



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Resources for Survivors of Domestic
Violence and Sexual Assault, Inc.

OUR MISSION

Bright Horizons is dedicated to the elimination of domestic violence and sexual assault through empowerment, education, social action, and support services.



ABOUT US

Bright Horizons' help is now and always will be FREE and CONFIDENTIAL. We provide Individual Advocacy, Shelter Support, Support Groups, Community Education, Criminal Justice, and Legal Advocacy. We are here to help women, men, and children escape violence and abuse. Help is waiting for you, it's completely confidential and there are no obligations.

877.379.3798 

YEARLY STATS

FISCAL YEAR - JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

Individuals served - 1,117

Crisis calls - 6,967

Emergency shelter beds - 2,124

Emergency shelter meals - 6,372

Adults in emergency shelter - 59

Children in emergency shelter - 51

Transitional shelter beds - 8,920

Adults in transitional shelter - 21

Children in transitional shelter - 25

Number of community presentations - 72

Number of people in the audience - 1,849



2021 ADDRESS



Dear Friends and Supporters,

In March of 2020 when we first began talking about the COVID pandemic and how that would affect how we provide services in our community, we all thought that this would be over in a few months. Here we are almost two years later and we are still working to provide services in these unusual circumstances as well as deal with the effects on our families and home life.

It is challenging times that sometimes reveal the true measure of people, and we have definitely revealed that we have an amazing staff! Even though several staff members themselves had COVID, had family members with the virus, and unfortunately even lost family members, they remained committed to serving survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault despite these challenges.

Our emergency shelters are back to operating at full capacity and we have been able to expand the number of families in our transitional shelter program. We know that as tough as it is to cope with COVID, families that are also living in homes affected by domestic violence have almost insurmountable obstacles to overcome. We are honored to be of assistance to them.

We are excited about next year and are planning for some exciting changes. We are planning to purchase an emergency shelter in the O'Neill community and open our first emergency shelter in Ainsworth. We are also making plans to expand our transitional shelter program to provide this stability to more families.

We rely on continued support from the communities in our ten-county service area. The financial support allows us to individualize services for families and to stabilize our programs. We also have individuals and groups that bring in supplies and donations that provide much-needed support to those we serve.

Another way to support our agency is to help us educate the public about the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault with the ultimate goal of ending these crimes in our communities. Please invite us to speak to your Church, youth group, community group or classroom. This gives us the opportunity to educate bystanders and let victims know how to access our services.

We are hoping that 2022 brings peace to all families!

Linda Olson
Executive Director

Kelli Wacker
Board President

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WEAR ORANGE FOR LOVE DAY

Dating violence is more common than people think, especially among teens and young adults. One in three teens in the U.S. will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from someone they're in a relationship with before they become adults, and nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent or abusive dating behaviors.

The month of February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. During this month we went to downtown stores and offered them a deal. If they would put orange outfits on their mannequins then we would post them on our social media. We had multiple stores participate. The staff at Bright Horizons also had shirts made that we wore on "Wear Orange Day" in honor of Teen Dating Violence Awareness.

Wear Orange Day, which was on Tuesday, February 9th, 2021, is a day designed to raise awareness of the issue of teen dating violence. By wearing orange and posting pictures to social media young people can take a stand in solidarity against dating violence. Local high school students across our service area were asked to wear orange on February 9th, 2021, and post their picture with the hashtag #knowyourworth for a chance to win a set of AirPods.



Alyssa, Ainsworth Community High school student, the winner of the AirPods

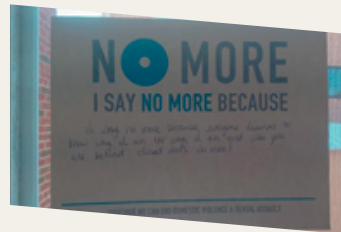


TYSON OUTREACH

Advocates were able to start back their outreach in person at Tyson Fresh Meats in March 2021 after a long year of not being able to due to COVID-19. Although advocates were not able to be present, they were still able to provide information with premade outreach bags for the team members. On their first day back, they were able to reach out to 340 team members with information in regards to financial abuse. From March 2021- October 2021, they have provided approximately 2,141 team members with information about domestic violence and or/ sexual abuse.

"NO MORE" WEEK

NO MORE's eighth annual NO MORE Week was March 7-13, 2021. Silence and lack of knowledge about domestic violence and sexual assault play a large part in why they persist. Simply wanting to help is a huge step toward ending the shame and stigma that survivors are burdened with. Businesses and citizens across our 10 county service areas proudly filled out signs declaring why they would no longer be tolerating domestic violence and sexual assault.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT WERE YOU WEARING...

