



middle way house, inc.

Providing meaningful alternatives to living with violence



Women Celebrate, Carol Bridges, © 2017

FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOURS

Executive Director: Debra A. Morrow

As the Bloomington community welcomes the arrival of summer with its slower-paced and more relaxed atmosphere, I hope you will take a few moments to learn about what has been happening at Middle Way House. In this issue you will meet some of our wonderful staff and volunteers, read about our activities during Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and learn about the work that happens each and every day at Middle Way House. Also included are some results of our strategic planning process to keep you informed of the values that guide our work.

As I remember last summer, one thing that stands out is how our emergency shelter spent week after week at full capacity. Many survivors with children wait for school breaks and holidays to seek shelter and start the process of rebuilding their lives. No matter how many survivors enter our shelter, we are always amazed by their strength, courage, and resiliency as they begin to identify and accomplish personal goals and chart their own path toward safety and self-determination. As they share their journey with us, their hard work and perseverance fill us with admiration and appreciation. For the survivors who came to us last summer with children in tow, there was no greater satisfaction for our staff than to watch the children look up at their parents and smile—especially when those smiles were accented with juice-stained mustaches!

I hope you will find your own special way to connect with our vision to end domestic and sexual violence in the lives of all people. The staff of Middle Way House make a difference, but together as a community, with the support of each of you, I know we can create lasting change. Won't you join us?

Debra

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UPDATE FROM THE BOARD: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Earlier this year, our board of directors announced updates to the agency's mission, vision, and values statements. Over nearly 40 years, Middle Way House has grown from a grassroots organization in one downtown Bloomington house—to one that today works from five locations, spans multiple programs, and serves thousands of people each year across six Indiana counties.

To evolve and meet current and future needs, we must continually assess our place in the community and our responsiveness to those we serve. Considering this, the board engaged in a strategic planning process to build on our strengths and chart an intentional course for the future.

The process was thoughtful and deliberate. We extensively reviewed the entire organization—including our mission. The board began by listening to key stakeholders. Recognizing the dedication and expertise of our staff as one of our greatest assets, we actively encouraged employee participation throughout the process. We also sought and considered the input of community partners.

The resulting organizational statements reaffirm

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Middle Way House's client-centered empowerment model and position us to meet the evolving needs of all survivors—including those from vulnerable populations and marginalized communities. These changes establish an aspirational vision to for Middle Way House's future.

Updated Organizational Statements:

Vision Statement: To end domestic and sexual violence in the lives of all people.

Mission Statement: Middle Way House works to support all survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; and to educate the community through outreach and prevention programs.

Core Values: Always be in alignment with the mission; be accountable to ourselves, each other, the organization, and the community; exhibit non-violence in all our behaviors and actions; behave compassionately in all our encounters; respect and maintain confidentiality; and be ethical in all transactions.

You may read more on our website:

MiddleWayHouse.org ('About Us, Organizational Statements').

UPDATED ONLINE WISH LIST IF WISHES WERE FISHES, WE'D ALL FEAST

We recently streamlined our online Wish List! Check it out at **MiddleWayHouse.org** ('Get Involved, Wish List')!

The following **items** are **currently needed for survivors and their children** living in our emergency shelter. Contact us to make a donation: 812.333.7404 or via email: communications@middlewayhouse.org.



- Gift Cards
- Adult Coloring Books, Colored Pencils, and Coloring Supplies
- Earbuds

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH APRIL 2019

While sexual violence directly impacts survivors and those closest to them, it also affects entire communities. Throughout April, Middle Way House increased awareness about the lived experiences of survivors and the ways diverse identities impact access to support and resources.

ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON

Survivors' Journeys: Unheard Stories

Middle Way House recognizes individuals from marginalized communities experience disproportionately higher rates of sexual violence. On April 4th, four experts in their respective fields (Dr. Beverly Stoeltje, Ron Smith, Deborah Getz, and Debra Morrow) presented composite, fictional survivors' stories to help us all better understand the wide range of backgrounds and identities of the survivors we serve and the ways that personal identity shapes experiences of sexual violence and the journey toward survivorship. Ultimately, we respect that each and every survivor is the expert on their own life and we honor their right to make informed decisions about their own next steps.

