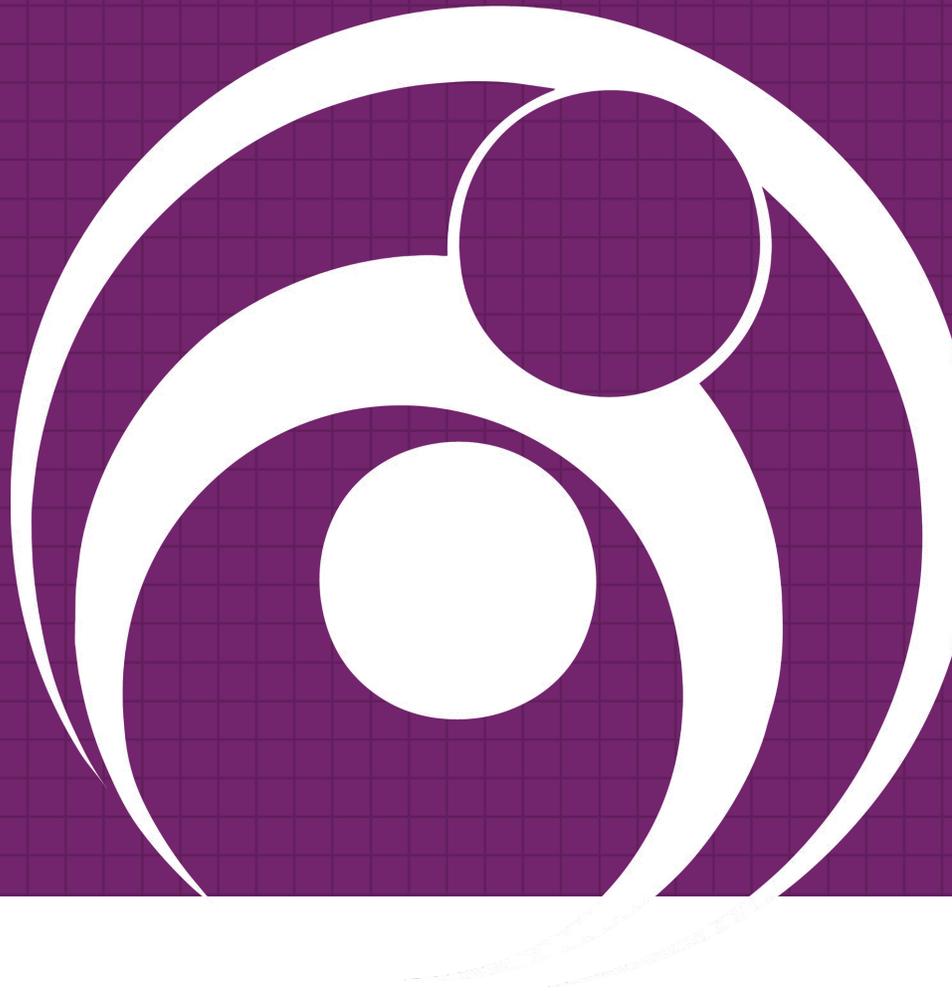


# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

NWA WOMEN'S SHELTER



The state of our organization

Our 2020 COVID Response

Looking to the Future

[WWW.NWAWS.ORG](http://WWW.NWAWS.ORG)

PO BOX 1059 ROGERS AR 72757

479.246.9999



# WELCOME

Stacy Seger, Development Director

Our mission is to provide shelter and support at any hour for those affected by domestic violence in our community.

In this annual report you will see numbers and statistics. We will share our successes and our challenges. We will present our vision for the future. In all of that, what we hope you really see is COURAGE, RESILIANCE, and HOPE.

2020 was a year unlike any in recent memory. But for over 35 years, the Northwest Arkansas Women's Shelter has been dedicated to serving both the immediate and on-going needs of survivors of domestic and sexual violence in our communities. In that, 2020 was no different.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we certainly had challenges to overcome. We had to re-imagine what it looked like to serve clients in a residential setting. We were able to develop safer ways to accompany our outreach clients through counseling sessions, legal appointments, and connecting them to our partner resources.

Our commitment to providing emergency shelter and accompaniment services to survivors is one thing that didn't change this year. We are grateful for a resilient staff, a talented leadership team, and our generous sponsors and donors who came together to ensure our work continued.

We continue to look forward, as well. As we work toward a future free from domestic violence and sexual assault, we are working with our community and corporate partners to find ways to expand our services to survivors, increase our capacity, and educate the NW Arkansas community to the signs of DV and ways to prevent it.

