2025 Annual Report

harbor house

Domestic & Sexual Violence Programs

Table of Contents

A LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY 3
OUR LEADERSHIP 4
WHAT WE DO 5
OUR PROGRAMS 6-9
HOPE'S STORY 10-11
A PARTNERSHIP FOR GOOD 12
APRIL'S STORY 13
2025 EVENTS OVERVIEW 14-15
IMPACT REPORT 16-17
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026 18
HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED 19

A Letter to Our Community

Dear Friends and Supporters,

At Harbor House, we believe everyone deserves to live free from violence, fear, and control. This past year, that belief guided everything we did—every call answered, every survivor supported, and every moment we stood alongside those navigating some of the hardest chapters of their lives.

Domestic violence often happens behind closed doors, but its effects ripple outward—impacting families, workplaces, schools, and entire communities. Thanks to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners, Harbor House remained a place of safety, advocacy, and hope for those who needed it most. Together, we provided critical services, raised awareness, and worked to ensure survivors were not alone.

This annual report reflects more than numbers. It tells a story of resilience, courage, and community. It is a testament to what is possible when people come together to believe survivors, challenge silence, and invest in prevention and healing.

On behalf of everyone at Harbor House, thank you for your continued trust and support. Your commitment makes this work possible—and helps light the way toward a safer, more compassionate future for all.

With gratitude,

Tracy Plamann
CEO, Harbor House - Domestic & Sexual Violence Programs

Our Leadership

BOARD MEMBERS

Nikki Voelzke, Board President
A2Z The Agency

Jean Coopman-Jansen, Vice-President
Primary Care Associates

Jennifer Peotter, Secretary
ThedaCare

Kellan Popp, Treasurer
Bank of Kaukauna

Ashley Hargrave
Miller Electric

Brynn Olearnick
Faith Technologies

Cory Brumlic
ThedaCare

Mike Fritsche
Appleton Police Department (Retired)

Melodie Briggs
US Energy (US Venture)

Tracey Noffke
Kimberly Clark

HARBOR HOUSE LEADERSHIP

Tracy Plamann
CEO

Michelle Ruhl
Director of Program Services

Lara Reddin
Volunteer Manager

Melissa Rettler
Office Manager & Accountant

Valerie Webster
Funding and Grants Manager

Lindsey Ross
Sr. Manager of Shelter, Crisis, & Outreach

Lori Stiebs
Manager of Intervention Program

Alia Swingle
Manager of Domestic Violence & Sexual Violence Services

Dena Williams
Shelter Manager

Jade Meiselwitz
Facilities Coordinator

What We Do

Our mission is to serve all people Impacted by domestic and sexual violence through Individual and community-focused safety, engagement, education and healing. Our vision of a community that empowers Individuals and families to heal from domestic and sexual violence and build a future rooted In safety, dignity, and hope.

At Harbor House we're more than a shelter—we're a regional leader in the movement to end domestic and sexual violence. Through advocacy, education, and community partnerships, we're working to create lasting change across Northeast Wisconsin.

We Do This By:

- Supporting all people impacted by domestic & sexual violence
- Connecting with local agencies and service providers to ensure community members have access to the services they need
- Educating our community about healthy relationship actions and supporting one another through social and policy change

Our programming truly takes a 360-degree approach to ending violence in our community. We exist to ensure that every person in Outagamie, Calumet, and surrounding counties who is impacted by domestic or sexual violence has access to safety, shelter, and advocacy.

Our Programs

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROGRAMMING

Our Sexual Violence Program is open to people of all genders and backgrounds. We provide confidential, trauma-informed advocacy, education, and support in a space that's inclusive and judgment-free.

No two people experience sexual violence in the same way. When individuals reach out to us for help, we take the time to learn about their needs, values, and goals for the future. With the support of an advocate, we create a personalized plan that reflects their needs and vision for their future. Our job is to walk alongside them, offering clear information, practical resources, and compassionate support at every step.

