



CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

Save the date

Thurs., March 5

BEACON OF HOPE

Beacon of Hope, our agency's fundraising event at Spring Lake Country Club, celebrates the Roaring Twenties with a cocktail hour, silent auction, plated dinner and short program.

6 REASONS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS BEACON OF HOPE

1. Celebrate our agency's long history in North Ottawa
2. Show your commitment to ending Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
3. Network with community and business leaders from the Tri-Cities who support our cause
4. Enjoy a 1920's era dance demonstration
5. Meet a client from the Center and hear about her journey
6. Listen to sounds of the Jazz Age performed by students from Grand Haven High School

Thursday, March 5

Spring Lake Country Club, Doors open at 5:30pm

Tickets \$75/person, Roaring Twenties theme

Buy your tickets at cwitmi.org/events



REACH FOR THE STARS

Center for Women in Transition is proud to announce **Diane Rosenfeld** as our 2015 Reach for the Stars speaker. A lecturer at Harvard Law School and Director of Harvard's Gender Violence Program, Ms. Rosenfeld will be addressing the topic of sexual assault on campus.

Prior to teaching at Harvard, Ms. Rosenfeld served as the Senior Counsel to the Office of Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice. Ms. Rosenfeld also co-produced with Cambridge Documentary Films "Rape Is..." which has received several film awards.

Ms. Rosenfeld brings attention to an often-ignored subject, one that has recently crept into the national conversation following high-profile cases at schools like Columbia University and Vanderbilt. Center for Women in Transition serves more than 120 sexual assault survivors each year, primarily through our trauma therapy and sexual assault nurse examiner program.

Thursday, April 16

The Pinnacle Center, Hudsonville, Doors open at 6pm

Find more information at cwitmi.org/events



Thurs., April 16



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

We may be in the midst of winter, but we are already looking forward to spring – a season of renewal, hope, and possibilities. One of our favorite ways to prepare for spring is to open our Girls on the Run (GOTR) season. While the ground is still covered in snow, girls are gathering after school to explore and develop their strength and character. Thanks to over 150 dedicated volunteer coaches, more than 1,500 girls learn lessons about healthy life choices and relationships, respect for self and others. All of this happens while the girls train for their celebratory 5k in May, when every team joins

together at the Grand Valley campus in Allendale. The lessons from GOTR help girls develop into young women with their own identity and value. Stronger youth build stronger communities –the core focus of Center for Women in Transition's Violence Prevention work.

We approach our violence prevention work at the individual, institutional, and community level. Girls on the Run, our Domestic Violence in the Workplace training, and Violence Prevention in Schools program are all part of our strategy to raise awareness about domestic and sexual violence and prevent it from happening in our community. Through these programs people learn individual lessons, build team skills, and develop policies and strategies as organizations to recognize and prevent violence in their own environments. Alone and as a team, we learn how to create communities of compassion, safety, and respect. So as we welcome spring, let's continue to learn and grow together, renew our commitment to building a stronger community, and nurture leadership in youth and in ourselves to end domestic and sexual violence.

Charisse Mitchell
Executive Director



The Center's mission is to respond to, reduce, and prevent domestic and sexual violence. This mission will be achieved through education, collaboration, and advocacy, with crisis and supportive services to victims and survivors.

Email: mail@cwitmi.org
Website: www.cwitmi.org

Executive Director:
Charisse Mitchell

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The Center for Women in Transition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.



www.facebook.com/cwit.mi



Welcome

We welcome four new staff members to the Center this month!

Barb Clymer, Transitional Housing Advocate

Barb comes to the Center with an extensive background in assisting at risk families, most recently as a family support worker with the Healthy Families program through Catholic Charities. She has two grown children and lives in Holland with her husband Barry and their golden retriever Guinness. She enjoys spending time with her granddaughter, Macy. Barb tells us she is, "looking forward to empowering women so that they can reach their potential!"

Joining us as on-call shelter assistants at Ginny's Place:
Marley Sabo, Martha Skelton, and Sue Zuidema

HOW CAN I HELP?

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and controlling behavior used to have power over one's partner in a relationship. It can include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or financial abuse.

When someone I know is experiencing abuse in their relationship:

- Listen and believe them! Minimizing or excusing the abuse does not help.
- Show empathy and understanding.
- Don't automatically tell them to leave. Help them to feel empowered to explore their options, make their own decisions, and support them in their decision making.
- If they choose to remain in an abusive relationship, you could express concern for their safety and let them know that you are willing to listen and support them no matter what they decide.
- Affirm that the abuse is not their fault.
- Direct them to resources that can help with support and safety planning.
- You could say:
 - “I support you and I'm here for you.”
 - “I'm worried about your safety.”
 - “You deserve to feel safe, valued, and respected in your relationship.”