This question is often asked of survivors of sexual assault.

This question perpetuates victim-blaming and calls into question the actions of the victims rather than the perpetrators.

Throughout April, Bright Horizons and area libraries provided a powerful visual answer to the question "What were You Wearing?" Proving that what a person is wearing has nothing to do with them being sexually assaulted.



CAMPUS ADVOCATE

At Bright Horizons, we have a position for a youth/campus advocate. With this position, our advocate spends 50% of his or her time on the Northeast Community College campus. With COVID the events at the school looked different than most years. Most events were often virtual or the ones that were in person were socially distanced and masks were required. During the winter months, We participated in virtual trivia and bingo games and partook in a COVID vaccine clinic. During the spring months, they were able to host events outside.

There were many tailgates at baseball, softball, and men's and women's soccer games. While at these games our advocate was able to converse with students and share our services. During the month of April, we hosted a sexual assault awareness t-shirt contest. Many students at Northeast participated and submitted various designs. A winner was picked and they received a prize. The staff of Bright Horizons then wore the shirts on April 29th. The winner had the slogan No does not mean convince me!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



YOGA

Wellness Yoga for Trauma Survivors began July 7, 2021, and meets every Wednesday at 5:30 pm at First United Methodist Church in Norfolk. Each one-hour class begins with a brief centering to help participants be more present and mindful during class, a few minutes of warm-ups, or repetitive movements to prepare the body for postures, a sequence of pre-selected yoga postures, each chosen for its specific benefits, and class ends with a brief relaxation. The class is taught by Deb Milligan, who has her 200-hr yoga teacher certification from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. She attended a 40-hour Introduction to Trauma Sensitive Yoga class at Kripalu in 2017. Deb is a mental health therapist, with 20+ years of experience working with trauma survivors. A Bright Horizons advocate attends each class to provide participants the ability to join the class through Zoom. Each session is recorded with Deb being the only one visible so that participants can use the recording to practice their poses between each session.

AINSWORTH OFFICE

In 2014 Bright Horizons began serving victims and survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence in Brown, Rock, and Keya Paha counties. Brown County Hospital graciously stepped in and provided the much-needed space and resources to assist us in setting up a new location to serve survivors.

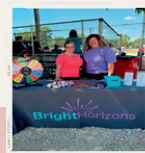
Having a safe, secure location was a treasured asset to Bright Horizons' and the survivors we serve. For 6 years they faithfully supported Bright Horizons' mission. Early in 2021, the need for a larger space became apparent and the search began.

On July 1st, 2021 Bright Horizons of Ainsworth moved into the new downtown location at 220 North Main Street in Ainsworth. This new location is a great fit, with more office space and more secure parking. Bright Horizons will now be able to see multiple clients at a time.



HANDCUFFS VS HOSES

For a number of years, Norfolk Police Division and the Norfolk Fire Department have collaborated in a unique way to fundraise for area nonprofits. This year, Bright Horizons was the selected recipient of such efforts. On August 15th, Law Enforcement Officers of the Norfolk Police Division, as well as Fire Fighters, came together for a game of softball at TaHa Zouka park to raise money for Bright Horizons and also stir up a little friendly competition on a beautiful sunny afternoon. The event was enjoyed by members of the community, loved ones of the players, as well as staff in attendance, but at the end of the day, Firefighters got the best of Law Enforcement. Bright Horizons distributed various materials to the spectators. Among the prizes for spinning the wheel were hackey sacks, bookmarks, highlighters, pens, pencils, and Bright Horizons information. It was a great afternoon for the community to come together for a common cause!




PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

National Night Out is a nationwide event put on by area law enforcement officials. Officers from Norfolk Police Division as well as the State Patrol sponsor the event every year. Held on August 3rd this year, NNO is a single evening event in which area agencies come together, typically just before the beginning of a new school year. National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors and public safety officials by providing the opportunity to come together in a positive environment. While handing out information about the agency, students, as well as parents, were invited to spin a colored wheel and take home a prize. Among the prizes were pencils, hacky sacks, highlighters, pens, bookmarks containing information about Bright Horizons. It was so great to be able to interact with the community again and we look forward to next year's event!

