Mary Nails for your support and generosity!!

Mary Nails & Co.

THE
SAFE Bar
NETWORK

The Bridge to Hope was recently the recipient of a grant that enabled ten different sexual assault service providers in Wisconsin to become certified as SAFE bar trainers. Coltra, our Legal Advocate, shared, "This grant caught my eye right away as a bartender/server who has worked in Menomonie bars and knows all too well that challenging situations can arise."

Coltra and Kat, our Sexual Assault Victim Services Advocate on the UW-Stout Campus, both received training and can now share that training with staff at local bars. "The training focuses on noticing concerning behavior, interrupting it effectively, and creating a workplace culture focused on taking action to increase safety and give everyone a safe night out. As a bar staff person, I know from experience that it is often hard to know when it's my place to step in or speak up, especially when the behavior could be directed at me, or threaten my job. This training helps to negate those fears by making it a team approach as a staff to identify issues and back each other up when addressing them. Beyond interrupting the behavior, the training also teaches how to provide support in a way that is safe for all. Once a bar is trained, they get window decals to display in the bar to boast that they are committed to make their bar safer," Coltra says.

Kat and Coltra are excited to train local bar staff. Keep your eyes open for the SAFE Bar decals! If you are interested in having your bar trained with this program, reach out to us.

Knapp Elementary Student Council decorated some beautiful stockings for our shelter residents. Thanks kids!



Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thrivent clients with membership can recommend where Thrivent distributes some of its charitable grant funds. These recommendations are shared by directing Choice Dollars to enrolled nonprofit organizations, such as The Bridge to Hope. One community member directed \$250 to The Bridge which enabled us to purchase books for clients. Choice Dollars designated during the calendar year can be directed until March 31st of the following year. If you are interested, please contact your financial advisor at Thrivent.

 **THRIVENT**
FINANCIAL®

Governor Evers signs Sexual Assault Bills

On December 6th, Governor Evers signed two bills that advocates in Wisconsin have been urging Wisconsin Legislators to pass for several years. Senate Bill 71 creates clear time frames for law enforcement to submit a Sexual Assault Kit, (evidence that is obtained from the victim after a sexual assault) to the State Crime Lab for testing. Senate Bill 94 creates a tracking system for those kits, so that survivors have the ability to obtain information about their location and status. These bills are a critical part of a trauma-informed response to sexual assault, as they restore power to survivors, offering them the ability to anonymously obtain information about the status of their sexual assault kits. Behind every sexual assault kit is a person, and by requiring prompt submission of their evidence kits for testing, it reassures them that the evidence collected from their bodies will not languish on a shelf in an evidence storage room for years. We applaud all those who worked on behalf of the passage of these much-needed bills!

Do you have a vehicle you could donate?

We have had several community members donate well-running vehicles to our shelter clients. Our advocates help facilitate the direct transfer to the new owner, while ensuring the confidentiality of all parties. One mother, who was the lucky recipient of a van wrote:

"This is an appreciation letter to tell you how grateful and happy I am for the vehicle you donated. You have no idea how helpful it has been for me and my children. We came out of a bad situation and are trying to change our lives for the better. We were taking the bus, and it got costly and was hard on us.

Now that the weather is getting worse, this van a true blessing to us. Thank you so much; you didn't have to do it, but you did. Thank you."