Thank you for your continued support. We are grateful for the ways in which the NW Arkansas Community joins us supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Wishing you good health and peace in 2021.

# OUR 2020 COVID RESPONSE

"Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving. We get stronger and more resilient."  
-Steve Maraboli

## OUR CLIENTS

The safety of our clients remains our top priority - especially during a time of pandemic. During this unprecedented time, we were able to ensure that those who needed safe shelter were sheltered safely by us or they were referred to one of our community partners.

We enhanced the ways in which we provide counseling and advocacy services to include secure virtual appointments. We transitioned to assisting individuals and families with educational needs for their children. We assisted those who were at home during quarantine with groceries and other living expenses so that they did not need to return to their abuser.

Our Thrift Store, Shelter, and Executive Offices alike, were outfitted with air purifiers, special door locks, and PPE to ensure everyone's safety and well-being.

## OUR STAFF

Every member of our staff has shown tremendous resiliency and flexibility in how they serve our clients. Some with compromised immune systems or other health concerns were transitioned to working remotely for a period. Others were able to amend responsibilities or schedules to minimize the amount of person-to-person contact.

During all of the uncertainty of a pandemic, our team never lost sight of what is important: securing the safety and well-being of the women, men, and children who seek our services. In addition, we were able to remain fully staffed during the pandemic.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

As a precaution, nearly all of our volunteer activity was put on hold over the course of the year. As we look forward to 2021, we have implemented strict health guidelines and will be welcoming volunteers once again. We rely heavily upon the generosity of our volunteers and look forward to having you back with us soon!

# OUR PEOPLE



## OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Brandy Osmus

As we begin 2021, we bring with us the same momentum that brought us through the trying times of 2020. While we were met with a number of challenges, our talented team overcame them showing resiliency, determination, and innovation.

Our sights are set high, looking towards a bright future. We saw each obstacle as an opportunity for us to grow as individuals and as an organization, striving even more to fulfill the mission we have always had: to provide services in our community to those impacted by domestic violence or sexual assault. As a result, we came out stronger than ever with effective programs, strong relationships, valuable experiences, refined processes, and steady financial support to serve our clients.

We did not go on this journey alone and we want to take thank our numerous partners; corporations, organizations, donors, volunteers, and peers.

MARS, Inc continues to be a constant source of generous support as our presenting sponsor year after year. Without them our amazing virtual Fresh Start event wouldn't have been possible! We hope you enjoyed your party boxes and can't wait to share what we have in store for this year's event! Kellogg stepped up as the title sponsor for our special VIP event to thank special donors! Their financial contribution, in addition to helping keep our pantry stocked all year was very appreciated. In the midst of an international pandemic, Clorox stepped in as a new sponsor for us this year, providing cleaning supplies so that we can keep our spaces clean and healthy for clients and staff! And once again, Earthbound continued as a generous partner for us. Their donations allowed us to makeover all client rooms and also provide new beginnings for our clients in their new homes, in addition to support our Thrift store. There are so many more of you without whom we wouldn't be able to make the impact we do in such a large way!

We know that we are better together and our partner organizations raised nearly \$200,000 during the year as they held independent fundraisers for us! As they are working hard to support their own mission, they took time to support ours. I wish we could name them all but there are too many to name. You know who you are ... so THANK YOU!

Leadership is not a position or a title, it is action and example.

# OUR PEOPLE

## OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONT.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your generosity. No matter the size of the donation it was important to the work that we do. The donations you provided were used to give the support and services our clients so desperately need. We were able to celebrate birthdays and holidays, meet every day client needs, provide food to clients, appreciate our staff, and so much more.



Giving your time to support us is so valuable. Whether it's at our thrift store taking donations, painting our client/staff spaces at the shelter, shopping for our families, or even serving our clients directly, your contributions make such a big difference in the lives of the people you are serving.



Finally, there are so many wonderful non-profit organizations in Northwest Arkansas and we are proud to stand alongside them. We serve a lot of the same clients in different capacities but we rely on each other to be the experts in our own areas in order to best care for our neighbors. We lean on one another to provide the absolute best care for our clients by collaborating, educating, and supporting each other along the way.



There were many uncertain times during 2020, and 2021 looks like it may bring more of the same, but we know that together we will make the difference. We know that together we will continue to grow and expand our services within our community. We know that together we can and will break the cycle of domestic violence.

Happy new year, stay safe and healthy!  
I look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2021!

# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## Ashley Abel, President

The promise of hope and the efforts of heroes outlined The Northwest Arkansas Women's Shelter's journey and growth during the 2020 calendar year.

The primary objectives of our organization were only amplified by the events of this year. Through local, state, and federal efforts, our amazing team was capable of serving those in need in our community through it all.