NORFOLK AREA PRIDE FESTIVAL



Norfolk Area Pride is a non-profit organization that provides services, community education, safety, awareness, and support for LGBTQ+ individuals in Northeast Nebraska. 2021 was the first Pride event for the Norfolk area. Attendees were able to participate in Zumba, listen to live music, visit the various vendors on-site, and attend panel discussions with speakers. Bright Horizons distributed various materials and information to the 650+ that were in attendance at the event. There was a social hour along with an after-party which included Bingo and a Drag Show at the Mint Bar. Norfolk Area Pride also hosts a monthly peer group for connection and support. The next scheduled event Saturday September 10, 2022.

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT NORFOLK (PHCN)

Project Homeless Connect Norfolk (PHCN) held their 5th Annual Day of Services event on October 8th, 2021 at Our Savior Lutheran Church. 40 service providers were on-site providing immediate services to anybody in need. Nearly 550 guests were served on this single day. Guests received services such as medical, dental, vision, mental health, and legal services. Haircuts, a hot meal, groceries, and toiletries were also provided for all of the guests. Over 100 volunteers donated their time, and nearly \$35,000 was raised to make the day a success. The PHCN committee would like to thank all of the 2021 sponsors who financially supported this annual event. Without your generosity and support to end homelessness in our community, this day wouldn't be possible.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

SHERWOOD FOUNDATION

Exciting Projects ahead!

Bright Horizons is the proud recipient of two Sherwood Foundation grants for fiscal year 2022; a capital improvement grant and a project grant. Through this funding, we will be purchasing a home to use as a shelter in O'Neill which will greatly increase our capacity to serve more families. The Sherwood Foundation's generous award of \$153,195 will bring the long-term goal of upgrading shelter services from an apartment to a more comfortable home setting. Planning is in process and upon closing on the property upgrades and renovations will begin. We are hoping to begin accepting clients this summer!

In addition to the Sherwood Foundation's capital grant, we were awarded \$10,000 to work collaboratively with local partners and Northeast Community College to bring nationally renowned speakers to share their expertise with area professionals. This planning group was also awarded \$5,000 from the Norfolk Community Foundation which will greatly enhance our lineup of speakers. This funding will provide low-cost training with limited expenses to many agencies struggling with continuing education budgets. Plans are in place to confirm speakers and host the conference in April 2022. Watch for details coming soon!

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

During the month of October, bright horizons helped spread awareness of domestic violence prevention. In Norfolk, O'Neill & Ainsworth local businesses put signs in their windows with stats and other messages. Some businesses in downtown Norfolk dressed up mannequins with purple outfits. On the main streets of each town, purple ribbons adorned the light poles.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

On October 4th and 5th our Criminal Justice advocates, along with members of our Coordinated Response Team attended a virtual conference held by the Institute for Coordinated Community Response and the Conference on Crimes Against Women. This conference held a wealth of information that the members of the Bright Horizons Community Response Team will be able to utilize to better serve victims and survivors.

Coordinated Response Teams, or CRT, are evidence-based community interventions that are proven to improve health outcomes for communities. A coordinated response involves police, prosecutors, probation officers, advocates, counselors, and judges in developing and implementing policies and procedures that improve interagency coordination and lead to more uniform responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking cases.

The mission is to work to ensure that each system is equipped to work cohesively in achieving victim safety and perpetrator accountability. A comprehensive, coordinated response, that leverages the communities' unique strengths, provides the most effective means to this outcome. This group consists of members from all the communities in the Bright Horizons Service Area.

2021 COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARDS

Norfolk

Renewed Hope Christian Community is the 2021 recipient of Bright Horizons' Norfolk Area Community Partner of the Year award.

Renewed Hope Christian Community has been a long-time supporter of Bright Horizons and in all of the services that Bright Horizons provides. This past year Renewed Hope Christian Community has donated several hours of volunteer work in both Bright Horizons' emergency shelter and transitional shelter, including many painting and construction projects. They have also donated hundreds of brand-new items that are used in our shelters and for survivors that are served in the business office, including toiletries and hygiene products, along with over \$1,000 in monetary donations. This year we are so incredibly grateful for all of the support from Renewed Hope Christian Community this past year and all the years that they have community. Thank you



O'Neill

On October 15th, 2021 Bright Horizons O'Neill office hosted a Chamber of Commerce Coffee. During this event, we proudly awarded our 2021 Community Partner of the year the Horses Unlimited 4-H Club. Beginning in 2002 the dedicated leaders, parents, and youth members chose to make Bright Horizons clients Easter full of joy. This group makes Easter baskets for families that Bright Horizons serves as a community service project. Bright Horizons wants to wish Horses Unlimited 4-H club the sincerest thank you. Congratulations this award was well deserved!