114 total SANE exams were attended in 2025 for a total of **349.25** hours

71 adults and **43** children

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

Our Domestic Violence Program offers confidential, inclusive advocacy, education, and support to people of all genders, whether they live in shelter or not. Services are tailored to clients' needs and their path forward. Our role is to support clients by providing clear information, practical resources, and ongoing support, empowering them to move forward on their own terms.

Beyond crisis response, the program equips survivors with tools and resources to rebuild their lives. Legal advocacy helps them navigate restraining orders and court processes; housing navigation assists with finding and sustaining stable housing; case management connects survivors to employment, education, childcare resources, and counseling. By addressing both immediate safety and long-term stability, Harbor House breaks the cycle of violence for families and creates pathways to independence.

As Wisconsin's first SAF-T Shelter, we also offer short-term housing for pets, helping remove barriers to safety and support healing. Pets must be spayed or neutered and up to date on vaccinations.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

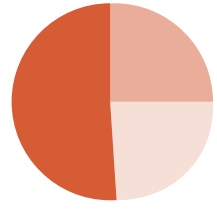
Children and teens who experience or witness abuse can face lasting impacts. Our Children & Youth Program helps young people process trauma, build healthy coping skills, strengthen relationships, and develop confidence and safety skills. We also support protective parents and caregivers to strengthen family bonds and help break the generational cycle of violence.

Every child responds to trauma differently, and every child deserves support that's thoughtful, personalized, and rooted in compassion. When families come to us for help, we take time to understand their unique circumstances, listen to concerns, and create a plan that reflects the specific needs of the child and family needing support.

Children & Youth Program 2025 Stats:

409
total clients age 17+ in 2025 for a total of
3,432.25 hours

14,299
total hours of service care



213
residential clients and
196 non-residential

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Harbor House strengthens community response to domestic and sexual violence through Prevention Education and Community Outreach. By educating individuals on recognizing abuse and supporting others, we're building a network of informed, compassionate advocates working toward a safer Northeast Wisconsin.

Prevention Education

Prevention Education helps children and teens build healthy relationships, recognize harmful behaviors, and learn when and how to seek help for themselves and others.

Community Outreach

Community Outreach raises awareness, reduces isolation, and equips friends, family, and community members to better support those experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

6,620
K-12 students received our healthy relationship message

65
community presentations and trainings reached 1,548 people

6,320
total volunteer hours

368
total volunteers

Our Programs

RURAL OUTREACH: CALUMET COUNTY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Located in Chilton, Wisconsin, our Calumet County Rural Outreach Program provides the same core services as our Appleton location, excluding shelter, with a focus on the unique challenges of rural communities. We address barriers like limited transportation, service access, and privacy concerns by offering localized, confidential support that reduces isolation and strengthens connections to resources, support systems, and safety.

INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Ending domestic violence requires accountability and collaboration. Our Domestic Violence Intervention Program works to hold individuals using abusive behaviors accountable while prioritizing survivor safety and community coordination.

Certified by Wisconsin Association of Certified Domestic Violence Intervention Professionals (WACDVIP), our program provides assessments across Outagamie, Calumet, and surrounding counties, with referrals from courts, probation, child protection, professionals, advocates, and self-referrals.

We completed 240 assessments on individuals using abuse.

63% were also child victims of abuse

42% continue to be in their relationship

54% had a child/ren present or in the home when abuse took place

We held Victim/Survivor Impact Panels in June and Dec. 2025.

85% of individuals shared they learned new info. about the effects of violence on children.

6 closed **20** week group sessions were facilitated

CRISIS AND SHELTER SERVICES

Immediate safety matters. Harbor House provides safe, secure shelter to all who seek it, regardless of capacity, along with food, clothing, personal care items, and other essentials. Whether or not you stay in our safe shelter, advocates are available to help you create a safety plan and connect with additional resources.

Our facility is protected by controlled access, 24-hour video surveillance, and trained staff on duty around the clock. We respect your choices, privacy, and boundaries.

1,624
individuals stayed in our safe shelter for a total of
22,980
nights
(compared to 17,106 nights in 2024, a 34% increase in just one year)

17–21%
over shelter capacity for five consecutive months

5,550
crisis calls responded to on our 24/7 Helpline

Hope's Story

After several months of working with COTS (an adult only transitional homeless program), Hope learned from her oldest daughter that their father was sexually abusing her. Once Hope became aware of the abuse, she took action and made contact with Harbor House, desperately seeking shelter for her and her daughter, so that she could get her to safety.

