



THE ADVOCATE

News from WIRC-CAA Victim Services

24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (309) 837-5555

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 1

WINTER/SPRING 2020

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The Advocate

Winter/Spring 2020

Volume 27, Issue 1

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The Advocate is published two (2)
times per year by

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ADVOCATES, COUNSELORS STILL AVAILABLE DURING PANDEMIC

By Naomi Taylor,
Victim Services Director

The main priority of the WIRC-CAA Victim Services is maintaining the health and well-being of our clients, staff, and community. We understand the concern and uncertainty surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and are doing our best to monitor the situation closely. At this time, we are taking active measures to prevent the spread of the virus while still providing services for our clients - victims of domestic violence and sexual violence. Many of these precautions are happening internally and involve facility disinfection, closing our offices to visitors, limiting staff travel, etc. Please note: If you are a current client, your counselor/advocate will be reaching out to you to discuss your options.

Counselors and advocates are available to answer non-emergency questions by calling the domestic violence business line at 309-837-6622 or the sexual violence business line at 309-836-2148.

If you are in crisis and need to speak with a counselor immediately, call the Victim Services 24-hour crisis hotline: 309-837-5555.

Our staff will discuss safety and service options with you. This may include an Order of Protection, a Civil No Contact Order, hospital advocacy, emergency shelter, or a safety plan.

At this time, because we are limiting in-person contact to prevent the spread of the virus, counseling services will be completed via telephone. Please call one of our non-emergency business lines before you come to the Victim Services' office for an appointment.

Staff will do our best to use good judgment in serving victims in the best way possible, on a case by case basis, through this unprecedented time. Victim Services will continue to monitor this situation closely and take the necessary precautions needed to keep everyone safe and healthy. We will keep you informed should things change and with any updates.☺

***Crisis Hotline
Volunteers Needed!***

If you would like to volunteer for the
crisis hotline, call (309) 837-6622.

KATHY SIMMONS 5K POSTPONED

Due to ongoing concerns regarding the Coronavirus, the Kathy Simmons Memorial 5K Walk/Run/Roll was postponed until September 2020. Event organizers will be in contact with those who have already registered and businesses who have donated. Additional details regarding the event date and location will be announced closer to September.

Public Relations Manager Jamie Roth says the decision was made out of concern for the safety of participants and employees. "Last year, we had over 60 participants of all ages join us to support domestic violence survivors in western Illinois," says Roth. "We are taking the CDC guidelines very seriously, and look forward to seeing everyone in September."

The 5K, sponsored by Victim Services, is held every year in memory of Kathy Simmons and in support of survivors of domestic violence. Ms. Simmons was a compassionate nurse at McDonough District Hospital, a resident of Hancock County, and mother of three children. On March 26, 2003, she became a fatality of domestic violence at the hands of her husband of 25 years. All proceeds from the event are used to provide free services, such as crisis advocacy response and counseling, to domestic violence survivors of Victim Services.

For more information, visit wirpc.org/simmons/, find "WIRC-CAA Victim Services" on social media, or call (309) 837-6622. ☺

Take Back the Night *March & Rally 2019, Macomb*



VICTIM SERVICES OFFERS VIRTUAL LESSONS ABOUT IMPORTANT TOPIC

Victim Services is offering a new way for parents to start the conversation with their children about a significant topic: how to tell a trusted adult about sexual abuse. Victim Services Preventionist Debbie C., whose full name is kept confidential in order to protect her safety and the safety of her clients, is providing free virtual one-on-one lessons about this subject.

Many teachers and school administrators are familiar with Debbie, as she typically gives educational presentations about sexual abuse to students and instructors throughout the year. Due to schools closing because of the Coronavirus pandemic, Debbie and many other prevention educators in Illinois are using video conferencing tools to continue their outreach.

Debbie believes it is very important for parents to have this difficult conversation with their children at an early age. "One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center," says Debbie. "These lessons provide information on staying safe, the differences between good touch and bad touch, and the differences between good secrets and bad secrets. It is extremely important that children have a trusted grown-up that they can disclose to and that the grown-up believes them."

Debbie understands that some parents may feel hesitant about trusting her to discuss this topic with their children. "Parents are welcome to be present for the lessons.

Each lesson is age appropriate and language sensitive. It is taught in a manner that will provide them with the tools and resources they need without getting into sexually explicit content," says Debbie. She added that her lesson plans are available for preview online at <http://wirpc.org/prevention/>. Parents can also visit the website <http://www.erinslaw.org> to learn more about prevention education and why it is important.

Currently, Victim Services is offering virtual lessons by appointment for Pre-K through 2nd grade level students. Lessons for advanced grade levels may be provided at a later date, depending on demand.

To schedule a virtual one-on-one lesson, email Debbie at Deborah@wirpc.org or call (309) 836-2148, ext. 141 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

If you have been abused at any point in your life, or if you suspect that someone you know is being abused, call Victim Services' 24-hour free and confidential crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555. ☺

*You are valued. We will believe you.
You are not alone.*



The Hancock County State's Attorney Office pledges to start by believing survivors of sexual violence.

START BY BELIEVING PLEDGES

**Photos were taken before the CDC social distancing guidelines were recommended.*



The Fulton County Police Chief and Illinois State Police pledge to start by believing survivors of violence.



The Office of Public Safety at Western Illinois University pledges to start by believing survivors of sexual violence.



The McDonough County State's Attorney Office pledges to start by believing survivors of sexual violence.



The Warren County State's Attorney Office pledges to start by believing survivors of sexual violence.

WIRC-CAA Victim Services Phone Directory

Domestic Violence Services:

*Hancock, Henderson,
McDonough, and
Warren counties*

Main Office
(309) 837-6622

**24-Hour Free and
Confidential Crisis
Hotline for All
Counties:**
(309) 837-5555

Sexual Assault Services:

*Fulton, Hancock, Henderson,
Knox, McDonough, and
Warren counties*

Fulton County Office
(309) 333-1934

Hancock, Henderson,
McDonough, and
Warren County Office
(309) 836-2148

Knox County Office
(309) 331-4716
or (309) 343-3337



Parents: are you tired of
teaching and need a break?

**Contact Debbie at
WIRC-CAA Victim Services!**

**Free Virtual One-on-One Lessons
for Pre-K through 2nd Grade Levels**

How to Tell Grown-ups About Sexual Abuse

Lesson 1: Play It Safe

Lesson 2: Good/Happy & Bad/Uncomfortable Touch

Lesson 3: Secret Safety



To schedule a lesson, email deborah@wirpc.org
or call (309) 836-2148, ext. 141.

**YOU ARE NOT
ALONE.**

**WE BELIEVE
YOU.**

**YOUR STORY
MATTERS.**

**WE ARE READY
TO LISTEN.**

**IT IS NOT YOUR
FAULT.**

Domestic and sexual violence can happen to anyone of any age, ability, sexual orientation, income, education level, religion, gender identity, or ethnic background.

If you need to speak with someone now, call our free and confidential 24-hour crisis hotline at (309) 837-5555. Otherwise, please contact us at any of the phone numbers listed in our phone directory.

All services are free to survivors and significant others of survivors, including partners, children, family members, and friends.