120 luncheon guests enjoyed a 50/50 raffle, posted photos on social media holding informational signs, and learned that Middle Way House believes, supports, and affirms the identities of everyone who interacts with us or needs our support.

SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL FALL LUNCHEON



Our annual fall luncheon in recognition of **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** will take place **October 25th** at **Ivy Tech's Shreve Hall**. This year's event will focus on the impact of domestic violence on youth and adolescents and highlight our services to support and empower young people through their experience of trauma.

Silent auction items will include a week at a Cocoa Beach condo! **Mark your calendars** and **look for updates** via social media and our website: MiddleWayHouse.org (click on 'Events').



Sarah Flint



Erin Hollinden and staff from Indiana University's Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS)



Michael Shermis

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

You've likely seen our tri-fold resource cards at events and various locations throughout our six-county service area. They feature our 24/7 Help & Crisis Line number (**812.336.0846**) along with information about our programs on small, business-sized cards that can easily be tucked away in a pocket, shoe, or bag.



The cards begin with a journey of connection long before they reach their destinations. Area 10 Agency on Aging's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) consists of more than 200 volunteers. RSVP hosts a drop-in volunteer center each Tuesday from 9 AM-noon in space adjacent to the Perry Township Trustee's office. The drop-in center provides a variety of non-profits with assistance, such as folding and bundling our tri-folds. Their contribution is significant: over the course of a year, RSVP volunteers fold more than 20,000 of our tri-folds. The group offers retired seniors a place to make meaningful contributions to their community and connect over coffee and conversation.



Amy Wardlow — RSVP Program Mgr., Dawn Kramer—RSVP Assistant Program Mgr., Sharon Roth—RSVP Volunteer, Amal Altoma—RSVP Volunteer

Amal Altoma is a retired librarian and has volunteered with the program since its beginnings in the 1980s. Amal explains that "Middle Way House is an important part of our community, and we're glad to help." Another regular volunteer, Sharon Roth, says the RSVP program helps her "learn about and stay connected with all of the different resources available in our community."

We are grateful for their service! Middle Way House's diverse partnerships create and foster meaningful connections to one another and local resources.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: VOLUNTEER WITH MWH!

Individuals and groups like RSVP make it possible to provide around-the-clock services to survivors.



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

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

Pre-registration is not required.

**Other Volunteer Training Dates:
September 7th and 14th**

NO TIME TO VOLUNTEER? There are many ways to get involved and help us support survivors:

- Support our summer youth program with the **Fresh Thyme Giving Bag Program** (see back page)!
- Reserve a table and bring friends to our **fall luncheon** on **10/25**.
- Become a **Sustaining Donor** and commit to a monthly pledge: MiddleWayHouse.org, Get Involved, Make a Donation.
- Donate necessary items via our **updated Wish List**: MiddleWayHouse.org, Get Involved, Wish List.
- Stay connected: follow us on **Facebook** and **Instagram** (@MiddleWayHouse).

PROGRAM/STAFF UPDATES: PREVENTION

The Middle Way House prevention team is wrapping up another busy academic year providing our *Building Healthy Relationships* (BHR) and *Elementary Prevention Program* (EPP) in local schools and youth-serving organizations. Over the summer, the prevention program will partner with the Monroe County Public Library to continue to equip young folks with the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent interpersonal violence and to promote healthy relationships.

Talking Tacos (Ages 12-19)

Monroe County Public Library, The Ground Floor
Tuesdays, June 4th and August 6th . 4-5 PM

Talking Tacos



Come for the friendly chat about relationships, dating, and other tough topics. Stay for the awesome tacos. **In June and July**, we are excited to continue to partner with the library to offer more activity-focused and discussion-based sessions on a variety of important topics. Participants may choose to attend individual sessions or all three. **June dates** will be offered to **ages 12-19** in The Ground Floor. **In July**, young people **ages 10-19 and adults** will meet in separate spaces (Youth: Room 1B and Adults: Room 1C). All programming will be facilitated by our prevention programs coordinator, Lindsey Badger, with Middle Way House On-Scene Advocates available for additional support.

Friendship & Peer Crisis Support:

June 13th (12-19) & July 11th (10-19): 3:30-4:30 PM

What are some ways we can best take care of each other during hard times?

