



middle way house, inc.

Providing meaningful alternatives to living with violence



FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOURS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEBRA MORROW

As the long days of summer draw to a close and the hustle of the return of IU students has passed, our thoughts turn toward cooler autumn weather, sweaters (even tree sweaters), and Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This time of year I cannot help but to reflect on our good fortune to be part of a community that understands the need to support survivors and has consistently stood behind our work.

Our shelter was full throughout the summer months and kept our staff busy. When I think of the amazing courage of survivors who reached out for help to flee violence, often with children in tow, I am grateful we were available to provide them with vital resources. While our dedicated staff worked hard to provide support, I know it is the survivors who did the hardest work to rebuild their lives. As I consider this, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the community's support through donations, both financial and material. These donations not only provide necessary services and items, but also hope and encouragement to survivors. Seeing a child receive a donated backpack full of supplies for their first day at school or a mom working on a computer in the newly redecorated community room at The RISE! demonstrates how much our community contributes to our work and helps survivors to feel wrapped in love.

I cannot forget to share my appreciation for the community's longstanding support of our transitional housing program, The RISE!, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. Domestic violence is a leading cause of

homelessness for women and children. Many survivors report affordable housing as a significant barrier to leaving an abusive relationship. The RISE! helps address these obstacles through affordable housing while providing safety within a secured building. In addition to their own apartment, as families work toward their self-identified goals they also receive support from skilled advocates, who wrap survivors and their children in love.

Children have always been a priority and our dedication to helping them succeed continues with enthusiasm. The youth program at The RISE! offers a space where children build friendships and trust as they play and learn. It is a critical space that enables healing from the trauma of abuse in their family. It touches my heart to see so many children thrive because our staff and volunteers are dedicated to helping them feel wrapped in love.

As an agency and staff, we strive to give hope and encouragement to survivors. Please know that it is from you, the community, from which we find the hope, support, and encouragement to continue to do so. Without you, Middle Way House could not meet the ever-growing demand for our services. It takes an entire community to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and human trafficking. I am so thankful for your support. It is each of you that make Middle Way House (and me) feel wrapped in love!

Debra

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

On September 10th, the board of directors officially announced a transition in leadership. At its August meeting, the board expressed its appreciation to Michael DeNunzio, the outgoing president, for his many years of exceptional service to the organization. They honored him for deftly guiding Middle Way House for almost a decade, particularly during the past two years of leadership transition, which involved recognizing the legacy of the late Toby Strout while overseeing the search process and selection of the current executive director, Debra Morrow. DeNunzio will remain on the board as past-president while the organization undergoes a strategic planning process under the guidance of organization development consultant, Beth Applegate, MSOD.

The board voted in a slate of officers for the next two years which includes Kathleen Sideli as president, Michele Ridge as vice president, Sally Dunn continuing as secretary and Judy Maki continuing as treasurer. Sideli and Ridge both joined the board in the spring of 2016 and are pleased to be involved with Middle Way House at this important time of refocusing and planning for the future.

Kathleen Sideli, associate VP for overseas study at IU, for many years has been committed to strengthening local community organizations through her volunteer efforts. In the 1990s she served as president of the Stone Belt Arc, advocating on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities, and then followed up with 12 years of service on the board of the Arc of Indiana, including multiple officer roles. More recently she served as president of the Quarryland Men's Chorus and is still actively involved with the organization to foster pride and understanding of the LGBTQ+ community through music. And, as former president of the board of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Bloomington she



Kathleen Sideli,
Photo Credit: Steve Raymer



Michele Ridge

followed the important services offered by social justice organizations, including Middle Way House.

Michele Ridge is currently the Director of Nursing Operations at IU Health Bloomington Hospital so she brings a welcome health professional focus to her position as the new vice president of Middle Way. Despite her busy career, she makes time for Middle Way because of her belief in the importance of its services and outreach efforts. Her executive responsibilities at Bloomington Hospital have given her a strong background in strategic planning and budgeting. Michele believes in life-long education and just completed her doctorate in nursing administration and organizational and system leadership. Her other local community activities include supporting travel softball, Girl Scouts, and Hoosiers Outrun Cancer.