When facilities were not available for a short period of time, the Northwest Arkansas Women's Shelter continued to provide services and shelter for those in need. Our mission does not have a door, but a mandate of empathetic advocacy.

While heroes worked on the ground within our organization, at all levels, individual donors, sponsorships, and grants kept our facilities and services operating when others could not. A once marginal revenue stream from our Northwest Arkansas Women's Shelter Thrift Store rose to the occasion, as well, moving into online retail spaces and edging closer to funding a larger part of the overall organization. While our organization withstood the stresses and difficulties 2020 presented, they are not without obstacles moving forward.

The goal of our board of directors and executive team has been to ensure that all services and facilities that promote our mission of, "shelter and support at any hour [for] those affected by domestic violence in our community," can continue. This objective will remain unhindered by the recession, pandemic, and our ever-changing global landscape with your help.

The state of the Northwest Arkansas Women's Shelter, on all levels, is outstanding at this time. Now is not the time, however, to stop pursuing all efforts to guarantee these missions, objectives, and services that our community so desperately needs. Take a moment this New Year to offer whatever support you can to those in need in our community. No person is too rich, too poor, too busy, or too minuscule to direct positive change within our community, or any organization like ours. My volunteer efforts within this organization have been fruitful and enriching for my life, on a spiritual and personal level. I hope that you can continue to find these enrichments, wherever they may be, this 2021.

Thank you to all the heroes in our community, state, and organization, again, for your sacrifices in 2020. They will not be forgotten.

Ashley Abel, President | Walmart

Mary Callendar, Vice President | P&G

Garrett Washington, Treasurer | Great Southern Bank

Deanah Baker | Walmart

Sarah Collins | Mars

Rob Dodd | Nabholz Construction

Hunter Haynes | HCH Consulting

Shelly McDougal | Walmart

Emily Neal | Eldridge Brooks Law Firm

Angelique O'Bryan | TPC

Simone Schwarze | Nestle

Simone Tamer | KPMG

# OUR CLIENTS



## Allow us to share a story from a former client

Julie\* walked from her home to her local police station with her 4-month old baby one Spring afternoon. It was an exhausting couple of hours to get there. She was escaping from an abusive marriage with her American husband. He had married her and brought her to America 2 years prior. Her dreams of happiness, family life, and a rosy future had turned into a nightmare of frequent rapes and sexual assaults by this man. He has also isolated her from the community and placed cameras all around the house to keep watch on her while he is at work.

When she came to us in shelter, our advocate was able to connect with her because she spoke and understood her language. She wanted us to help her return to her home country. Unfortunately, she could not leave. If she leaves, she will have to leave her baby behind in America. This woman then sacrificially chose to stay for her baby's sake, in a place that is unfamiliar and where life is uncertain. She has had to maneuver the court system and immigration issues. She has had to find a new place to live, and a way to sustain them both while working toward a divorce and through custody issues. These are all big tasks, even for a seasoned American.

We went to bat for her by engaging court advocacy, emergency shelter, clothes and hygiene needs for her and the baby, and day to day advocacy. We even scheduled a visit to the Asian grocer for her, so she can buy the sauces she needs to cook the type of cuisine she knows, which is a small consolation for her.

After her initial in shelter stay, we helped her move into an apartment under the Emergency Shelter Grant program. We then followed up with Outreach Services by continuing to assist her with court advocacy, custody visitations for her baby, food security, baby's wellness, doctors' appointment for post-partum check up for her and her baby, and many other tasks and services. In addition to her situational and language barriers, we had to work through the limitations of COVID-19 restrictions too.

We are still in the process of helping her assimilate to life here, empower her to provide for herself and her baby, get a driver's permit and eventually to drive the car she paid for but is currently still in her estranged spouse's possession. We are also looking out for her emotionally as she comes to term with the traumas sustained from the marriage, post-partum fragility, and being alone without friends or family in a foreign country, and her longing to be back in her familiar environment.

It will be a long and arduous road ahead for Julie\*, which all started with that walk to the Police Station one spring afternoon. NWAWS will walk with her for as long as she needs and until she can stand on her own two feet.

