



# HARBOR LIGHTS

Spring 2013

Newsletter of Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs

## HARBOR HOUSE'S LEGAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Harbor House's Legal Advocacy Program provides support, information, advocacy and court accompaniment to survivors of domestic violence and their children as they go through the criminal or civil legal system. In 2012, approximately 700 individuals accessed the program.

The services provided include assistance filing and obtaining temporary restraining orders and injunctions, court preparation, accompaniment for civil and criminal cases, safety plans, individual support and problem solving regarding legal issues and referrals to other appropriate support services. Advocates also make contact with victims whose partners have been arrested, informing them of their rights and how to access them as a crime victim in Wisconsin.

### Navigating the legal system

Many survivors cannot afford to hire an attorney to represent them or assist with a legal remedy, leaving them to navigate the legal system alone. Advocates provide a link between survivors and the legal system by giving needed support and information about their rights, options, and resources available to them. Advocates take the time to explain how the legal system works, the roles of criminal justice players and help survivors make sense of legal terminology so they can make informed decisions and successfully complete the legal process with a favorable outcome.

In 2012, approximately 116 individuals filed for a domestic abuse protection order in Outagamie County. Many survivors asked Harbor House for assistance in obtaining or enforcing a protection order. Advocates



explain the different types of orders, the process and help them explore whether pursuing a protection order as part of their bigger safety plan is the right option for them.

### Standing with survivors

Having been isolated by their abusers, survivors often lack a supportive network of friends and family and would have to attend court proceedings alone without the support of the Legal Advocacy Program. Standing up to her abuser and speaking out on her own behalf is intimidating for a survivor. Advocates work to empower clients with self advocacy to help ensure that their interests and the best interest of their children are at the forefront while participating in the legal system.

Since 1996, Harbor House has maintained a Court Watch Program in Outagamie County. The primary goals are to provide safety to victims of domestic violence, educate advocates, create awareness of potential inadequacies that exist in the legal system and hold batterers accountable. The Legal Advocate provides several trainings each year to new staff, student interns, as well as volunteers who wish to become involved in the court watch program.

## Firearm Surrender Protocol

Outagamie County is one of four counties selected by the Office of Justice Assistance for the Firearm Surrender Protocol Demonstration Project grant.

Under Wisconsin law, a person subjected to a domestic abuse or child abuse injunction is prohibited from possessing a firearm and must surrender any firearm that they currently own or possess. However, many counties lack a mechanism or person in place to oversee that the firearms are turned over and rely on the respondent to act in good faith and follow through on the court order.

Implemented into the court process on February 1, 2011, the Firearm Surrender Protocol Demonstration Project ensures the presence of an officer at each injunction hearing who then meets with the respondent immediately afterwards to arrange for surrender of firearms in compliance with the court order. If the respondent does not comply, the court holds a Hearing for Failure to Surrender Firearms.

The award of this grant and implementation of the protocol has improved the safety of domestic abuse and stalking victims in Outagamie County and has no doubt saved lives.

## Homicide Prevention Project

In November 2012, Outagamie County was selected to participate in the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Project in which the Domestic Violence Intervention Team (DVIT) works in-depth on homicide prevention efforts in their counties.

Of the 12 women murdered in Outagamie County since 1990, seven of those involved gun violence. Our DVIT team has chosen to investigate this issue further by looking closely at the following areas:

- Enforcement of firearm surrender and follow-through with third-party safe-keepers to inform them of the law for returning firearms to the offender, and other trends.
- Opportunities for and access to services for victims in the community.
- Prior opportunities for offender accountability and restrictions of the offender possessing a firearm.

This project runs from January 2013 through June 2014. Our team hopes to gather and analyze the data and share our findings and future projects with the community.

For more details on the programs featured in this newsletter, please visit our website at

[www.harborhouseonline.org](http://www.harborhouseonline.org)

Harbor House's Mission

To lead a community-wide partnership in the awareness and prevention of domestic violence and abuse, and to offer safety and support to diverse families in crisis.



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Harbor House is supported by United Way



**HARBOR HOUSE HAPPENINGS**

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual A Time to Laugh Comedy Night Charity Gala:**  
 West Corporation presents the hilarious improv talents of ComedySportz, as they delight and entertain at Harbor House’s annual spring fundraising event on **Friday, March**



**15**, at Liberty Hall in Kimberly. The event features fun, frivolity and fundraising through raffle, silent auction, live auction and a Wine, Chocolates and Cheese

Wall. All components this year center around a “sportz” theme and celebrate the healing power of laughter for domestic abuse survivors.

Individual tickets are still available at \$75 per person.  
 Contact: Beth Schnorr at beths@harborhousedap.org or (920) 955-9120.

**SAVE THE DATE! SATURDAY, OCT. 6:**

Harbor House’s 2nd annual Warrior Princess Mud Run at Mosquito Hill in New London. The Warrior Princess



Mud Run is a non-competitive 5K run and obstacle course designed for women, men and (New this Year!) teens 13 and older, of varying fitness levels. The obstacles are fun and unique with just enough challenge to royally get your heart pumping! To find out more visit:

[www.warriorprincessmudrun.org](http://www.warriorprincessmudrun.org)

**NEXT OPPORTUNITY FOR MEN TO STEP UP: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Voices of Men Breakfast—Tuesday, June 11 at the Radisson Paper Valley. Learn more at: [www.voicesofmen.com](http://www.voicesofmen.com)**



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