



Bright Horizons

2023

Annual Report

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

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Introduction

As we reflect on 2023, it has been a year of incredible challenges, growth, and opportunities.

In April our board members, staff members, volunteers, and some past clients met to review the strategic plan that was developed in 2018 and develop a new plan to focus our efforts for the next five years. Thanks to the efforts of the staff and board, all of the goals in the 2018 plan were accomplished!

Our biggest challenges have been funding cuts and staff turnover. Our largest grant is federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act, which faced the largest cuts in recent history all across the state. The impact of these cuts on Bright Horizons' budget has been very difficult. As with a lot of other businesses, we have experienced and continue to experience an increase in staff turnover and issues with retention. With the budget cuts, it has been increasingly difficult to remain competitive with the wages and benefits that we offer, which has led to staff leaving for better-paying jobs or those that are able to offer insurance benefits.

On a positive note, Bright Horizons and the DOVES program have collaborated on a new housing program for survivors funded through HUD. This opportunity has allowed us to rent homes throughout our service areas to provide a seamless transition from our crisis shelters to securing permanent housing. We currently have apartments available in Norfolk, O'Neill and Ainsworth. In addition, the DOVES program covers nine counties in the panhandle, so this program will benefit domestic violence survivors across nineteen rural counties that have previously been underserved.

We continue to receive amazing support from our donors and our community supporters. This past year a private foundation grant and a large donation from an anonymous donor allowed us to purchase office space in O'Neill. This will provide long-term stability for our agency by reducing monthly rental expenses, allowing us to reinvest in our staff and organization.

As the grant funding situation continues to be difficult, it is important for our agency to be flexible and be able to take advantage of different opportunities as they arise to provide the very best services to survivors and their families. With the guidance of our board of directors and the newly developed strategic plan, we are positioned to move into 2024 and make it the best year yet!

Yearly Stats

Fiscal Year – July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

1,463	Individuals Served
7,770	Crisis Calls
4,933	Emergency Shelter Beds
14,799	Emergency Shelter Meals
72	Adults in Emergency Shelter (68 Females, 4 Males)
80	Children in Emergency Shelter
12,130	Transitional Shelter Beds
14	Adults in Transitional Shelter (13 Females, 1 Male)
34	Children in Transitional Shelter



What is an Advocate?

It seems so simple, just reach out to someone who can help.
The difficult thing is reaching out when you feel so alone!!

ALONE is how many, who have suffered abuse at the hands of someone who claims to love them, FEEL.

ALONE because they have been told that no one will believe them. That what happened is their fault. That no one cares. No one can help them.

You are NOT ALONE.

We are here for you! **We** believe you! **We** can help you! But who are “we”?
“We” are Advocates!

By definition, an **Advocate** is:

a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person, cause, etc.

(usually followed by of):

an advocate of domestic violence.

a person who pleads for or on behalf of another; intercessor.

a person who pleads the cause of another in a court of law.

You may even feel this way. You need to know this is simply NOT true.

The abuser is a LIAR!

Reaching out to speak to an advocate isn't always easy. But doing so can help in ways you may never imagine.

So how can an advocate help you?

- ◆ An advocate will meet you where you are, they will not expect or insist you take the journey to heal any faster than you are ready to take it.
 - ◆ All of our advocates are specially trained experts. They understand the effects that trauma has on the mind and body.
 - ◆ An advocate can connect you with resources to help you, resources that you may not be aware of.
 - ◆ Working with an advocate will help you take back power and control over your own body and mind. Helping you find the strength to do what is best for you and your healing.
 - ◆ An advocate understands and values confidentiality! Any survivor of domestic violence and/or sexual violence can speak confidentially to an advocate without the worry that what is said will be spread all over town.
 - ◆ When speaking to an advocate you will be speaking to someone who will not judge you. Someone who will not insist that you make decisions you are not ready to make but will help you safely plan for each of your decisions.
 - ◆ Most importantly an advocate can help you find your voice again! Abusers use power and control to make others do as they want. Often causing those who were harmed to feel as though they have lost their voice.
- Bright Horizons provides advocacy services to victims/survivors, their children, and families of many crimes including domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking.*



O'Neill Office Move

This fall Bright Horizons was able to purchase office space in downtown O'Neill thanks to a private foundation grant and a generous donation from an anonymous supporter. By purchasing the office space, we will be able to save the monthly cost of rent which will allow us to reinvest additional funding into our daily programming.

We were able to do a few minor updates before moving in August. We had a crew of volunteers that came out and helped with the move in addition to some wrestlers from O'Neill High School who helped arrange the desks and other heavy furniture.