Accountability Peer Support:

June 20th (12-19) & July 18th (10-19): 3:30-4:30 PM

Sometimes taking care of each other means supporting someone who has caused harm. Together, we can work on strategies for what to do when this happens.

Drugs, Sex and Safety:

June 27th (12-19) & July 25th (10-19): 3:30-4:30 PM

You're talking about this stuff already, why not come talk and gain some useful tools in a non-judgmental space? We will use an anonymous question box—so if you're nervous to ask questions, you can write them down, and we'll make sure you get answers and connecting resources!

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2019 City of Bloomington Volunteer Network's Be More Award Recipient: Peg Smith

On March 26th, our own Peg Smith received the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network's 'Be More Healthy' award! Peg was recognized for her commitment to empowering youth in Monroe County with the knowledge and skills to prevent sexual and dating violence through Middle Way House's BHR and EPP programs. Peg also serves as facilitator, educator, developer of curriculum, events committee member, board member, and on-scene advocate.



Kyla Wargel, Peg Smith, Lindsey Badger

Thank you so much, Peg! Other MWH volunteers nominated for Be More awards included Julie Booze, Karina Gutierrez, and our QueerTalk facilitators.

CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES



Kymberlee Blackford

Daisy Schoen, B.M. and Kymberlee Blackford, MSW, crisis intervention specialists, presented *Music as a Coping Mechanism for Children and Adolescents with ACEs* at the The FACES of ACEs – Lifelong Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences Conference on April 12th. The conference was a collaborative project between several Monroe & Lawrence County Systems of Care partners.



Daisy Schoen
(left, pictured with her mother)

Daisy and Kym discussed how music promotes social connectedness, communication, builds cohesion, fosters cooperation, and increases likelihood of reproductive success **(continued on Page 6)**.

CRISIS INTERVENTION (Continued from Page 5)

Music has proven valuable to individuals with high ACE scores as coping mechanisms to manage various maladaptive traits which the survivor developed in response to their experience of trauma.

Their presentation enlightened conference attendees about how qualities of music can help children and adolescents cope with ACEs by strengthening language skills, social skills, and emotional regulation to increase practical applications and therapeutic impacts of music. Daisy and Kym's professional experience has shown that music is a strong protective factor and resiliency-builder in the lives of minors undergoing traumatic life experiences and that it has great potential to help folks in their healing processes.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and their children. Survivors fleeing violence often arrive with their children and nothing more than the clothes on their backs. While our shelter serves an immediate need, securing safe, affordable, long-term housing is a major issue facing survivors. These needs are compounded by a shortage of affordable housing options.

Housing programs available through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) are intended to help address these barriers. For example, one program specifically available through VAWA enables low-income survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, or stalking to complete an application for Section 8 Housing through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—even when the application list is closed. This option, in addition to our transitional housing program, The RISE!, help mitigate these barriers.

Our resident advocates work with survivors who are interested and eligible for the program to certify their stay in shelter, document a history of violence, and help survivors obtain necessary **middle way house, inc.**

documentation (such as birth certificates, social security cards, picture identification, etc.) that is often left behind when fleeing violence. Section 8 is granted on a points basis, and due to the precariousness of their situation, this application grants survivors of relationship and sexual violence with additional points, placing them higher on the list when the applicant list reopens.

Since January, an average of 20 new residents have entered shelter each month. About half express interest in applying for the program. VAWA programs are critical to our ability to help provide survivors with meaningful alternatives to living with violence. Learn more about this vital piece of legislation by going to **MiddleWayHouse.org**, (Get Involved, Take Action).



Image courtesy of NNEDEV, 2017

CHILDCARE AND YOUTH PROGRAMS



Music Monday



Tasty Tuesday



Family Friday

Throughout the week of April 13th-17th, our nationally accredited **Rise and Shine** childcare program participated in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's "Week of the Young Child." Children participated in fun-filled, themed activities and were sent home with corresponding projects to do with their parents. Because engaging and celebrating families is at the heart of supporting our youngest learners, the week culminated with a Spring Fling Family Event.

