



# THE ADVOCATE

News from WIRC-CAA Victim Services

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

2022

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 1

## In This Issue:

Meet Mariah, Preventionist at Victim Services	p.2
Bullying Prevention Tips	p.3
Pet Parents Pledge to Stop Abuse	p.4
Quilt Gives Voice to Survivors & Victims	p.5
Thank You to Bridgeway for Wearing Purple	p.5
Take Back the Night March & Rally	p.6
Drum Out Domestic Violence	p.7
Staff News	p.8
Local Elected Officials Recognize DVAM	p.8
Phone Directory	p.8

## The Advocate

2022: Volume 29, Issue 1

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The Advocate is published by  
WIRC-CAA Victim Services  
PO Box 157, Macomb, Illinois 61455

## 2021 PROGRAM REPORT AT-A-GLANCE

Once again, thousands of calls were made to the crisis hotline in 2021. The majority of the calls were domestic violence-related.

Every person's situation is unique, and the agency continues to offer survivors the option to meet with their counselor in-person, by phone, or via video chat. Nearly 500 people, including children and adults, attended scheduled counseling sessions or received medical/legal advocacy services.

Public education and outreach is a critical part of Victim Services' mission to end the cycle of violence. The agency hosts seminars and trainings throughout the year, and staff speak with local organizations about the agency's services. Over 3,500 people were reached last year.

Please view the chart shown below to see how you impacted so many lives in our service area through your support of our programs. ☺

### 2021 Domestic Violence Program Totals

Hotline Calls Received: 2,109	Clients Receiving Direct Services: 357	Public Education Participants: 2,317
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### 2021 Sexual Violence Program Totals

Hotline Calls Received: 221	Clients Receiving Direct Services: 137	Public Education Participants: 1,260
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### 2021 Combined Program Totals

Hotline Calls Received: 2,330	Clients Receiving Direct Services: 494	Public Education Participants: 3,577
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# MEET MARIAH, PREVENTIONIST AT VICTIM SERVICES

Hello survivors and friends! I am Ms. Mariah, and I have been settling in with the Victim Services department for the past four months by learning the ins-and-outs of being the Sexual Assault Preventionist for Victim Services. In those months, I have dipped my toes into the vast resources that I have available to me, and continue to learn each day about primary, secondary and tertiary prevention for the six counties receiving our services: Hancock, Henderson, Fulton, Knox, McDonough, and Warren.

Under Victim Services and through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), I am able to provide the following services: prevention education seminars for schools (Pre-K-12th grade), colleges, members of community, civic organizations, and churches; professional training programs for teachers and school personnel; and sexual harassment continuing education for businesses and other organizations.

In my role, I also act as an advisor and educator to legal, medical, law enforcement, and social service providers concerning all issues related to sexual assault.

More recently, I started speaking at schools and colleges about Erin's Law, a state-mandated program that educates children about consent, boundaries, and respect in an age-appropriate way. I want to thank the wonderful teachers and community members who have been gracious enough to invite me into their classrooms and to events.

The calling that I have to be in



*Mariah H. is the Preventionist for Victim Services. [Courtesy Photo]*

this field grows with the feedback from interactions with students. Working with youth is wonderful when I hear their thoughts and know they are committing to join the fight against sexual violence; their actions show there is passion for change in the community.

In the coming year, I look forward to working with communities and implementing new methods of prevention programming. The future of prevention is ever-changing. I am committed to continued learning, and to being a resource and sounding board for the community. I look forward to working with and meeting members of the community. I have big plans and hope I can do the community justice in the fight to end sexual violence.

I have been a resident of western Illinois since birth, and it is my pleasure to serve in this role and be an ally in the fight to end sexual violence. While this is not an easy fight, I hope to immerse myself in prevention education and social justice activism to be a strong

resource for our communities.

If you would like to have me to speak at your school or organization, or if you have any questions, call Victim Services at 309-836-2148 or email [Mariah@wirpc.org](mailto:Mariah@wirpc.org). Do not hesitate to reach out to me; I would love to hear from you and address any questions you have related to sexual assault and prevention education.

I look forward to educating in many communities and speaking at events. I am always available to be a friend and ally to the cause of ending sexual violence.