Hope and her daughter came into our safe shelter feeling very overwhelmed and not sure of their next steps. Hope had recently hit a six-month sobriety milestone and was often reaching out to her sponsor for support. Hope was able to return to COTS to continue their programming, but her main concern was finding safe and stable placement for her daughter.

During her time in shelter, Hope met with her assigned advocate regularly, participated in our support groups, and was able to get connected to outside resources such as the Community Clothes Closet, the Boys and Girls Club, and the YMCA to support her healing. Hope began therapy and started addressing her significant mental health concerns and trauma.

Since Hope was still actively participating in her required programming through Drug Court and working part time, her schedule was very restrictive, but she stayed focused on prioritizing her daughter's safe placement. Once Hope found placement for her daughter with a family member, Hope was able to return to COTS to complete programming. Thanks to her drug court program, Hope was able to get her move-in fees covered. Hope thanked Harbor House for our kindness and dedication to serving our clients.

"Harbor House helped me through one of the hardest moments of my life. Their support gave me the strength to stay focused on my healing and make sure my daughter was safe. Because of them, I was able to keep moving forward."

A Partnership for Good

At our Candlelight Vigil in October, Leah Eckhart, the Forensic Nursing Program Coordinator for Ascension spoke as a part of the program. Forensic Nursing is a specialty in the nursing field that bridges the gap between the medical and legal systems. Forensic Nurses complete additional training in caring for people who have been victimized within our communities. The Forensic Nursing team provides compassionate, trauma-informed care to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, strangulation, human trafficking, elder abuse and child abuse.

"Many of the patients that have been in our care have sought help on the worst day of their lives. We recognize the courage that it takes to walk through the doors of a hospital to seek help."

Leah and the Forensic Nursing Program at Ascension are integral to providing Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) exam to individuals experiencing sexual violence in our community.

"Forensic nursing provides compassionate, trauma-informed care at the intersection of healthcare and justice. At each hospital, survivors are met with expertise, dignity, and choice—never judgment. Through strong community partnerships, including Harbor House advocates, no survivor has to face their worst day alone. Together, we are breaking the silence around domestic violence and affirming a clear message: abuse is never acceptable, help is available, and everyone deserves to feel safe."

April's Story

April never imagined she would have to rebuild her life from the ground up. What began as a relationship that felt loving slowly became controlling, isolating, and abusive. As the violence escalated, April stayed, not because she was weak, but because she was a mother trying to protect her children.

Her turning point came quietly. One day, she realized that staying meant teaching her sons that fear and silence were normal. With their safety in mind, April made the courageous decision to leave. It wasn't easy or immediate. Leaving meant uncertainty, fear, and starting over with little more than hope.

The road to healing was not linear. April faced trauma, panic, and self-doubt, but with support, therapy, and advocacy, she began to reclaim her life. Slowly, stability returned, not just for her, but for her children.

Today, April and her sons live in a home filled with safety and laughter. Her children are watching their mother rebuild with strength, resilience, and love.
April's journey is a powerful reminder that when survivors are believed and supported, healing is possible and freedom is worth fighting for.

"When I was believed and supported, healing became possible."

2025 Events Overview

AMAZING RACE 2025

In May of 2025, we hosted our fifth annual Harbor House Amazing Race. Harbor House's Amazing Race event is not only about raising funds, but creating awareness about domestic and sexual violence in our area. In 2025, 18 teams and 10 sponsors joined us to raise over $40,000 to support our programming.

PURPLE PORCH PROJECT

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. During the month of October, we ask the community to shine a light of hope and solidarity by joining the Purple Porch Project. The community participates by decorating their porch, door, or windows in purple. The message the purple sends is; 'we stand with survivors, and we believe in a future free from violence.'

“LIGHT THE WAY” CANDLELIGHT VIGIL IN CALUMET CO.

Each year, Harbor House brings the community together for Light the Way, a vigil dedicated to honoring victims of domestic violence, uplifting survivors, and raising awareness about an issue that often remains hidden.