Ainsworth

This year Bright Horizons awarded the Brown County Sheriff's Department with the Outstanding Community Partnership Award. Bruce Papstein and all his deputies and dispatch have diligently worked to help promote and improve the health and well-being of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in our communities. They have demonstrated a measurable impact on the safety of survivors in our community. They have shown a commitment to survivors by providing referrals to Bright Horizons and by participating in continued training regarding Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Human Trafficking, Stalking, and Trauma. Bright Horizons and the survivors that we serve will be forever grateful for the support of the Brown County Sheriffs Office.



UPCOMING EVENTS

We have some bigger events coming up in the next few months. In the month of February, we are having two Galantine events in Ainsworth and downtown Norfolk. In May we will be having a Big Give event downtown at Black Cow Fat Pig, where we will be having a live band. As always, we hope to get out in the community and schools to promote awareness.

NEW STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Hi! My name is Lyndsey Figgner and I am the Outreach Coordinator in the Norfolk office. I grew up on a farm 15 miles west of Albion NE. I recently graduated college from Wayne State College, I currently still live in Wayne with my three roommates. I have one younger brother that is currently a senior in high school, my mom works at Homestead Bank in Albion and my dad is a farmer. When I am not working, I love to golf, hang out with family and friends, and just be outside. This job has been an eye-opener for me but I have enjoyed working here and gaining the experience that I have. I enjoy helping others and giving them the help and assistance that they need. I believe that everyone deserves a second chance and the chance to start over.



Hey! My name is Josh Miller. I am the Criminal Justice Liaison in the O'Neill office. I've lived in O'Neill my whole life (34 years). In 2012 I married my high school sweetheart Alexandra and together we have 2 awesome little boys, Maxwell 4 and Merritt 1. I love to hang out with my family, hunt deer, fish, and watch football. I enjoy helping people in need and seeing our youth set and reach goals! I'm a firm believer that life is what you make of it!



My name is Kylie Debus. I was born in Kearney, NE but raised in Winner, SD. In 2016 I graduated high school in Colome, SD. In 2019 I was given the opportunity to work in Alaska. I couldn't pass up that offer. After spending 6 months in the beautiful state of Alaska I came back home to Winner and was going to save up money to move to Texas. One day I messaged a friend whom I hadn't seen since I graduated High School and she lived here in O'Neill. I then traveled down here to visit and never left. A couple of months later I found the love of my life. Almost a year later we decided to add to our family, a fur baby named Remi who is our golden retriever mixed with a black lab. We thought we needed one more member of our crew so on May 10th, 2021 our beautiful baby girl was born. She was nothing less than perfect. I have wanted to work with a company like Bright Horizons my whole life. I myself was in a domestic violence relationship and was so lucky to escape that. I really enjoy helping people in their journey. This job has been such a blessing. "Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life."- Mark Twain.



SHELTER UPDATE

Bright Horizons has been providing shelter services in our current shelter location in Norfolk since January 16th, 1991. A five bedroom, three-bathroom home was purchased for emergency shelter and office space. This home remains a confidential location for families to stay while fleeing a domestic violence or sexual assault situation. Our emergency shelter in Norfolk can house up to 22 people. We also have office space in the home for four staff, including the Norfolk Housing Supervisor, Bilingual Advocate and two Shelter Advocates. In 1995, Bright Horizons set up a shelter in O'Neill to expand shelter services. Both shelter locations provide one-on-one advocacy with one of our Advocates and helps victims to assess their situation, evaluate options, and make safe decisions. Groceries and personal supplies are also provided as needed.

Many updates were completed in 2021 at the Norfolk emergency shelter thanks to private donations and grants. The shelter has had new flooring installed in the kitchen, along with all new appliances. Most rooms in the home were also repainted, and new furnishings were brought in. Hundreds of individuals come through the shelter on a yearly basis. And while emergency shelter is not a permanent home for the families, it is still important to our agency to continue to provide a safe, clean environment for all the families that we serve.

Both emergency shelters are in confidential locations and it is very important that we maintain the confidentiality of these homes. Families enter our shelters on a daily basis and they are leaving very dangerous and life threatening situations. The risk of an abuser coming to one of our shelters is always there, so Bright Horizons has put safety precautions in place. In 2021 a new security camera system was purchased for the Norfolk emergency shelter to replace the older model. This newer system also included additional cameras outside of the home for added security.