Until next time,

Mariah H.

Victim Services Preventionist



## WIRC-CAA Food Pantry



**Hours of Operation:**  
Tuesdays, Thursdays and  
Fridays (excluding holidays)

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

133 West Jackson Street  
Macomb, Illinois

(309) 837-2997

# SPEAK UP! SPEAK OUT!



Be more than a bystander!



## BULLYING PREVENTION TIPS

*Written by Debbie Collins, Victim Services Director*

A bystander to bullying can become an UPSTANDER by:

- Questioning bullying behavior, simple acts like changing the subject or questioning the behavior to shift focus.
- Using humor. Say something funny or redirect the conversation.
- Strength in numbers! A group of bystanders can intervene to show there are several people who don't agree with and want to stop the bullying.
- Take a walk with the person who is the target of bullying to help diffuse current and potential bullying interactions.
- A bystander can make the smallest difference by reaching out privately to check in with the person

who was bullied. Let them know you do not agree with it and that you care.

For more information and bullying prevention resources, check out <https://Stopbullying.gov/>.

If you have experienced bullying, or would like to learn how you can make a difference by combating bullying, contact our 24/7 free and confidential crisis hotline at 309-837-5555.



### *Crisis Hotline Volunteers Needed!*

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

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

## WE BELIEVE YOU.

## YOUR STORY MATTERS.

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

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



24/7 Free and  
Confidential Crisis  
Hotline:  
**(309) 837-5555**



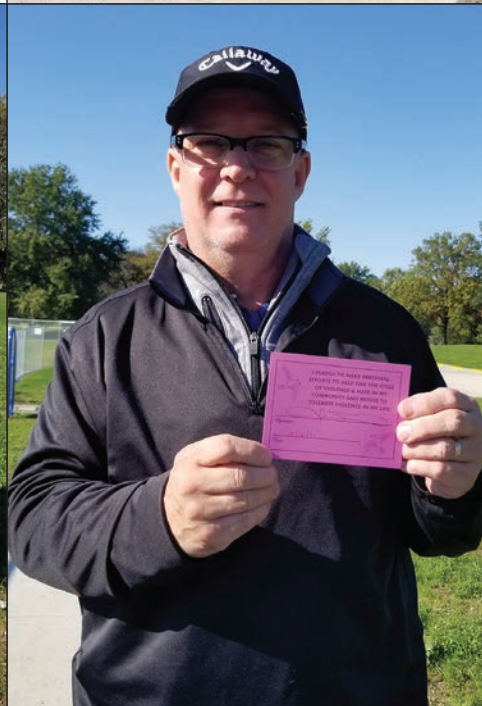
# PET PARENTS PLEDGE TO STOP ABUSE AT PETS AGAINST VIOLENCE AWARENESS EVENT



Thank you to everyone who came out to the Pets Against Violence Awareness event hosted Saturday, October 16, 2021 at the Jackie & Dave Thompson Dog Park in Macomb.

Each person learned about barriers that survivors with pets often face, and they signed the following pledge: "I pledge to make personal efforts to help end the cycle of violence and hate in my community and refuse to tolerate violence in my life."

Pets are often the target of domestic abusers, especially when the abuser feels like they are losing control of their victim(s). ☺



## Contact us when you need a helping hand

**Food pantry • Scholarships**  
**Energy bill assistance • Job training stipends**  
**Homeless prevention assistance**  
**Minor home modifications for the elderly/disabled**  
**...and MORE! Services are free and confidential.**

**WIRC-Community  
 Action Agency**  
**(309) 837-2997**  
<https://wirpc.org/>

Equal Opportunity Employer





# QUILT GIVES VOICE TO ABUSE SURVIVORS AND VICTIMS



*Rose Elam spent nearly 50 hours constructing a quilt made from t-shirts of Victim Services' Clothesline Project display.*

"Everyone deserves to feel safe," "Love doesn't hurt," and "Hands are not for hurting," are just a few of the heart-wrenching messages written on t-shirts designed by local survivors of abuse. The t-shirts are part of a national exhibit called The Clothesline Project. WIRC-CAA Victim Services curates the exhibit in western Illinois. The t-shirts are hung from a clothesline wire that are put on display at various locations throughout the year. When the wear and tear on the t-shirts becomes too much, Victim Services gives the shirts new life by sewing them into a quilt. This year, longtime WIRC Administrative Assistant Rose Elam constructed the five-foot by seven-foot quilt.

