What is the mission of your organization?

The mission of Women and Children's Horizons is to provide support, shelter, education, training and healing services to victims of sexual and domestic abuse, their families and the community.

Who are the leaders of your organization?

A dedicated 17-member Board of Directors, headed by Board President Diane Walton, leads Women and Children’s Horizons. Officers are Vice President John Plous, Treasurer Terri Schmidt and Secretary Eva Hoey. Members are: Erik Guttormsen, Robert Hallisy, Marcy Hufendick, Carrie Kauck, Lou Molitor, Robert Pieroni, Sandra Riese, Leo Schuch, Pamela Seidl, Helene Sobin, Clara-lin Tappa, Fran Wargolet and David Zoerner. Diana Newton is the agency’s executive director.

How and when did it get its start?

Never underestimate the power of a determined group of people to make a difference! Joanne Rattan, a clinical social worker and co-founder of WCH, was disturbed by the frequency of domestic violence and that victims had no place to go. She met with victims in their homes and recruited others to help, including Lou Repka and Ann Bergo. A group of about 20 men and women set up WCH's first 24-hour crisis line. With only one public service announcement, the response to the crisis line was staggering, fielding 50 calls within a 24-hour period. Recognizing the strong community need, the group legally incorporated Women's Horizons, (later renamed Women and Children's Horizons) in October, 1976.

Today, WCH is a well-respected agency that has served the Kenosha community for 42 years. WCH has broadened its mission and extended services well beyond the 24-hour crisis line. Programs include: a 24/7 emergency shelter, 19 units of transitional housing, counseling for sexual assault victims, victim advocates to respond to hospitals and to attend court, restraining order assistance and a batterers’ treatment program.

What kinds of support do you need from the community?

We are so thankful for the donations, volunteers, and all-around goodwill we receive from individuals, clubs, houses of worship and businesses in Kenosha County and beyond.

Community support comes in all shapes and sizes. Donations of paper products (toilet paper, paper towels, and tissues), cleaning supplies, personal care items, non-perishable food, towels, and new bed pillows are always welcomed for our shelter. Grocery and gas gift cards are greatly appreciated for clients who need to flee a dangerous situation or for the shelter to purchase perishable items (milk, bread, fruit, etc.). We also would appreciate Visa cards so that we can purchase bus or train tickets for clients who must leave the area for their safety. Donations can be dropped off at our administrative office at 2525 63rd Street, Kenosha.

Participation, sponsorships, and silent auction items are great ways to support our events: Mardi Gras (Feb.), “Strike Out Abuse” Bowl-a-Thon (May), and “Slice Out Abuse” Golf Outing (July). Nifty Thrifty Resale, 4200 39th Ave, Kenosha, will accept your items that can be re-purposed. All proceeds from Nifty Thrifty directly support our clients.

Monetary donations are greatly needed and will allow our agency to continue to advocate and support survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault. We recognize that not all are able to give in the same fashion. We are thankful for any level of giving.

We love our volunteers! We currently are recruiting volunteers for our upcoming Strike Out Abuse Bowl-a-Thon on May 5th. Volunteer opportunities include set up and break down, photography, and registration. We are always in need of smiling faces to help us at our Kenosha resale store, Nifty Thrifty. Opportunities are available Tuesday through Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Nifty, volunteers sort donations, organize the sales floor, and empty our donation bins. Another great way to support WCH is to volunteer during one of our four annual events.

We also have volunteer opportunities at our new location in Salem Lakes, such as hanging flyers at local establishments, representing WCH at community events, and hosting small fundraisers to benefit WCH.Ready to get engaged? Visit wchkenosha.org to complete a volunteer application. For more information, contact us at volunteercoordinator@wchkenosha.org or by calling 262-656-3500. Don’t forget to like us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn or visit wchkenosha.org to stay up to date!

What's your next event or effort?

“Strike Out Abuse” Bowl-a-Thon fundraiser will be held Saturday, May 5th, at Guttormsen Rec. Center, and it is a lot of fun! Please join us! Next will be the “Slice Out Abuse” Golf Outing at Kenosha Country Club on Thursday, July 19th. Bowlers, goers, sponsors, donors, and volunteers are being sought to help make these events a success.

If you love creatively organizing parties or events, we are eager to have you join our planning committee for WCH events. To do so, please contact Lori Hanson at 262-656-3500 or email lhanson@wchkenosha.org.

How can people get in touch with you and get involved?

Volunteer inquiries can be directed to Rose Rosser, volunteercoordinator@wchkenosha.org. Those interested in becoming a Board member or who have general questions about how they can make a difference can contact Executive Director Diana Newton at executivedirector@wchkenosha.org. The main number to reach either Rose or Diana or any staff member is 262-656-3500. If you or someone you know is in need of help, please call our 24-hour helpline at 262-652-9900.