Spring Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 7

April, 2020

Highlights:

Thank You—Fabulous Finds

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Upcoming Events

Vision

Empowering people to create violence free communities

Mission

Women's Information Service, Inc. (WISE) provides advocacy, safety options and support services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and sextrafficking.

WISE empowers individuals and families through respect and equality, and works toward strengthening our communities through awareness, prevention and education.

WISE is a non-profit organization. All of our services for victims are free and confidential.

Board Members:

Carol Schroeder-Semeyn, Chair
Nancy Baldwin, Vice-Chair
Linda Kuk– Treasure

Mark Schuelke
Angela Thomas
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Wendy Nystrom
April Decator

P.O. Box 1249
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231-796– 6600
www.wiseagainstviolence.org

Thank you Fabulous Finds Supporters / Volunteers.....

Fabulous Finds Resale Store closed its doors at the end of the January, after 22 years of service to the community and clients of WISE. The store, which was owned and operated by Women's Information Services Inc. (WISE), opened Oct. 2, 1997. Located in downtown Big Rapids it served the community and clients, providing an opportunity to gather clothes, household items and furniture to get a new start. Offering the community an opportunity to repurpose gently used clothes and household items.

While WISE had never anticipated for the store to be a main source of income, it did serve us well for client needs and a community donation opportunity. Over the years it even grew to expand with furniture items. However, it recent years we were experiencing an increasing downward trend in profit since a restructuring of the store in 2017. Due to sales we decided to condense the store space and eliminated the furniture section. Unfortunately, we didn't continue to get the sales needed for operation. Due to the downward trend in sales the last few years a decision was made by the board to close the store this past January,

"It's been a nice little shop," WISE Executive Director Jane Currie said. "It's served the community well for many years, but it's time." While the store will be closing, Currie said this does not mean WISE will be going anywhere, adding that services made possible from the store will be continuing, just in different ways. One way we served clients was through a voucher program, which allowed those in need to shop the store for free. Currie said individuals receiving WISE services will likely still be able to receive voucher assistance. WISE also will continue to accept monetary donations, as well as toiletries, household products, food and various other items." This doesn't mean we aren't going to be needing anymore donations," Currie said. "We still have the same need." Plans are underway to have a drop off area for future donations of food, toiletries, paper products, etc. In the meantime, those who want to donate, may call the nonprofit at 231-796-6600 or visit wiseagainstviolence.org.

"It's been a great experience," Currie said. "We want to thank the community for years of support. It all went to helping clients." We would like to give a special thank you to the many volunteers that supported the store and those who donated items. None of the years of service would have been possible without our Fabulous Finds Committee members, who were valuable supporters and volunteers for many years of operation of the store. WISE would like to extend a special thank you to: ***Merri Jo Dawson, Sharon Doxsee, Dorcas Hults, Yvonne Ittner, Johana Keelor, Cindy Linebaugh, Beth Martz, Jane Torrey and Susan Truog.***

WISE Administration Offices Moving.....

We will have a new location this summer. We will be moving our administration office and advocates to the downtown location previously held by the Fabulous Finds Store. By having our administration in one location we feel will it be easier to serve the clients and we will have easier access for the community. It is our hope to still gather specific donations and with this location make it easier for the public. WISE offices were in the downtown location previously and we are looking forward to getting back. Please bear with us as we will be under construction, but hope to be ready by early summer.

COVID19 — We are open and operational during this unique time in our history. As always we are practicing and adhering to polices and guidelines for best practices to keep our clients and staff safe and well while providing services and advocacy.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month....

Sexual assault awareness month is an important time at WISE. We are organizing events, and sending staff around the community and collaborating with Ferris State University to bring awareness and teach prevention during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month began back in the 1970's as *Take Back the Night* a time when women were afraid to walk the streets at night without fear of being assaulted. This first campaign was the first step in what we still address today. During the 1990's the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault decided with its members to designate April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month to bring annual awareness to the United States. This year emphasis is on prevention, promotion of safe and healthy respectful relationships.

Today our efforts must be more sophisticated as our population recognizes the is-sue, but sometimes struggles to address it. Survivors and perpetrators are commonly thought of by their stereotypical images. The truth is that perpetrators are not strangers, in many cases they are a familiar person. Every 92 seconds another American is sexually assaulted, while only 5 out of every 1,000 rapists will end up in prison. Of course, these are the reported cases of assault. The truth about survivors is that they fit no stereotype. They can be a member of your family, a professional, a student, or a neighbor. The reaction a survivor has to assault is a deeply personal one that could include sadness, anger, confusion, etc.

At WISE we work to support survivors by empowering them and helping them set meaningful goals. We can help them achieve those goals by creating a safe place and resources they may need. This may mean finding new housing, spending time with family, finding a counselor, or even finding medication or seeking medical help. WISE offers ser-vices to families dealing with childhood sexual abuse, and victims of sexual assault.

Call WISE today at (231) 796-6600 or toll-free at 1-800-374-WISE (9473), press "0" to speak to an advocate. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and our advocates are here to listen.

Events during Sexual Assault Awarness Month...

- Each county will have a dedicated tree on the main stop heavily garbed in teal bows, ribbons and a sign. (Mecosta— Michigan Avenue / Osceola— TBD / Newaygo—Veterans Memorial Park).
- The bridge along the river walk, behind the middle school, will be decked out in teal ribbons.
- MCOLES training for non stranger sexual assault, April 3rd @ Freemont Library 8-5.
- Kicking off a new support group in Newaygo county, March 25th.
- Tear away flyers have been posted around all three counties.
- In the University Center, there will be a table set up for students to write letters to survivors. These will be used in the sexual assault intake packets.