Elam says the colorful quilt took nearly 50 hours to make. She started the project in November 2020, and added the finishing touches in early

April 2021. "I am proud of how it turned out and think it is meaningful to all who see it," said Elam.

All of the t-shirts in Victim Services' collection were designed by child and adult survivors of domestic and/or sexual abuse who lived in the agency's service area. In certain cases, shirts are designed by a friend or family member in memory of someone who has died as a direct result of abuse.

Each t-shirt color represents a different form of abuse: white is for people who died because of violence; yellow represents survivors of physical assault or childhood sexual abuse; red, pink, or orange stand for survivors of rape or childhood sexual abuse; blue or green represents survivors of incest or child abuse; purple is for people who were attacked because of their sexual orientation; brown or gray is for survivors of emotional, spiritual, or verbal abuse; and black is for people who were disabled after a physical assault. ☹



**You are not alone**

**Abuse is not love**

# THANK YOU TO BRIDGEWAY FOR WEARING PURPLE

Thank you to Bridgeway of Macomb, Illinois, for wearing purple during October to raise awareness of domestic violence and show support to survivors. ☺





# TAKE BACK THE NIGHT MARCH AND RALLY SUPPORTS SURVIVORS - OCTOBER 21, 2021

Take Back the Night March and Rally was hosted at the Macomb campus of Western Illinois University on October 21, 2021.

Thank you to Western Illinois University, the WIU Multicultural Center, and the WIU Women's Center for another empowering event for survivors and allies.

Victim Services counselors and advocates were available to survivors during the event. ☺





# DRUM OUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEMINAR FOCUSED ON STRANGULATION AWARENESS

Thank you to everyone who attended the Drum Out Against Domestic Violence event at Make Fit Happen, Macomb, Illinois, on Wednesday, October 20, 2021.

The event was a fun and informative seminar for law enforcement officials and customers of Make Fit Happen about domestic violence, helping survivors, and how domestic violence calls impact law enforcement.

Kaylie Gilbert of the Illinois Attorney General's Office gave a short presentation about strangulation, which can often lead to brain injuries or death.

Victim Services DV Counselor Amanda gave a presentation about domestic violence statistics and the services offered to survivors at Victim Services.

A moment of silence was held to honor the memory of citizens and officers who have died due to domestic violence.

The event included a POUND exercise session by Greg Todd, Fitness Instructor at Make Fit Happen. POUND is a unique, full-body workout that combines cardio, pilates-inspired movement and drumsticks.





# STAFF NEWS

## New Team Members

The following people recently joined the Victim Services Team:

**Desiree\***

DV Case Manager/Counselor

**Danielle\***

DV Legal Advocate

**Molly\***

DV Counselor

**Brittany\***

DV Child Counselor

## Staff Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following team members who recently celebrated special employment anniversary milestones:

**One Year**

**Beci\***

LEP DV Counselor

*\*Full names of Victim Services employees are kept confidential out of concern for their safety and the safety of their clients.*

## Victim Services Phone Directory

**24/7 Free and  
Confidential Crisis Hotline**  
(309) 837-5555

**Domestic Violence Office**  
(309) 837-6622

**Sexual Violence and  
Prevention Education Office**  
(309) 836-2148

# LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Multiple local elected officials signed proclamations declaring October 2021 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Thank you to Oquawka Mayor Lori Lipes, Macomb Mayor Michael Inman, Carthage Mayor James Nightingale, Monmouth Mayor Rod Davies for supporting survivors. 🤝



*Carthage Mayor James Nightingale with former WIRC & CAA Executive Director Tracy Camden*



*Oquawka Mayor Lori Lipes (left) with Victim Services Director Debbie Collins (right).*



*Monmouth Mayor Rod Davies with Victim Services Director Debbie Collins.*



*Macomb Mayor Michael Inman (center right) with Victim Services Director Debbie Collins (left), Victim Services LEP DV Counselor Beci (center left), and former WIRC & CAA Executive Director Tracy Camden (right).*