Domestic violence affects individuals and families across our community, with lasting impacts that extend far beyond the home.

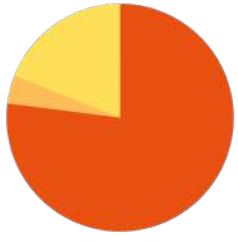
COMEDY FOR A CAUSE: A NIGHT OF HALLOWEEN FUN

Our first Comedy for a Cause event was hosted at the Hilton Paper Valley in Downtown Appleton on October 30th. Over 200 community members joined us (many in their finest Halloween costumes) to network, laugh, and raise over $50,000 to support Harbor House’s programming in 2026. The night featured acts by comedians Jackie Kashian and Kristin Lytie, food and drinks, a costume contest, a 50/50 raffle and more!

Impact Report

INCOME

- Government Grants: 41%
- Non-Government Grants: 9%
- United Way: 14%
- Fundraisers: 3%
- Individual & Corporation Contributions: 33%



EXPENSES

- Shelter & Programs: 77%
- Fundraising: 4%
- Administrative: 19%

**financial numbers are pending a final audit*

1,624
total clients served in 2025

1,210
of total clients identified as female

902
total number of walk-ins

SHELTER & CRISIS ADVOCACY

499
individuals stayed in our shelter

18,051
days total shelter days

5,550
calls were received on our 24/7 helpline

39
nights - average night stay for a shelter client

OUTREACH & ADVOCACY

1,064
hours of legal advocacy were provided to clients

417
clients under 17 years old, with **3,555** hours of services

PREVENTION, EDUCATION, & INTERVENTION

6,620
K-12 students received our healthy relationship message

65
community presentations and trainings reached 1,548 people

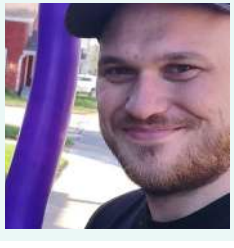
387
prevention education presentations provided to K-12 students in schools

240
assessments given to people using abusive behaviors

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Youth Volunteer of the Year:

LOLA LEVIN
SANE and Childcare Volunteer



Volunteer of the Year:

ERIC HODKIEWICZ
Front Desk Volunteer

GET TO KNOW OUR VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

6,320
total volunteer hours

368
total volunteers

69 adults and
128 children were served through our Holiday Program

Looking Ahead to 2026

In 2025, thousands of community champions chose to support our mission. Businesses, foundations, individuals, schools, faith communities, etc. have all allowed us to build hope in the lives of individuals experiencing the impact of violence.

Once again, we say thank you. We look to continue to shine our light even brighter for survivors in our community and beyond!

How You Can Be Involved

CORPORATE SUPPORT

At Harbor House, we believe in the power of collaboration to drive meaningful change. By aligning with our mission, your company can help us serve all people impacted by domestic and sexual violence, lead the shift in perception of violence, and advocate for lasting social and policy change while also enhancing your corporate social responsibility (CSR) profile, engaging employees, and making a tangible impact in the community.

- Corporate Giving
- Matching Gifts
- Sponsorship
- Board Member/Committee Engagement

For more information, contact **Valerie, Funding and Grants Manager at valerie.webster@harborhousewi.org** or 920-832-1667.

HOST A DONATION DRIVE

Check out our current needs list and host a donation drive with your group or organization.
harborhousewi.org/current-needs-list

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- facebook.com/harborhouseDAP
- instagram.com/harborhouse_appleton

VOLUNTEER

See all the ways your time can have an impact at Harbor House. Check out our volunteer listings at **harborhousewi.org/volunteer**

ATTEND AN EVENT

- Harbor House's Amazing Race - May 2, 2026
- Calumet County Candlelight Vigil - October 1, 2026
- Purple Porch Project - October 2026
- Comedy for a Cause - October 29, 2026

See our complete line up of events at **harborhousewi.org/events**

MAKE A DONATION

Provide crucial support for victims of abuse, offering safety, empowerment, and a path to healing.
harborhousewi.org/get-involved/individual-giving

harborhousewi.org