In 2015, a partnership with the First United Methodist Church of Norfolk was formed. They donated the use of a home to Bright Horizons. This home was originally donated to the Church to be used for philanthropic purposes. Through planning with the Church, we opened a transitional shelter, Kris' House of Grace, for families that were ready to move from our emergency shelter. The home can house up to 12 people. Families pay rent that is based on their income and they can continue to receive advocacy from the Advocate that has an office within the home. The monthly rent that families pay goes into a savings account for them, which they get back when they are ready to move into their own permanent housing. The families can use this money for various things, such as a rental deposit, a vehicle or school tuition. Families can stay at Kris' House of Grace for up to two years and can receive assistance with supplies, education and transportation needs.

Since 2018 Bright Horizons has added a third housing program for families; an off-site transitional shelter program. Eight families receive advocacy and financial support for up to two years while they live in their own housing. Each family continues to receive weekly advocacy from the Transitional Shelter Advocate, along with the same savings plan that families at Kris' House of Grace have. This continued support increases the chances of families maintaining their safety and living independently in a life free of violence.

Bright Horizons and our Board of Directors work very hard to sustain our emergency and transitional shelters by locating funding and maintaining staff to supervise the homes. There are other domestic violence programs in Nebraska that no longer have shelters and have to utilize a hotel/motel system. We recognize that our shelters are the best option for victims in our communities and it is our goal to be able to continue to provide this service for years to come.

NEBRASKA TEEN MISS

This past summer we had Vanessa Parra reach out to us about her story. Her story is to follow: At the age of 14, I was head over heels for my very first boyfriend. I thought this high school relationship was the best thing to ever happen to me, but that was farthest from the truth. For two years I let someone mentally and emotionally manipulate and bully me. I was fed lies about myself every day I got to the point where it was hard for me to do everyday tasks and even wake up in the morning. It felt as if my purpose was stripped away in just the blink of an eye. Even when the relationship was finally over, it was hard for me to feel comfortable about speaking out about what I have gone through. I was scared by the thought that someone would not believe me or not take me seriously. At the end of the day, I realized that no matter what people thought, it was important for me to tell my truth. Little did I know that so many other teenage girls and boys have gone through the same things I once did. In a time that I felt so alone, I realized I truly wasn't and that so many others related to me. From realizing this, I made my own social media platform called 'Speak Your Truth', where I educate boys and girls about the severity of teen dating violence, how to spot teen dating violence, and what we can do to stop it. Every Monday I post a statistic on teen dating violence on social media and every Wednesday I post a positive quote. I have held two conferences in Northeast Nebraska where I have spoken to boys and girls, ages 13-18, about teen dating violence. Bringing this awareness to so many people is very important to me. I want to make sure that people realize that they are not alone and there are so many resources available to help. Most of all, if I had known that so many people have gone through the same thing, my relationship would have ended quicker than what it did. Now that I do that for other people, I know I am doing my job and making a difference.



THANK YOU!

Bright Horizons wishes to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our wonderful donors! Support from individual donors and businesses helps individuals and families break the cycle of domestic violence and help people to achieve self-sufficiency.

Our donors are the reason we are able to make a difference and provide assistance. It is because of your generous contributions of time, talent, and treasure that make it possible to provide services and supports to those fleeing domestic violence and human trafficking. You truly make a difference and Bright Horizons and those we serve value you tremendously! Thank you for supporting our mission - we appreciate you!!

WISH LIST

Gift Cards/Cash

Paper Goods (Kleenex, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels)

Cleaning Supplies (New and Unopened)

(Multi-Purpose Cleaners, Dish Soap, Toilet Bowl Cleaner, Clorox/Lysol Wipes, Febreze, etc.)

Laundry Soap (HE detergent)

Tall Kitchen Trash Bags

Personal Hygiene Supplies (New and Unopened) (Body Wash, Deodorant, Shampoo, Conditioner)

Baby Supplies (Diapers, Wipes)

Food (Dry and canned goods such as Pasta, cereal, crackers, soup, meat or tuna, vegetables, fruit, instant meals, etc.)

Furniture (please call ahead of time)

Bedding & Towels

Kitchenware pots, pans, dishes, silverware



Thank you to our supporters and donors
We wish you the happiest of Holidays

24/7 CRISIS LINE 1-877-379-3798

OFFICES

Norfolk
601 E. Norfolk Ave.
Norfolk, NE 68701
402-379-2026

O'Neill
318 E. Douglas Street
O'Neill, NE 68763
402-336-1774

Ainsworth
220 Main Street
Ainsworth, NE 69210
531-776-5050

The logo features a stylized sunburst or starburst graphic composed of several elongated, teardrop-shaped rays in shades of yellow, orange, and purple, radiating from a central point.

BrightHorizons

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