

SUPPORT. EMPOWER. GROW.



Annual Report | Fiscal Year 2023

WELCOME

OUR UPDATED MISSION

To support and empower women and all families during challenging life transitions.

OUR UPDATED VISION

Creating a community where women and all families are free from violence and harassment, are economically and emotionally secure, and have access to equitable opportunities.



Dear friends of Women and Family Life Center,

We are honored to share our Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report. This year's annual report shares information from July 1, 2022, through July 31, 2023.

This past year, the Women & Family Life Center's Board and staff spent a great deal of time creating our new strategic plan. The process included a questionnaire that went out to over 75 partners to learn where the Center was excelling and how we could better meet the needs of the community we serve. This data informed the working sessions between the Board and staff, ultimately producing our new strategic roadmap.

During this process, we updated our mission to better reflect the work we wanted the Center to accomplish while making a slight but vital addition to our vision.

MISSION

To support and empower women and all families during challenging life transitions.

VISION

Communities where women and all families are free from violence and harassment, are economically and emotionally secure, and have access to equitable opportunities.

In addition, another area of focus that was vital to all stakeholders involved is that the Center maintains its dedication to the core principles by which we operate. To reflect this, we established our guiding principles.

Compassion- We treat one another with grace, kindness, respect, and acceptance.

Accountability- We do what we say we will – we hold ourselves to our principles and fulfill our commitments and responsibilities.

Engagement- We foster the active participation of those we work with.

Community- We strive to build strong relationships and value people in all their diversity.

By the end of the 2023 fiscal year, we had developed a solid and exciting three-year plan for the Women & Family Life Center, which we have already begun to implement.

We invite you to read the plan, which can be found on the Center's website, womenandfamilylife.org/what-we-do.

While 2023 was a planning time, the staff kept the Center moving along with serving more than 500 participants, offering over 4,800 services, and providing over 1,670 referrals while creating new programs and different ways to connect with the community.

The Women & Family Life Center is unique not only to the shoreline but in the entire state of Connecticut, offering services that are not duplicated elsewhere. We owe our success to our generous supporters like you.

From all of us at the Women & Family Life Center, we THANK YOU!



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Wenderoth-Holster".

Jennifer Wenderoth-Holster
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Fecko-Curtis".

Elizabeth Fecko-Curtis
Board Chair

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our **NEW** guiding principles are the foundational beliefs and values that drive our actions and decisions. They serve as the compass that steers us toward our goals and shapes our behavior as individuals and an organization.



COMPASSION

We treat one another with grace, kindness, respect and acceptance.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves to our principles and fulfill our commitments and responsibilities.



COMMUNITY

We strive to build strong relationships and value people in all their diversity.



ENGAGEMENT

We foster the active participation of those we work with.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

In Fiscal Year 2023, Women & Family Life Center provided **over 4,800** individualized services to **over 500 participants** from the Connecticut shoreline, from East Haven to East Lyme.

**OVER
500**

Participants served

**OVER
1,670**

Incoming Calls for
assistance

97

Lawyer Time
appointments

76

Financial Consult
appointments

Since 1991, Women & Family Life Center has served over **18,000** individuals and continues to be a valuable resource in the community for women and all families experiencing challenging life transitions.

SHULA'S STORY



Shula first came to the Women & Family Life Center after being referred to us by a nurse at her doctor's office.

Shula was in a bad situation. When she came to us, she described her situation of being evicted from her home and sleeping in her car. Before coming to Women & Family Life Center, Shula had been sleeping in her car for a month.

When Shula arrived, she said there was a woman standing outside, our Executive Director Jennifer Wenderoth-Holster, who asked her if she was okay. When Shula responded "no", Jenny told her, "you came to the right place." Shula was very emotional and was so grateful for the help Women & Family Life Center was able to offer.

"When I got to Women & Family Life Center, there was a lot going on and a lot of cars in the parking lot and a lot of people outside. I was worried that maybe they were too busy

to help me that day. But that woman standing outside was so kind. When I said I wasn't ok, she gave me a huge hug and had me come right in."

Shula needed to find someplace to live and find a way to put food on her table. That first day, our Referral Navigator gave Shula a lot of resources for food and soup kitchens around the area. Shula was also provided several vouchers for gas and groceries to help her with her immediate needs.

"It wasn't just help with the applications. It was gas when I didn't have money and groceries when I didn't have food. It kept me going."

Shula was initially referred to our Financial Consults and from there our Lawyer Time program. However, upon further conversation with our Referral Navigator, Shula was put into our Guided Assistance Program (GAP). In this program,

“Had I not found out about this community, Women & Family Life Center, I wouldn’t have had things done as fast as I had. **I would probably still be living in my car. You helped so much,** the Referral Navigator would sit with me, sometimes for more than two hours to fill out applications and make phone calls. It was the biggest help I’ve ever got from any community. **You are the only institution that helped me.”**

she worked closely with our Referral Navigator who helped her with applications for housing and shelters in the area.

