Who We Are & How We’ve Grown

We believe and support survivors.
Middle Way House incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 1971 to provide crisis intervention services to the people of Bloomington. For the next decade, the agency operated as a volunteer organization, responding to needs in the community as they arose.

In 1981, following the arrival of Planned Parenthood and the South Central Community Mental Health Center in Bloomington, Middle Way refined its focus, selecting as its target population survivors of domestic violence and their children.

Today, Middle Way House provides meaningful alternatives to living with violence to 1,350 survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking each year. Further, Middle Way House touches the lives of more than 4,000 community members annually through our educational outreach and prevention programs. Our goal is to end violence in our community.
A Brief History

In 1987. . .
We began to provide children’s programming in the shelter setting.

In 1988. . .
At the request of the city of Bloomington, Middle Way House established a rape crisis center. Later in the year, we established a legal advocacy program.

In 1992. . .
The agency suspended its time limit for length of stay in the emergency shelter, resulting in fewer residents returning to abusive relationships. In addition, we began providing support groups in Greene County, and also established our on-scene advocacy (OSA) program, which provides access to an on-scene advocate at locations throughout the community, such as emergency rooms, police departments, etc.

In 1994. . .
We opened county outreach offices in Lawrence, Owen, and Greene counties to provide crisis intervention and legal advocacy to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.
In 1998...  
Our 28-unit transitional housing program, The RISE!, opened its doors to low-income adults and their children recovering from the impacts of domestic violence. We also launched our licensed childcare program to children of families who live in our transitional housing and emergency shelter programs.

In 2000...  
We were recognized as one of six model programs in the U.S. by the federal Department of Justice. The honor recognized Middle Way House’s innovative and comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of survivors, and its high rate of effectiveness in reducing the percentage of survivors who return to abusive relationships upon leaving the shelter. We also began offering our Youth Empowerment Services (YES) program, which intervenes in the cycle of violence affecting children ages 3-18 who are currently living or have lived in our shelter or transitional housing programs.
In 2001. . .
We opened an outreach office in Morgan County. While Middle Way House still provides services within Morgan County, we closed this outreach office in 2005 when another domestic violence shelter and transitional housing program became available in this community.

In 2005. . .
Middle Way House purchased the historic Coca-Cola Bottling Co. plant on South Washington Street in Bloomington to allow us to expand our programs and provide for new initiatives.

In 2010. . .
The New Wings facility opened its doors as our administrative office. The building also houses our emergency shelter and six one-bedroom apartments for survivors in need of permanent housing options. Middle Way House also became a founding member of the Monroe County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).
In 2012... Middle Way House partnered with the Monroe County court system to provide screening for domestic violence and on-scene advocacy in the Monroe County Child Support Division’s Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC) program.

In 2013... We began offering shelter within our New Wings emergency shelter to male survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Throughout its history, Middle Way House has always provided services to male survivors, however requests for shelter were previously offered at off-site locations.

In 2013 and 2014... Members of Middle Way House’s prevention program won the State’s Preventionist of the Year Award in recognition of their delivery of our Building Healthy Relationships curriculum and other prevention programming.
In October 2016. . .
The Middle Way House community came together to honor the retirement of Toby Strout, our Executive Director of 30 years. In December 2016, following a nationwide search, the Board of Directors selected Debra Morrow as our new Executive Director. With her past experience as community service coordinator, and having lived at The RISE!, Debra brings intimate knowledge of Middle Way House — including both client and employee needs.

In January 2017. . .
Middle Way House paid off its mortgage on the New Wings building, which houses our 30-bed emergency shelter and administrative headquarters.

In January 2018. . .
Our Rise and Shine Childcare Program was awarded national accreditation from the National Association for Family Child Care.

In May of 2018. . .
We began to expand our prevention programming to elementary-aged students with the goals of reducing sexual and dating violence, decreasing peer-to-peer perpetration, better preparing students for prevention programming offered at higher grade levels, and allowing childhood sexual assault survivors to seek and access help sooner.
This is Middle Way House over the course of a single year . . .

- 2,500 calls for support and resources are answered by our 24/7 Help & Crisis Line.
- Nearly 6,000 nights of emergency shelter are provided to survivors (with and without children) fleeing violence.
- 28 parents and nearly 65 children create a home within our safe and affordable transitional housing program, The RISE!
- Throughout their stay — and in the period of transition that follows — survivors with children receive access to a nationally accredited, affordable childcare program.
- 180 youth, ages 3-18, receive support from our Youth Empowerment Services program, which exists to intervene in the cycle of violence.
- 250 survivors are provided with on-scene advocacy and crisis intervention services, both at Middle Way House and at community locations such as emergency rooms, police departments, etc.
- More than 800 survivors work with our legal advocates and receive assistance with matters such as protective orders, divorce petitions, custody options, and court accompaniment to case-related hearings.
- 1,500 middle and high school students are provided our Building Healthy Relationships Curriculum, an interactive program designed to prevent dating and sexual violence.
- Nearly 150 survivors attend our three support groups for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and incest.

All of these programs and many more are supported by a staff of 70 and a volunteer force of more than 300 compassionate and dedicated members of our community.