# OUR EVENTS

reimagined  
**Fresh  
Start**

OUR FEATURED  
ARTIST

LENA  
REGINA



**\$104,000**

raised to support the programs of the NWAWS

**83 PARTY  
BOXES**

delivered to party  
"attendees"

# OUR SERVICES

**4,660**

SAFE NIGHTS  
IN SHELTER  
AND OFFSITE



**392**

Women



**18**

Men



**179**

Children

**1,772  
CALLS**

Answered on our  
emergency hotline

**657  
SESSIONS**

Counseling sessions given

## THRIFT STORE CLIENT VOUCHER PROGRAM

**151**

VOUCHERS  
GIVEN



**\$8,596.40**

PROVIDED BY  
VOUCHERS



**WATCH FOR THE 2021 ANNOUNCEMENT SOON!**

#NWAWS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



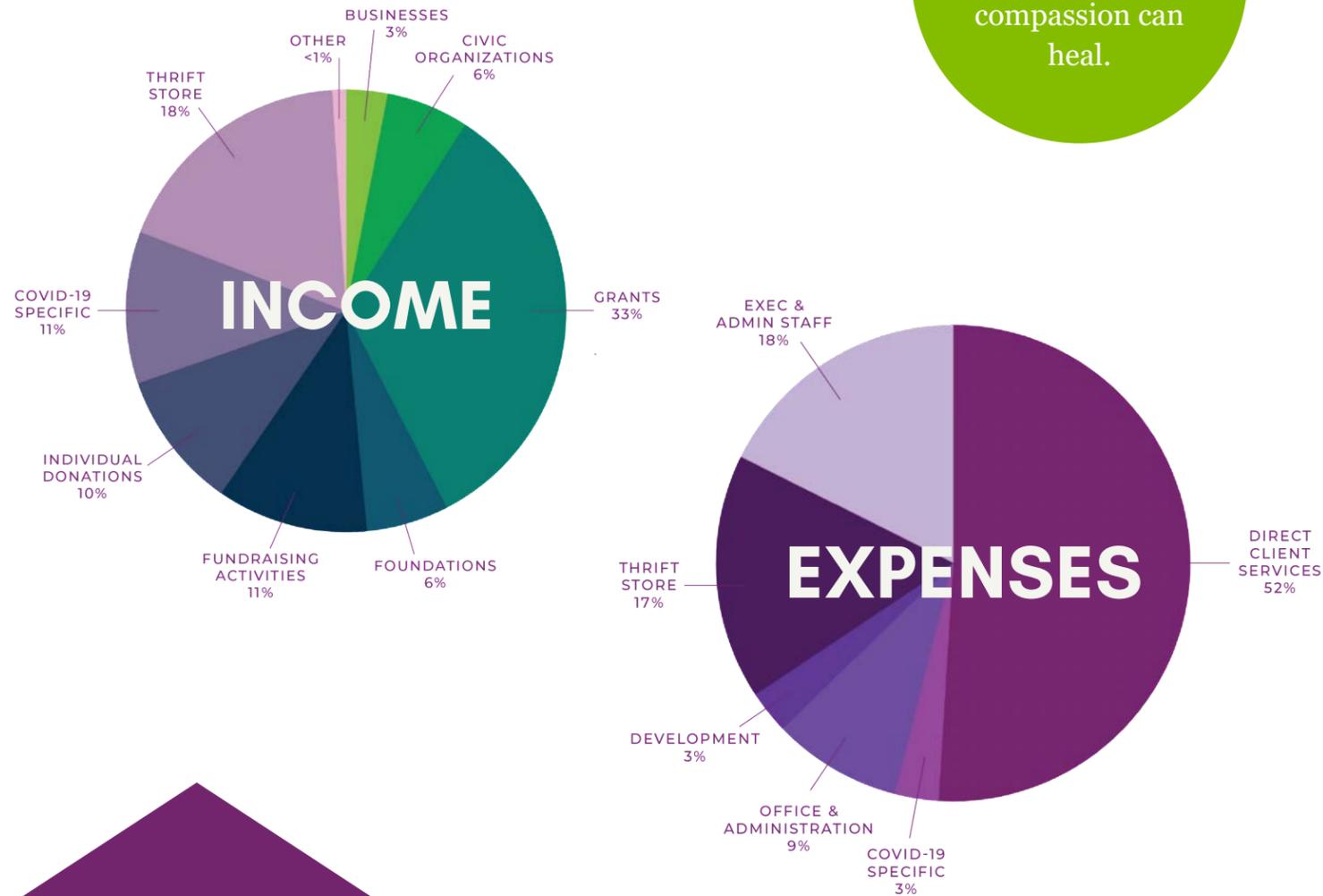
DESPITE BEING CLOSED FOR **12 WEEKS** THIS YEAR DUE TO QUARANTINE, OUR THRIFT STORE HAD SALES TOTALING:

**\$371,285.05**

with all profits  
going directly to  
shelter programs!

# OUR FINANCES

A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal.