“I filled out about 12 applications for the lottery housing for the elderly, 62+, and disabled. I was scared at first. But eventually, some of those people became my friends. They became my family.”

Shula worked closely with a Referral Navigator through the GAP program who helped her with applications for housing and shelters. When Shula called 211, she was referred to a shelter that, unfortunately, didn’t have any room for her. Women & Family Life Center worked tirelessly with this shelter, and after many phone calls on Shula’s behalf, Shula was pushed to the top of the list.

While searching for an apartment, Shula kept true to who she was and what she wanted. During this process, she turned down available apartments that wouldn’t create a happy and sustainable place for her to live. After about six months of living in a shelter in Middletown and continuing conversations with the Women & Family Life Center, Shula was able to find a one-bedroom apartment for herself.

“Because of Women & Family Life Center, I was in this shelter and was able to have things I needed while searching for a home. I am so happy to be in my own place and I am able to fix it up the way that I want.”

Shula is now a volunteer, helping people the way Women & Family Life Center helped her. She’s at a food pantry in Stamford and is doing what she can to assist people in similar situations to hers.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

All of the Women & Family Life Center services are open to anyone regardless of income, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, from any of the 16 towns that we serve. All services offered by Women & Family Life Center are **FREE!**

GUIDED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (GAP)

GAP provides personalized support and referrals for individuals facing difficult life challenges. The Center's Referral Navigators work to directly connect participants to community resources spanning crisis services, social services, mental health, financial services and legal services. Through GAP, participants learn how to outline their personal or family needs and create an action plan. GAP is a unique service not offered at any other organization on the Shoreline.

LAWYER TIME

Lawyer Time offers individuals the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a volunteer attorney to discuss legal questions and to better understand personal rights and the legal process. Attorneys can discuss most civil matters and provide legal education.

FINANCIAL CONSULT

Financial Consults offers participants one-on-one appointments with a volunteer Financial Coach to review finances and help those involved take control of their economic independence and success. Topics include budgeting, divorce, finances, debt, death claims paperwork, and more.

PARENT LIFE COACHING

Parent coaching approaches parenting from the lens of the parent. Individuals meet one-on-one with a volunteer parenting life coach to help navigate obstacles and turn them into opportunities for growth. Life coaching guides you through powerful life events such as divorce, remarriage, blending a family, and grandparenting. Coaching will help you adjust to the changing relationships that you have with your adult children and in-laws.

ADAPT DIVORCE WORKSHOP

ADAPT is a workshop designed to provide a comprehensive overview of divorce to help participants acquire the tools needed to make the best choices for themselves and their families. An expert in divorce and family law guides participants through the types of divorce, the paperwork to collect, and the questions to ask. Empowered with this knowledge, participants can more confidently navigate this significant life change.

ACHIEVE CAREER WORKSHOP

The career workshop is a four-part workshop offered to participants, with each session covering a different aspect of career development. Participants will engage with the facilitator on professional development goal setting and skill building; resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, and job search strategy are among the topics to be explored by the workshop participants.

RESTART DIVORCE GROUP

RESTART is a divorce group hosted by two facilitators, an expert divorce attorney/coach, and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. RESTART provides information, skills, and support for those contemplating or navigating divorce at any point in the process. Participants learn the essential skills needed to thrive through and after divorce.

LIFE AFTER LOSS PART 1

Life After Loss is a bereavement group for anyone who has experienced loss and is still working through their grief. The support group will guide participants in written and shared discussions on dealing with life after loss. Individuals will learn about types of grief, coping skills, self-care, and self-love suggestions. Participants will also be introduced to the concept of listening to one's "inner self," working through the many emotions of loss, what the future will look like, and much more.

Continued on Page 10 >



LIFE AFTER LOSS PART 2

Attendance in this four-session Life After Loss bereavement group will be available to individuals who were participants in the Life After Loss, Part I, eight-session bereavement group. The objective of these four sessions is to provide additional time for talking and sharing of thoughts, feelings, and ideas among group members. It will also provide a forum in which participants can share how they have fared emotionally and otherwise after Part I ended.

SAFE SEARCH

Safe Search is a program that allows participants and walk-ins needing a safe place to use a phone or access the internet. It will give those living in a home where they fear their computer/ phone use is being monitored an opportunity to access a computer, the internet, phone, printer, scanner, copier, and fax machine. Safe Search is a time and place where individuals can call counselors and lawyers, research jobs, and revise and print a resume. We also offer a secure location to keep documents for future use.