Hold someone I know accountable when they are abusive:

- Be aware of the victim's safety.
- Be honest and let the offending individual know that abuse is not acceptable.
- Reiterate that the abusive behavior is a choice. It is not the victim's fault. The abuse ends when the individual chooses to stop their violent or controlling behavior.
- Offer to support his or her efforts to make changes.
- When you witness harmful behavior or language, please try to have a positive impact and intervene to promote respectful behavior.
- You could say:
 - “I care about you as a friend but I cannot condone your behavior.”
 - “There is no excuse for violence, control, or abuse in your relationship.”
 - “You and your partner both deserve to feel safe, valued, and respected.”





A NEW SPACE FOR ART AND HEALING

Thanks to the generosity of a few donors, the art room at Ginny's Place is receiving a much-needed facelift!

According to research conducted by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV), "Thoughtful design can help to empower parents, support children's needs, and facilitate healing. It can help survivors rebuild a sense of dignity and allow staff to focus on providing survivor centered advocacy." Out of this research came the Building Dignity project (buildingdignity.wscadv.org), a trauma-informed program which inspired the plans for our new space.

Following Building Dignity's recommendations, the new art room will incorporate sitting areas with soft rugs, fabrics, and pillows in updated colors and patterns, modular seating options for various family sizes, new built-in storage—some at floor level for small children—plus a toddler area.

For the 55 adults and 80 children who make Ginny's Place their home this year, the space will provide multiple benefits: opportunities for artistic healing, family craft nights, cozy spaces to rest and draw in restorative silence, and an organized, distraction-free place to work on school projects and homework.

We'll be sharing photos of the finished art room in our next newsletter. In the meantime, we're still looking for partners to provide some of the finishing touches. See the information below for how you can help.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We need your help! Our art room renovation has ongoing needs for supplies and funding. If you'd like to help out with this project, please call Ellie Davis at (616) 494-1744.

Thank you, West Michigan

Thanks to the generosity of our community, our agency's annual winter appeal raised more than \$209,000! This is a record-breaking number for our winter appeal, and we are truly honored by your support. On behalf of the many women and families we serve, thank you!





SHAME RESILIENCY GROUP

Our agency is always looking for innovative ways to support and empower our clients. This winter, Clinical Coordinator Holly Wilson developed a “shame resiliency” support group. Meeting once a week, this group is specifically for survivors of sexual trauma.

After attending a training last year, Wilson became aware of a curriculum developed by Dr. Brené Brown. A research professor at the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work and bestselling author, Dr. Brown has spent the past decade studying and speaking on the topics of vulnerability, worthiness, courage and shame. She defines shame as the, “intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging.”

Wilson explains, “Dr. Brown’s curriculum on shame is especially pertinent to the work we do here at the Center. While no one is immune to feeling shame, trauma survivors in particular can experience difficulty with the negative self-talk, feelings of fear, blame and secrecy which create conditions ripe for internalized shame.”

The shame resiliency group follows a curriculum developed by Dr. Brown and adapted for our clients. Each session begins with a DVD component and ends with a mix of educational and therapeutic group work. Some of the topics include recognizing shame as a feeling and a physical response, and identifying the personal triggers of shame.

According to Dr. Brown, the opposite of shame (and the goal of our support group) is to encourage empathy – practicing courage, compassion, and being comfortable making connections with others. Participants in the group will receive practical tools to understand and cope with their feelings in their everyday lives, an understanding of shame and how it can impact the healing process, and how to make connections that encourage empathy.

i For more information on this, and other support groups, please contact our crisis line at 800-848-5991.

SUPPORT GROUPS

We have several support groups running this winter. For more information on any of these groups including meeting times and locations, please call our crisis line at 800-848-5991.

- Domestic Violence Education and Support (DV 101) is an education and support group that includes information on the basics of unhealthy relationships and domestic violence including power and control, barriers to leaving an unhealthy relationship, and warning signs of an abusive personality. Day and evening groups.
- Self-Empowerment is the next step after DV 101 that looks deeper at healing oneself including topics such as rebuilding self-esteem, healthy boundaries and self-defeating behaviors. Evening group only.
- Spanish-language group is a combination of two groups listed above. Daytime group only.
- Peer led group is led by survivors after they have completed DV 101 and Self-Empowerment and feel ready for the next step of healing. Daytime group only.
- Parenting Workshop: Caring for Children Exposed to Trauma is a parenting skills class for families that have experienced abuse or violence in the home. Evening group only.
- Children’s Coping Skills Group is a therapy group for children who have been exposed to domestic violence. This group runs concurrently with our Parenting Workshop. Evening group only.
- Group for Survivors of Sexual Trauma changes based on the needs of clients. Past therapy groups have included Trauma Informed Yoga Practice, Healthy Coping Skills and Mindfulness, and Mastering Emotions. Call our crisis line at 800-848-5991 for more information on this cycle.