"I am proud to be able to use my position on the board to support the services the organization offers to survivors of domestic violence, victims of sexual assault and individuals of every age who receive outreach services. It is my intention to actively engage the Bloomington community in Middle Way efforts so that its long legacy of empowering individuals in their time of need continues without interruption or decrease in services," said Kathleen Sideli, longtime Middle Way House supporter and new board president. "Local communities are the core component of social justice support at a time when state and national resources are shrinking," said Sideli.

In addition to the past president and elected officers mentioned above, the Middle Way House board of directors currently includes Christopher DeYoung, Cindy Houston, Kelly Kish, Peg Smith, Maxine Watson and Carl Ziegler.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2018

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) has been observed each October since 1987. It is a time during which advocates, service providers, first responders, communities, and other stakeholders come together to raise their collective voices in order to inspire action, increase awareness about issues surrounding domestic violence, and most importantly, to support survivors. Middle Way House will recognize DVAM in a variety of ways, including our Wrapped in Love public art display, our annual fall luncheon (check out the details on the back page of this newsletter), community outreach and awareness efforts, and social media campaigns.

YOU Can Help Support Survivors Throughout October

- Believe and support survivors!
- Attend our Wrapped in Love Yarn-Cutting Ceremony on October 5th
- Reserve a table and bring friends to our Fall Luncheon on October 19th
- Become a Sustaining Donor and commit to a monthly pledge, in honor of the 20th anniversary of The RISE!
- Sign up for our December 1st volunteer training
- Support us through Amazon Smile and/or Kroger Community Rewards
- Donate necessary items listed on our web site and Amazon Wish List (<http://a.co/8R1NDG3>)
- Place our brochures at local businesses (with permission)

WRAPPED IN LOVE YARN-CUTTING CEREMONY: OCTOBER 5, 2018

Join us on **Friday October 5th** at **6 PM** at the Middle Way House Tree on the **Monroe County Courthouse lawn** to help us celebrate the opening of our annual public art display of tree sweaters! Learn how to enter and win our raffle, meet our generous sponsors, pick up a map of tree sweater locations, and enjoy hot cocoa and cookies!

Wrapped in Love represents a collaborative effort by our community to support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Just as Middle Way House wraps survivors in love, a talented force of fabric artists lovingly wraps downtown Bloomington trees in creative sweaters, which warm the trees and the hearts of passers-by. Committed individuals and organizations sponsor the

tree sweaters to help fund meaningful alternatives to living with violence. Executive Director Debra Morrow explains: "Every stitch of this project relies on community members working together to create awareness of the issues affecting survivors and the services available in order to help us wrap survivors in love and support."

The sweaters will be displayed throughout downtown Bloomington from October 5, 2018 through March 15, 2019.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: GINA ERICKSON



Gina (left) and Daisy Schön (right),
CI Staff

When Gina Erickson returned to school to study criminal justice, she knew she wanted to make a difference in the prevention of human trafficking. Middle Way House offered an excellent volunteer opportunity to do just that. Since January, Gina has been volunteering one or two days per week within our crisis intervention (CI) services

program. She answers our 24/7 help and crisis line and serves as an on-scene advocate.

Gina's volunteer experience has provided her with the opportunity to participate in community outreach and education presentations related to human trafficking and more. She feels it is important to help others better understand the ways that factors such as poverty, race, age, gender, and sexual orientation intersect to place people from marginalized and oppressed communities at greater risk for experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Gina adds that because these circumstances are often interconnected, the solution is rarely as simple as "just leaving."

Through her volunteer work, Gina feels as though she helps create positive change in the world. She explains "the opportunity to offer just a little bit of kindness to someone navigating a difficult time is both meaningful and sustaining."



MAKE A DIFFERENCE: VOLUNTEER WITH MWH!

People like Gina make it possible for us to provide around-the-clock services to survivors. If her story has inspired you, please sign up to volunteer with Middle Way House!