Bright Horizons also received a grant from the O'Neill Community Foundation which allowed us to install a kitchenette and provide new signage.

Thanks to amazing community support, we now have a permanent location to serve survivors and their families!

**New Office Location:
119 N. 4th Street**

Norfolk Area Big Give



The Norfolk Area Big Give is a 24-hour period of giving where Norfolk area supporters are invited to give back to their favorite local charities and educate themselves on other non-profits in our community.

The goal of this community-wide giving event is to match Norfolk area supporters' passions and generosity with local nonprofit organizations already doing great work. Bright Horizons was a recipient of these donations and we celebrated by having a "Kick Off" party at Bar A. The community was invited to help us celebrate and recognize all of the services and support that we are able to offer survivors!

Galentine's

NORFOLK

On February 9th the Norfolk Office hosted their 2nd Annual Galentine's Event. The event was held at the District Event Center in downtown Norfolk. There were six vendors present that were selling a variety of items. We tried something new this year as we had an online silent auction. We had a great time and cannot wait for next year!



AINSWORTH

The Ainsworth office also held its 2nd Galentine's Day Event on February 12th. 20 local vendors setup to sell a wide variety of items at the Elks Lodge. Approximately 300 members of the community showed up to support and enjoy their afternoon with friends & family. A great time was had. Next year's event poses to be even bigger!

SAVE THE DATE

Grab your friends and join us in celebrating Galentine's in 2024! Vendors and light refreshments will be available at all locations. Drinks may be purchased so you can sip as you shop!

NORFOLK - FEB. 9

District Event Center
4:00 – 8:00

AINSWORTH - FEB. 11

The Elks Club
1:00 – 4:00

Family Violence Summit

SAVE THE DATE

3rd Annual Summit **APRIL 16 & 17, 2024**

Tuesday

Keynote Speaker – Bill Fulbright is the Ravalli County District Attorney in Montana. He is going to cover evidence corroboration in sexual abuse cases.

Wednesday

Keynote Speaker – Human Trafficking Case Vignette.

We have a wonderful line up of speakers you don't want to miss!!



2023 Summit Conference

N N O

National Night Out is a nationwide event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in local anti-crime efforts, and strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships. Local families joined representatives from the Norfolk Police Division, Norfolk Fire Division, & Nebraska State Patrol to engage in an evening of games, food, and a show of solidarity.

The police division coordinated with dozens of businesses & nonprofit organizations in helping bring the event to Norfolk. Kathryn Carlson, Support Group Facilitator & Advocate, has attended National Night Out for several years to bring awareness to anti-bullying by asking the children in attendance how bullying affects them & their friends. While at the event, our advocates engage within the community and bring awareness to stalking, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

Bright Horizons Receives AWG Cares Award Grant

Recently, AWG Cares provided a grant request in the amount of \$3,000 to Bright Horizons in Norfolk, Nebraska. The grant request was submitted by Jennifer Lewis, an AWG Nebraska Division employee.

Bright Horizons is a non-profit agency that helps survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking in the immediate ten-county area. The organization provides empowerment education, social action, and support services. They also provide the following confidential and free services – individual advocacy, shelter services, support groups, community education/outreach and prevention, protection orders, and criminal justice and legal advocacy.



Pictured from left to right:

- Cynthia Puntney, Administrative Services Supervisor, AWG Nebraska Division
- Jennifer Lewis, Sr. Coordinator Center Store Sales, AWG Nebraska Division
- Felicia Rath, Criminal Justice Liaison, Bright Horizons
- Bob Miklos, VP Division Manager, AWG Nebraska Division



Project Homeless Connect Norfolk (PHCN) held their 7th Annual Day of Services event on October 6th, 2023 at Our Savior Lutheran Church. 42 service providers were on-site providing immediate services to anybody in need. Nearly 265 houses received immediate services, a total of over 700 guests. This marked PHCN's biggest year to date.

PHCN is a "community response to a community problem." Almost 100 volunteers helped make this annual event a huge success. PHCN is a great opportunity to come together as a community...neighbors helping neighbors. Most volunteers do not have any experience working in social services. They just want to help do good for those in need. One of our volunteer groups who have helped since year one is Sacred Heart Parish and Norfolk Catholic High School. Not only do these parishioners and students spend the day at PHCN serving, but throughout the year, they give back to PHCN monetarily. We couldn't do what we do on this single day without the help and support from local groups such as them. They are just one of the many groups that we are grateful to have in our corner.

Planning for the 2024 PHCN event is already underway. The PHCN committee would like to thank all of the 2023 sponsors who financially supported this annual event. Without your generosity & support to end homelessness in our community, this day wouldn't be possible. Because of you, hundreds of people were given the hope they needed and now have brighter days in their future. Thank you!