NOTE: These events could be changed pending the COVID19 pandemic. We will post any changes on our website.

SUPPORT SERVICES AVIALABLE TO OUR CLIENTS…

- A safe place to stay at our 24-hour emergency shelter for women and children who are fleeing domestic violence or sexual abuse.
- Staff who are willing to listen and referrals for therapists if necessary.
- Guidance and support through legal and medical processes.
- Referrals to services that can assist with emergency assistance, employment options, food, and clothing.

UPCOMING EVENTS ...

***DINNER THEATER*— *Friday, April 24th** at the Holiday Inn, Big Rapids.* Join us for an entertaining evening. Buffett dinner includes: Hors d'oeuvres, baked potato bar, entre, salad, desserts, and a cash bar. Ticket information is available at our website or contact Jessica Wilson at 231-796-6600 or email jwilson@wiseagainstviolence.org

***2020 ANNUAL GOLF OUTING*—**



Wednesday, July 15th at Spring Valley Golf Course in Evart. Golfers will again play the holes at Spring Valley on U.S. 10, just east of Reed City while they enjoy the company of others who are golfing for a cause. Look for upcoming details on the website or facebook.



***2nd Annual 5K Walk/ Run*—**

Sunday, September 13th at Northend Park, Big Rapids. Mark your calendars for our 2nd annual 5k Walk/ Run.
Sure to be a fun time!

*Thank you ....**Hesperia High School & Freemont Area Community Foundation*** for your recent awareness event, "Volley Against Violence" and generous donation of $4,500 from this event and matched by the foundation. Your generosity allows us to continue to support our cause for those effected by domestic violence.

Giving Day Appreciation... This past November, WISE sponsored a giving day at the United Methodist Church to replace the philanthropy day that has previously been held in November. The following business' and groups assisted us with this event: ***Bob Patterson, of Patterson's Flowers; Big Rapids Middle School Choir , Directed by Katie McInnis; Canadian Lakes Men's Choir; Chef, Don Zimmer, and Big Rapids High School Quartet, Directed by Brian Balch.*** Thank you to these individuals and groups for providing entertainment for our event. Your time and talent was so appreciated. This fundraiser will be back this November to help support our causes at WISE.

Shelter Updates... Our shelter continues to stay at full capacity. Precautions have been made for the coronavirus virus, staff have been updated on precautions and clients have received instructions. Like all areas, we are taking the necessary precautions for the safety of our clients and employees.

Upgrades were made to our heating system, and purchase of new mattress' and bed frames, Both projects were made possible by generous donations.

Volunteer Opportunities…. Our organization maintains a 24 hours crisis hotline and we are always in need of dedicated volunteers. Training is available for the shelter area needs.

Other Opportunities…. Our agency covers three counties, we have many volunteer opportunities. We could use volunteers for office and committee work. If you have any interest in any of these areas, please contact our volunteer coordinator at 231-796-6600. Our amazing staff would welcome your assistance.

Thank you to our Community Sponsors

United Way

Fremont Area Community Foundation

Mecosta County Community Foundation
An affiliate of Fremont Area Community Foundation

Osceola County Community Foundation
An affiliate of Fremont Area Community Foundation

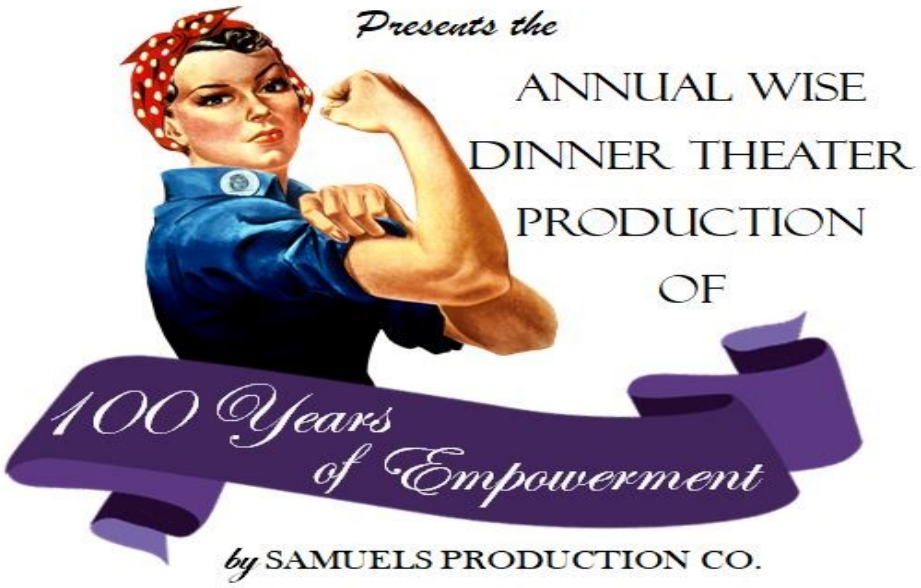
Women's Information Service, Inc.
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WISE SPRING NEWSLETTER Volume 7

Women's Information Service, Inc. (WISE)

WISE
Women's Information Service, Inc.

Friday, April 24, 2020
Holiday Inn Ballroom
6:00 P.M.



Presents the

ANNUAL WISE
DINNER THEATER
PRODUCTION
OF

100 Years of Empowerment

by SAMUELS PRODUCTION CO.

Delicious Buffet
Must-Have Raffle Items
Outstanding Entertainment

Please save the date and support the many services available to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and sex trafficking in Mecosta, Osceola and Newaygo counties.

Ticket Price: $60