Anyone can volunteer at our Bloomington locations or outreach offices in Greene, Martin, and Owen counties after participating in our pre-service orientation and training session.

Our next volunteer training is scheduled for Saturday, December 1st (9 AM-5 PM) at the downtown Bloomington Transit Center (corner of 3rd and Walnut Streets).

Pre-registration is not required.

Stay tuned via social media and our website for 2019 training dates!

NO TIME TO VOLUNTEER?

YOU CAN HELP US SUPPORT SURVIVORS WHEN YOU SHOP:

When you designate Middle Way House as your agency of choice with Amazon Smile or Kroger Community Rewards, we receive a percentage of your purchase. To sign up, visit our web page: MiddleWayHouse.org and click on 'Get Involved'!



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PROGRAM/STAFF UPDATES:

NEW WINGS EMERGENCY SHELTER



Summer is a time when many of us think about getting away from the daily grind and taking a well-deserved vacation. Domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking never take a break. Neither does Middle Way House. Our services are available to survivors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, each and every day of the year.

This has been a very busy summer for our New Wings Emergency Shelter. The shelter provides a safe space for survivors fleeing violence (with or without children) to stay and access empowering and supportive services, consider their options, and develop longer-term plans. In May through August we provided emergency shelter to **134 adult survivors** and **60 children**, totaling **2,465 nights of safety**, including **9,568 meals**.

Two full-time and several part-time advocates have risen to the occasion to balance their schedules (even canceling personal vacations) to meet this need. Together, they provided nearly **900 hours of advocacy and case management**.

Thank **you** for supporting these vital services!

PREVENTION

Our prevention program is growing!. In February the Monroe County Community Foundation awarded our team a grant to expand our violence prevention programming to serve elementary-aged students.

Our Building Healthy Relationships (BHR) curriculum was originally developed to teach middle and high school students the importance of having safe, fulfilling, and healthy relationships. Through delivery of BHR, it became clear there was a demonstrated need to build an earlier foundation of social and emotional skills to help students navigate a variety of situations. This led the team to conduct research about competency skills identified by school counselors, social workers, and teachers to be fulfilled and demonstrated by students across the state of Indiana in order to develop a curriculum geared toward elementary-aged students.

Skills such as empathy, acceptance, emotional regulation, communication, listening, and boundaries are critical to violence prevention. When children have the confidence to communicate in an effective way, healthy relationships prevail. This underscores the importance of teaching and modeling social and emotional skills within school or after school programs.

This fall, our prevention team will present the resulting Elementary Prevention Program (EPP) at the Boys and Girls Clubs, Baneker Center, Girls, Inc., and The RISE! (our transitional housing program). Reactions of children we have worked with so far have been encouraging. Following exposure to the curriculum we observe more acts of kindness, compassion, and assertive communication in student interactions.

In addition to our EPP expansion, our prevention team is also extending the reach of BHR to both The Academy and Bloomington High School South this fall.

COUNTY OUTREACH OFFICES

Middle Way House serves six counties in southern Indiana with three county outreach offices in Greene, Martin, and Owen counties.

In recent months **County Services Specialist, Heidi Weaver** has worked diligently to increase awareness of Middle Way House's services in Lawrence County. This included a presentation at the Lawrence County Systems of Care meeting in August. As a result, the Director of the Lawrence County Department of Child Services (DCS) invited Heidi to present to their staff about domestic and sexual violence and our services. Heidi also met with the Lawrence County Domestic Violence Problem Solving Court.

At the end of May, our Board of Directors held their monthly board meeting in the CommUnity Building in Spencer. **Owen County advocate Kathy Talkington** presented to the board about client services, community partners, and prevention efforts.

Our **Greene County office** has relocated to a new location within the Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library Annex Building, located at 87 East Spring Street. In the midst of the move, our Greene County advocates continued to serve **42 clients** from May-July. Also in July they participated in the National Night Out (NNO) held in Linton. NNO is a community event where first responders socialize with citizens with the shared goal to work together to fight crime. **Over 600 people** stopped by their booth!



