

Putnam/Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center

History and Services

For 35 years, the **Putnam/Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center (WRC)** has been providing services to victims of crime from Putnam County, northern Westchester County, and surrounding areas. The mission of the Women's Resource Center (WRC) is to provide advocacy, education, and services to the community in order to create a safe, supportive environment that eliminates violence against women and children and promotes gender equality.

In brief the WRC, is a private, not-for-profit 501(c) 3 agency that offers a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence, victim and court advocacy, counseling, support groups for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, a rape crisis program, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program (SANE), an extensive Volunteer training program and Community Education Component. All services are confidential and provided free of charge which allows for greater access to immediate and on-going support and removes a significant barrier that many victims face when they have suffered physical and psychological trauma.

Incorporated in 1979, the WRC began training volunteers, and provided non-residential domestic violence services, and a Safe Home Program. In 1986 the Women's Resource Center services expanded to include a 24-hour Hotline, a licensed six-bed domestic violence shelter and paid staff to provide counseling and advocacy. In 1988 Rape Crisis Services were created to provide advocacy and direct services for victims of rape and sexual assault. By 1993, the WRC was able to purchase a residence and convert it to a shelter; expanding access to safety for 15 women and their children fleeing domestic violence.

The WRC annually provides direct services to between 1800-2000 women, children and men who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, dating violence, sexual abuse, etc. These victims are primarily residents of Putnam County and the surrounding areas. The WRC has been licensed through the NYS Office of Children and Family Services as the county Domestic Violence residential and nonresidential service provider for the last 28 years (1986), as well as the NYS Department of Health approved Rape Crisis Center for Putnam County for the last 26 years (1988).

The WRC coordinates the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program (SANE), as well as the WRC Volunteer program which facilitates an intensive 40 hour rape crisis counselor certification training for hospital advocates, staff, and volunteers, ensuring all victims have access to the highest level of confidentiality protection. The WRC Community Education Component is a significant component of the agency and its mission provides primary prevention efforts in the community, schools and surrounding areas to address ending sexual and domestic violence in all relationships. Between 2009- 2013 the Community Education Component provided 577 violence prevention workshops and anti-violence classes to 20,252 children and adolescents in our community.

The WRC domestic violence and rape crisis programs offer direct services and support to victims of crime 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through; our 15 bed emergency domestic violence shelter, 24 hour hot line and walk-in Resource Center. The WRC offers a confidential and compassionate setting designed to empower victims to create safety plans, educate themselves on their options and to make informed choices about their future. The WRC programs provide twenty-four hour access to crisis intervention through our 24 hour Hotline, individual counseling, support groups, advocacy (hospital, court, criminal justice etc.), and accompaniment to emergency rooms, court, sheriff/police departments etc. In addition, information and referrals are made to community and law enforcement partners who have a long and supportive relationship with the WRC.

Direct services are provided at two locations; our confidential domestic violence shelter and at the walk in center in Mahopac. These services are provided by licensed and certified social workers, art therapists, mental health counselors, victim advocates, community educators, support staff, and volunteers who are all trained and have expertise working with victims of sexual assault and domestic violence

The Women's Resource Center as we were aptly named at the end of the 1970's, reflected the lack of support services and laws that protected women from abuse and violence in their relationships, and the need for a safe place which was crucial. The mission and services provided by the Women's Resource Center continued to grow through the 80's 90's and into the 21st century, We now serve all victims of intimate partner violence, women, children, and men. Our service delivery and program creation was, and always will be, driven by the needs of the victims of crime who seek our services and the needs of the community.