(PHCN)

42 Service Providers

265 Houses Served

700 Guests

Wearing Awareness

Throughout the year Bright Horizons staff and community members sport specific colors in an effort to raise awareness or show support for different subjects. In January we wear blue for support for law enforcement agencies. In February we dress in Orange to raise awareness of Teen Dating Violence. In April we don jeans and wear teal to bring awareness to sexual assault and in October we dress in purple in support of domestic violence survivors.



In May, Bright Horizons and the DOVES program were awarded a federal grant from HUD to implement a joint housing program for survivors of domestic violence. This project provides services in nineteen rural counties to meet the housing needs of survivors and their families.

The HUD DV Bonus program has two housing programs, the Transitional Housing, and the Rapid Rehousing Program. Both programs' clients have to have an interview with a housing advocate to see if they are eligible for the program. The Transitional Housing provides temporary housing along with services provided by an advocate. The Rapid Rehousing program allows Bright Horizons to pay up to three months of rent with the requirements of doing a housing inspection. Both programs' goal is to help clients maintain permanent housing.

This new project will enhance the services currently available through Bright Horizons and DOVES. "This project opens up many opportunities for survivors to establish violence-free homes and long-term stabilization for their families. We are working to get the project fully implemented," stated Cora Hemmer, Bright Horizons' HUD Housing Advocate.

HUD DV Bonus Program

MARY KAY ASH FOUNDATIONSM AWARDS BRIGHT HORIZONS \$20,000 GRANT TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*Mary Kay Ash
Foundation Awards
\$1.2 Million in Grants to
60 Domestic Violence
Shelters Across U.S.
providing critical
programs and services*



In support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Mary Kay Ash FoundationSM announced it is awarding \$1.2 million in grants to 60 domestic violence shelters across the country. Bright Horizons has received a \$20,000 unrestricted grant to support local survivors of domestic violence in rural Nebraska. This year's grant contribution brings the Foundation's total investment in its shelter grant program to \$56 million.

The Mary Kay Ash Foundation was established in 1996 with the overarching purpose of supporting issues impacting women. In 2000, the Foundation expanded to include ending domestic violence as part of its mission. The Foundation is committed to funding the life-saving work of women's shelters, and the annual shelter grant program has helped finance critical needs including emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, and legal aid. All these resources support women and children as they seek refuge and relief on their journey to an abuse-free life. This year, more than 300 organizations applied for the Mary Kay Ash Foundation shelter grants.

"Mary Kay remains steadfast in its commitment to ending domestic violence. We believe women should be free to live safe, productive lives free from abuse," said Michael Lunceford, President, of Mary Kay Ash Foundation Board of Directors. *"One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime and it is our responsibility to support the women's shelters that aid these survivors. At the heart*

of the Foundation's work is the shelter grant program, which awards deserving organizations the funds needed to continue and improve their critical life-saving services in support of women."

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, more than 72,000 adult and child victims receive domestic violence services across the United States in just one day. Unfortunately, in the same period, more than 11,000 requests for services were unmet due to a lack of resources.

"Bright Horizons is incredibly grateful to the Mark Kay Ash Foundation for their support of our work in our rural communities" stated Linda Olson, executive director. Lacy Kimes, housing supervisor added *"This donation will allow us to make some necessary improvements to our shelter to provide a comfortable space for families to heal from the violence that they have experienced."*

Applications for the 2024 shelter grant program will be available in January 2024. Please visit marykayashfoundation.org for more information, and to view the complete list of 2023 shelter grant recipients.

OUTSTANDING 2023 COMMUNITY PARTNERS!

Bright Horizons is very grateful for every individual and agency that contributes to our mission! Each year we recognize Outstanding Community Partners in or near each of our three locations. This award is given annually to an individual or agency partner who has demonstrated excellence in partnering with each of our three agency locations to provide support, volunteer, and or donations for our clients and their families.



ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

Bright Horizons-Norfolk; Orphan Grain Train Doug Trampe Warehouse Manager. Orphan Grain Train assists many survivors that we work with in the Norfolk area by providing clothing and other items.

AINSWORTH BROWN COUNTY HOSPITAL

Bright Horizons- Ainsworth Brown County Hospital Auxiliary President Judy Walton and the board of officers are committed to meeting the needs of families in the area. Throughout the last few years, Brown County Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store has assisted many victims and survivors who have been displaced. Those with only the clothes on their backs. Many times our agency may be limited in what we can provide to survivors. Because of the amazing generosity of the Brown County Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store, Bright Horizons has been able to use our limited resources in other vital areas. Brown County Hospital Auxiliary Thrift Store has stepped in and lent a helping hand in providing household supplies and clothing for those who have nothing!