Congratulations to Marcella Ettinger, our **Rise and Shine Childcare Coordinator!** Marcella received five awards at the Monroe County Early **(continued on page 7).**

CHILDCARE AND YOUTH PROGRAMS (Continued from Page 6)



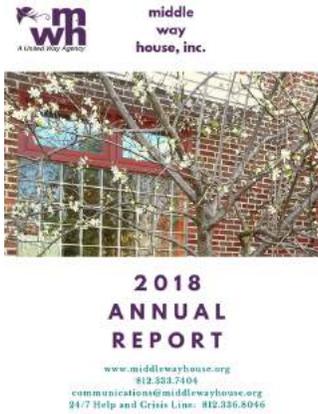
Marcella Ettinger

Childhood Excellence Awards Ceremony! Kate Allan, one of Marcella's staff, was also recognized with an Excellent Educator Award. We appreciate Marcella and her staff for their dedication to providing children, especially those who have experienced trauma at an early age, with excellent educational experiences in an emotionally supportive environment.

Priscilla Cuevas, Youth Programs Coordinator for our **Youth Empowerment Services (YES)** program, along with her staff, have planned exciting activities for youth participating in their summer program.

They will attend a fire safety education program with the Bloomington Fire Department and a public safety education program with the Bloomington Police Department. Attendees will also take part in the summer reading program hosted by the Monroe County Public Library.

2018 ANNUAL REPORT: NOW AVAILABLE



Our 2018 Annual Report is now available via our website. Learn about the many ways your support makes it possible for us to provide meaningful alternatives to living with violence for survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking: MiddleWayHouse.org, About Us, Annual Reports.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: MONROE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAM REDUCES BARRIERS FOR SURVIVORS



Bowman-Sarkisian

If you've ever doubted the ability of one individual to make a difference in their community, then allow us to introduce you to Shannon Bowman-Sarkisian. Last fall we received an email from Shannon, an Information Services Assistant with the Monroe County Public Library (MCPL). She had recently assisted a library patron enrolled in the Attorney General's Address Confidentiality Program (available to survivors with active protection orders). Shannon discovered that library staff were unaware of the program and why it existed, which delayed the patron from receiving a library card for several weeks. After exiting an abusive relationship, survivors must often navigate multiple, unexpected, and exhausting barriers like this.

Middle Way House discussed with Shannon how domestic and sexual violence can cut survivors off from community resources, such as the public library. Survivors may feel like they are no longer able to use the library because they don't have proof of residence, have accumulated fines in the process of leaving their abuser, or are concerned their abuser will see them at the library. Within a short time, Shannon—with the help and full support of her supervisor, Leanne Zdravecky, began to prepare an application for a Library Pioneer Grant to craft the Creating Access for Violence Survivors (CAVS) program.

The Friends of the Library granted funds for CAVS in February and many of the program's goals have already been met. MCPL service staff have received training from Middle Way House on domestic violence and related issues; iPads and LeapPad tablets have been purchased to enable residents of Middle Way House to access eLibrary and digital learning tools; library leadership is in the process of approving policy changes on fee forgiveness; and library outreach is underway for residents of our transitional housing and emergency shelter programs.

Shannon explains her passion for supporting survivors stems from her personal experiences: "The library was very important to me in the first few years after I left my abuser. It was one of the few places I felt safe that also didn't require me to pay money to be there." We are inspired by Shannon's commitment and are excited about our continued partnership with MCPL.

FRESH THYME GIVING BAG PROGRAM

Purchase a Giving Bag in June and Support Our Summer Youth Program



Middle Way House has been selected as the beneficiary of the **Fresh Thyme Giving Bag Program for the month of June!** We will receive a \$1 donation each time one of their \$2.99 reusable Giving Bags is purchased during the month of June at the Fresh Thyme store located at **2894 E Third Street.**

Our goal is to sell 600 bags to help offset costs related to summer programming for our **Youth Empowerment Services (YES) program.** Funds will be used to purchase an annual pool pass for staff members to accompany youth on pool outings, summer fun passes, and bus tickets for program adults. **We strongly encourage you to share this news with all of your family and friends!**

We believe and support survivors. Thank you for supporting us!

Prefer to receive an e-newsletter?
Send an email request to:
communications@middlewayhouse.org