2014 VICTIM SERVICE NUMBERS

2,065

Callers Assisted
24 Hour Crisis Line

54

Patients Provided with
Forensic Exams
Sexual Assault
Nurse Examiner Program

151

Individuals Assisted
Personal Protection Orders

566

Individuals Served
Emergency Walk-in Services

67

Survivors Served
*Trauma Therapy:
Sexual Assault
(Individual and Group)*

44

Secondary Victims Served
*Trauma Therapy: Children
Exposed to Domestic Violence*



CENTER FOR
WOMEN IN
TRANSITION

135

Residents
Adults: 55 | Children: 80
*Emergency Shelter,
Ginny's Place*

196

Survivors Served
*Non-Residential Case
Management & Domestic
Violence Support Groups*

127

Program Participants
Adults: 36 | Children: 91
Transitional Housing

292

Victims Served
*Crisis Intervention Advocacy/
Follow-up after a Domestic
Violence Arrest*

IN THE COMMUNITY

Join us for **Beacon of Hope**. This Gin & Jazz themed event takes place Thursday, March 5 at the Spring Lake Country Club. Doors open at 5:30pm for a cocktail hour and silent auction. Program begins at 7:15pm.

Head over to **The Piper Restaurant** anytime March 24–26 and support our agency. Bring in your coupon (featured right) and the Center receives a donation. Great food, great view, great cause—what more can you ask for?

Celebrate the **23rd annual Reach for the Stars** on Thursday, April 16 at the Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville. Guest speaker Diane Rosenfeld will speak to the timely issue of campus sexual assault. Doors open at 6pm.

Mark your calendar! Saturday, May 16th is the day of the **Postal Food Drive** for the Holland area. How do you participate? It's easy—just fill your pre-delivered bag with non-perishable food items and hang it on your mailbox. Our agency, along with others in the area, is a direct recipient of these donations. In fact, our emergency shelter saves thousands of dollars thanks to the Postal Food Drive! We also have volunteer opportunities available during Postal Food Drive. Contact Sherry at 616-494-1747 for more information.

The **annual Girls on the Run 5k** celebration event will be held Friday, May 29 at Grand Valley State University in Allendale. Find more details at gotroac.org.

Thank you

Barnes and Noble of Holland! We are grateful to be included in your Holiday Book Drive. We are already putting your generous donation to good use.

Girlfriends Fit Club! We are honored to be your nonprofit partner for the months of January and February.

Holiday Inn Spring Lake/Grand Haven! We were thrilled to be the beneficiary of your Love, Wine, and Chocolate event again this year.

Holland Sentinel! We value your partnership with our agency.

American Association of University Women! We appreciate your support of our Girls on the Run event.

Johnson Controls Inc., Care & Share! Your generous donation in support of our mission brings healing to the women, men and children we serve.

The Community Share—A Gentex Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area! Your ongoing support makes our work providing safe shelter possible.

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation Greatest Needs Fund! We appreciate your investment in our Victims' Relocation Fund.

BRING CWT TO DINNER

at
**THE PIPER
RESTAURANT**

20%

of your bill will be donated to
Center for Women in Transition
Valid on March 24, 25 and 26, 2015

The Piper Restaurant of Holland has generously teamed up with Center for Women in Transition for a special event to benefit our agency the last week of March.

WHO? Everyone! Skip your dinner prep and join us at the Piper Restaurant. Reservations are recommended; groups welcome.

WHAT? The Piper Restaurant will donate 20 percent of your bill to Center for Women in Transition!

WHEN? Tuesday through Thursday, March 24, 25 and 26

WHERE? Piper Restaurant, 2225 South Shore Drive, Holland, Michigan 49434

QUESTIONS? Contact Pat Eldean at (616) 335-5866



CENTER FOR
WOMEN IN
TRANSITION

Support Center for Women in Transition! Present this coupon at Piper Restaurant in Holland and 20 percent of your bill will be donated to Center for Women in Transition. Valid on March 24, 25 and 26, 2015.



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CENTER FOR
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TRANSITION

GINNY
JAZZ

JOIN US FOR A
ROARING TWENTIES STYLE PARTY

 **BEACON OF HOPE**
3rd Annual Celebration
Thursday, March 5, 2015
Doors open at 5:30pm
Spring Lake Country Club

Tickets \$75/person
1920's attire encouraged
but not required

To purchase tickets or for more
information, visit cwitmi.org/events
or call Ellie at 616-494-1744


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WHAT'S INSIDE

Announcing our 2015
Reach for the Stars speaker!

Updated Art Room at Ginny's
Place Emergency Shelter

New Shame Resiliency Group