SHORELINE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE

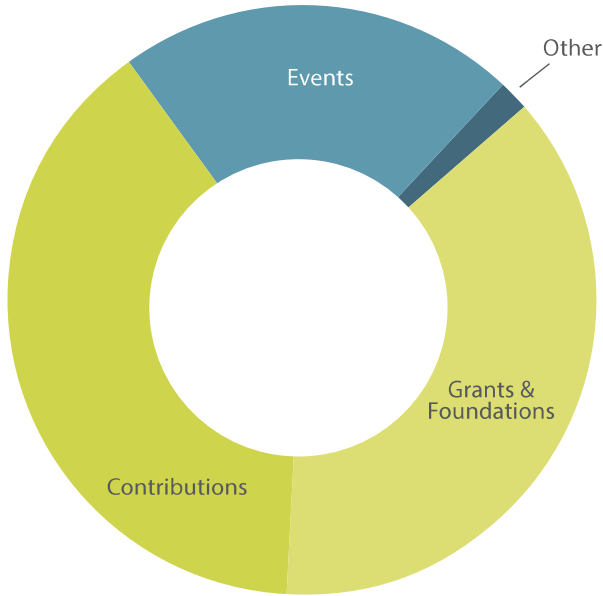
W&FLC spearheads the Shoreline Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Task Force (SDVSATF) and includes a group of informed non-profit agencies, municipal offices, and private practitioners. The mission of the Task Force is to provide education, coordinate resources, and aid in preventing domestic

violence and sexual assault across Shoreline communities. The Task Force hosts an annual Legislative Roundtable with state and local legislators representing Shoreline Towns to discuss key legislative issues pertinent to the work of domestic violence and sexual assault crisis services.

SHORELINE HOUSING DIVERSION SPECIALIST

The Women & Family Life Center partners with the Beth El Center to offer a Shoreline Housing Diversion Specialist. To be connected to the Shoreline Housing Diversion Specialist, one must first access the CAN program through 211. The Shoreline Housing Diversion Specialist provides time-limited case management to participants accessing the Greater New Haven CAN who are not currently receiving housing-related case management services in East Haven, Guilford, Branford, North Branford, and Madison. The goal is to divert clients from entering shelters whenever safe and appropriate. Participants are referred to and linked to all relevant resources as quickly as possible, including emergency shelter openings when no viable diversion plan is actualized. Participants must provide the requested documents and work alongside the Shoreline Housing Diversion Specialist to be diverted from homelessness.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

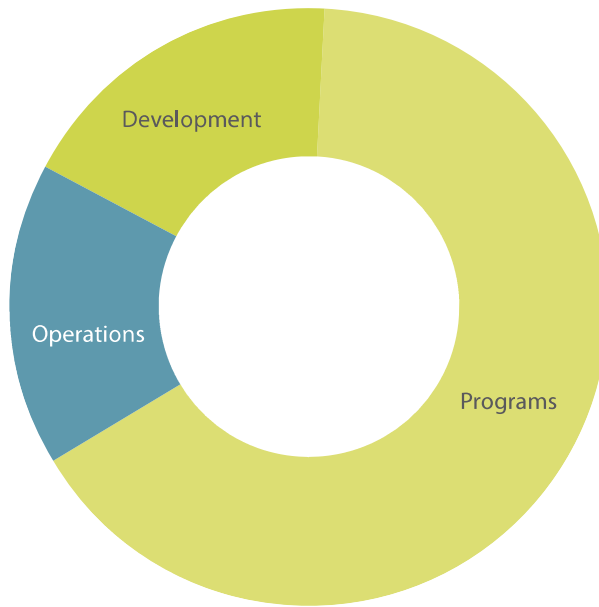


Income Revenue: \$413,107

Contributions:	Events:
\$154,824	\$90,426
Grants & Foundations:	Other:
\$161,249	\$6,608

Expense Revenue: \$673,084

Operations:
\$111,439
Development:
\$120,806
Programs:
\$440,839



STAFF AND BOARD

WOMEN & FAMILY LIFE CENTER STAFF

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Executive Director

Julie Lister
Development Manager

Jamie Callinan
Operations Manager

Emily Rorke, MS
Marketing & Events Manager

Melissa George, MA
Program Manager

Destiney Stackhouse, MSW
Referral Navigator

Melanie Meyers, BSW
Referral Navigator

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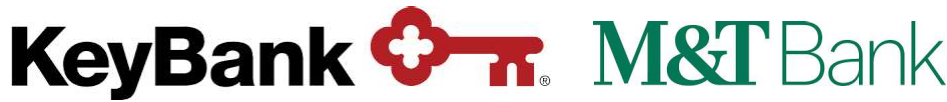
Andrew Serrano

Haley Sabitus Torab

OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS



Sponsored by our Community Foundations with funding provided by GSB.



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THANK YOU!

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If you do not see your name listed, we are sorry we missed you! Please get in touch with Julie at jlister@womenandfamilylife.org so that we may update our records.





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