**513**  
DONATION PARTNERS

**18**  
CLIENTS  
Received eye exams and glasses at no cost to them

**25**  
CLIENTS  
Attended our free legal clinic

**44** KIDS &  
**34** ADULTS

RECEIVED CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



# NWAWS THRIFT STORE



## SHOPPING WITH A PURPOSE

EVERY DOLLAR SPENT IN OUR STORE GOES DIRECTLY TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAMS AND MISSION OF THE NORTHWEST ARKANSAS WOMEN'S SHELTER. EVERY DONATION WE RECEIVE IS EITHER SOLD IN-STORE, GIVEN TO A CLIENT, OR USED BY ONE OF OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR MISSION. OUR DONORS, SHOPPERS, AND VOLUNTEERS HELP TO MAKE OUR STORE A FULL SHOPPING EXPERIENCE. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MAY FIND AMONG OUR SHELVES AND RACKS!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON!



THE THRIFT STORE TEAM IS PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT OUR ORGANIZATION IN SUCH A LARGE WAY DURING 2020. OUR SMALL (BUT MIGHTY!) TEAM OF DEDICATED AND LOYAL THRIFT STORE EMPLOYEES ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD OF THE GROWTH WE HAVE SEEN AS A TEAM!

WE ARE SO VERY GRATEFUL FOR ALL OF OUR DEDICATED SHOPPERS AND GENEROUS DONORS. WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT WHAT THE NEW YEAR HOLDS AND WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT US IN OUR GROWTH AS A BRAND OF INTEGRITY AND CONSISTENCY. – Christy Jaro, Store Manager



WE LAUNCHED OUR NEW ONLINE THRIFT STORE IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE SHELTER WHILE OUR PHYSICAL STORE WAS CLOSED BECAUSE OF COVID.

[www.nwawsthiftstore.org](http://www.nwawsthiftstore.org)

You can find brand new and designer items online AND in-store!

# OUR PARTNERS

We are blessed with an active business and vendor community here in NWA. We give thank for those who stepped in as corporate partners to help us meet the needs of our clients.



# OUR PARTNERS

For nearly 35 years, we have worked hard to serve those effected by domestic violence or sexual assault. We have "honed our craft", as they say. We know that we have an effective system and are making a difference in the lives of many people. We also know that we cannot do everything. We need the help of other experts in the area to help ensure that everyone's needs are met. We have been diligent in forming strategic partnerships throughout NWA knowing that they are aligned with our mission and we are much better when we work together.

Thank you to all of our service partners; we are grateful for your expertise and your comradery.



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Nothing we do can change the past, but everything we do changes the future.  
Ashleigh Brilliant

## OUR VISION

As we continue to provide life-saving and life-changing services to our clients, we are always looking for ways to move forward and do more. While our founding mission of providing emergency shelter to those experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault will not change, we are excited to find new ways of helping our clients.

Part of our vision calls for the establishment of an independent re-housing program that would support our clients beyond the 30-day emergency shelter period. As we move forward with this exciting new program, we will be diligent in working with partners to establish best practices, working with local business operators, property owners, and organizations to form a network of support, and finding a talented and experienced program staff to oversee implementation. Our goal is to get this program off the ground during 2021.

In addition, as our vision expands, we are laying the foundation of creating our own facility that will serve as our emergency shelter, administrative offices, and a hub for services supporting our clients' healing, wellness, and independence.

As a leader in NWA in providing emergency shelter, we take our responsibility seriously. It is our goal to continue to be a beacon of courage, resilience, and hope; not only to survivors of domestic violence, but also to the Northwest Arkansas community.

We could not be more proud of our leadership team and our staff for boldly stepping into the future! We continue to work hard because there continues to be people who need safety, security, and support. Above all, we are proud of our clients who show us every day the power of courage and resilience and remind us that we are all better when we work together!



"I have always felt a strong pull to help women in need so when I moved to Bentonville, the first thing I did was seek out a women's shelter in the area. At first, it was just donating clothes to their local thrift store. Then, an opportunity arose to make larger donations through my employer so I jumped at it. During that donation effort, I was able to work closely with the NWA Women's Shelter team and loved it so much, I couldn't not ask to be considered for additional volunteer opportunities. I look forward to continuing to supporting NWA Women's Shelter."

- Parvaneh Daneshmand, Walmart  
NWAWS Donor & Volunteer

# 2021 EVENTS

MAY

VIP PURPLE PARTY

JUNE

PRIDE DRAG SHOW

JULY

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION  
PICNIC

OCT  
OBER

DV AWARENESS MONTH  
TO INCLUDE OUR INAUGURAL VIRTUAL  
FUN RUN AND OUR SIGNATURE FRESH  
START EVENT



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