BRIGHT HORIZONS - O'NEILL

Bright Horizons-O'Neill office would like to proudly announce the recipient of our Outstanding Community Partner award for 2023. Congratulations to the Holt/Boyd Community Connections Collaborative. This group is making our community a better place. Community Navigator Amy Shane and the board of directors are committed to meeting the needs of families.



Silent Witnesses

Each year many men, women, and children die in acts of domestic violence. Throughout the year Bright Horizons collaborates with community partners to display Silent Witnesses. Why? Because we need to remember their names! We MUST remember their stories.

The exhibit is a visual representation consisting of life-sized, red silhouettes of those murdered in acts of domestic violence. All silent witnesses represent someone who was killed in our 10-county service area.



Throughout October, Bright Horizons displayed the Silent Witness exhibition in multiple locations, spanning our 10-county service area. Silent Witnesses allow victims of Domestic Violence who can no longer speak for themselves to share their stories. The life-sized statues wearing victims' stories on their chests make a powerful impact on community members who stop to learn about them.

As in years past the Silent Witness exhibit was displayed in the Rock County Library and Courthouse in Bassett, as well as the Keya Paha County Courthouse in Springview. They were also displayed in the Ainsworth Public Library and the Connection in Ainsworth.

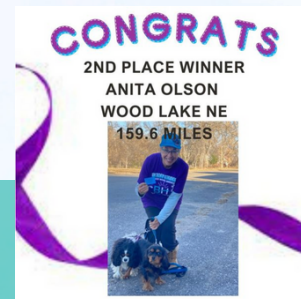
A program called Active Minds reached out to the Bright Horizons Campus Advocate requesting us to display the Silent Witnesses on the Northeast Community College Campus in Norfolk NE at their event in the Student Center. Active Minds is the nation's premier nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults. They are dedicated to saving lives and to building stronger families and communities.

We had a great outcome for our first time at the college with many students, staff, and professors visiting the display asking questions and sharing their own experiences. It was a wonderful forum to educate how we help people who are in violent relationships and anyone who is struggling with the effects of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. The Director of Student Services was president at the event which encouraged students to stop and visit our booth and display.



This year, Bright Horizons introduced our virtual run/walk event called Victory Strides. Victory Strides is a Domestic Violence Awareness event held from October 1st through the 31st. Participants could run or walk at their leisure and on their own time throughout the month of October in order to raise Domestic Violence Awareness and with their entry, they received a Victory Strides T-shirt. This being its first year, Victory Strides was very successful in that those who participated represented several counties in our coverage area and even some that were not. Feedback and reviews have been extremely positive and return entries have been confirmed. Advertising via radio, social media, and T-shirts was an amazing boost of exposure for Bright Horizons and Domestic Violence Awareness.

Victory Strides



Support Group

Bright Horizons offers a variety of support groups to help both Spanish and English-speaking clients and their children recover from abuse. These support groups are held on Monday evenings and cover a range of topics that are specifically designed to help clients work through their recovery process. In addition to providing support and guidance during these group sessions, we also work with community agencies to connect our clients with additional resources and services that can assist them in their healing journey. Some of the agencies we have worked with in the past include:

- ◆ **Elkhorn Valley Lower Public Health Department**
Healthy eating and living over several weeks to provide clients with information on lifestyle changes for a better healthier lifestyle.
- ◆ **Midtown Health Department**
For several months, we discussed self-care, speaking to children about healthy lifestyles, and working through mental health questions that our clients might have.
- ◆ **Ponca Tribe**
Domestic violence awareness.
- ◆ **BMO (Bank of the West)**
Financial abuse awareness and providing information on building credit.
- ◆ **911 Emergency Service Update**
Providing information on the option to start soon for having the ability to text 911.
- ◆ **United Methodist Church**
We are grateful to have the ability to work with the United Methodist Church in having the ability to meet as large groups for the holidays.
- ◆ **Norfolk Public Library**
We have been grateful to be able to meet at the Library in large groups as well when we have speakers, it is great to have a place where our clients can meet in large groups.
- ◆ **Trauma-Informed Yoga**
We continue to meet with Deb Milligan at the YMCA to provide yoga sessions on Wednesday evenings. These sessions are open to the public for individuals who have experienced any form of trauma.



601 E. Norfolk Ave.
Norfolk, NE 68701

Our Mission

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

**Thank you to our supporters
and donors! We appreciate
your support!**

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.

24/7 Crisis Line: 1-877-379-3798
Text Line: 402-370-8817
www.brighthorizonsne.org



Norfolk Office

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



Ainsworth Office

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O'Neill Office

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