Greene County advocates: Carol Byers, Christa Turpin, and Samantha Edwards

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS: 'STORY' TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA



In late May we launched our Staff Stories project on Instagram and Facebook. Each week we add a new video of a staff member discussing their work to our 'story'. The goal is to introduce the community to the amazing team of individuals whose dedication makes possible the full range of services available at Middle Way House.

While the full video for each staff member is only visible for 24 hours, we add a new 'highlight' to our Instagram bio each week. The result is a moving collection of staff members sharing what motivates and inspires them to do this work.

If you don't already, we hope you'll **follow us on Facebook (@MiddleWayHouse) and Instagram (@middlewayhouse)**. Watch for posts encouraging you to check out our 'Story', and reply with your thoughts and feedback. We'd love to hear from you!

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

CASA OF MONROE COUNTY'S COURTHOUSE FACILITY DOG PROGRAM

Appearing in a court of law can be an intimidating experience. This is especially true for individuals involved in legal proceedings with the person who caused them harm. Our legal advocacy team accompanies survivors to court hearings and case-related appointments to provide emotional support. Even with this support, court dates can be overwhelming experiences, full of anxiety and trepidation.

The Monroe County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, which provides advocacy to children in court, understands this. One CASA team member is Jordy--a furry, four-legged, professionally trained courthouse facility dog. Jordy's presence in the courtroom can significantly reduce the anxiety of these emotionally-charged circumstances with a high level of non-judgmental support and compassion.

One of our legal advocates, Virginia White, recently attended a hearing in which Jordy helped to soothe a

survivor she was working with. When the judge went on on record, the survivor's anxiety increased. Petting Jordy provided a sense of calm, relief, and reassurance.



Jordy

While Jordy's primary responsibility is to support abused and neglected children, Tia and Jordy are available to assist agencies such as Middle Way House.

When he's not on the job, Jordy lives with Tia and her family and can follow 37 commands, including giving hugs. To learn more about CASA or Jordy, visit monroecountycasa.org. You can also follow Jordy on Facebook and Instagram (@jordythecasadog)!

BLOOMINGTON LIBRARIES PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL (BLPC)

When the Bloomington Libraries Professional Council at Indiana University sent out a survey with candidates for a service project, over 90 percent of the IU Libraries professional staff chose to support Middle Way House! They were especially pleased to learn The RISE! has a community/library space. The council knew their unique skillset would lend itself to helping create a warm, welcoming, and functional space for the families living in our 28-unit transitional housing program.



Updated library space at The RISE!

To begin, a meeting between the BLPC and parents living at The RISE! gained the resident's input about what they envisioned for the space. Many of the residents wanted warmer lighting with lamps. One resident suggested that film be

applied to the windows in order to allow more light while still ensuring the privacy and safety of the families. The BPLC incorporated both of these suggestions within the updated space.

In March, the BLPC held a book drive in which they collected over 20 boxes of children's, young adult, and adult books! This was in addition to an Amazon Wish List of items needed to make the project a reality. All of us, especially the families, are incredibly grateful for everyone's hard work and to create this fun and functional space.

Kristin Browning Leaman of the BLPC said that her involvement in the project was rewarding and informative. She explains, "The impact of Middle Way on this community is palpable. The staff and residents I worked with are so inspiring, as their dedication and kindness make daily impacts on the lives and wellness of our community members."

Fall 2018 Luncheon: October 19, 2018, 11 AM-1 PM

Join Us in Recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month

FEATURED SPEAKER: Dawn Johnsen

2018: Year of the Woman?
Alpha Chi Omega House
1000 N. Jordan Ave., Bloomington, IN

Professor Dawn Johnsen will discuss the complex impacts of this year's legal and political developments on the status of women and women's rights in America.

Enjoy lunch and a silent auction!
(Bid on a week in a Cocoa Beach condo!)

PURCHASE TICKETS:
Middle Way House.org (click on 'Events' tab)
Tickets: \$30 / Tables for 10: \$270

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