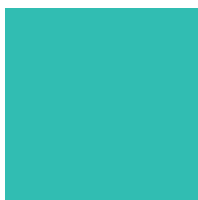
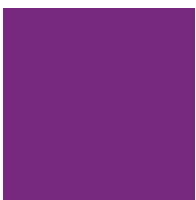
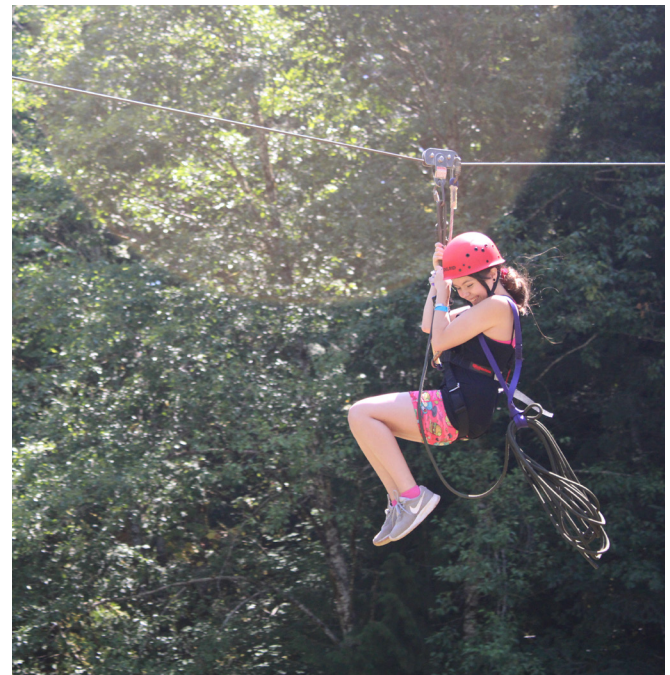




# Impact Report



# From Our Executive Director

**When concerned neighbors in Clackamas County first opened their homes to women and children escaping domestic violence, it is unlikely they were aware that this simple act of compassion would evolve into the creation of CWS and the county's first emergency shelter for domestic and sexual violence. For 40 years, we have proudly carried forward CWS' commitment to the safety and wellbeing of those impacted by domestic and sexual violence, becoming a robust agency with a continuum of services with innovative models and collaborations.**

Reaching this forty-year milestone represents the hard work, dedication, and generosity of countless people and partners, and we are eternally grateful to all who have shared this journey with CWS. Through past and current challenges—and opportunities—we have always leaned in to meet the moment. This was true during the pandemic, when we adapted and kept all our services open while serving more people than in years prior. It was true when we actualized our goal of expanding capacity in our housing program, serving 832 more people in 2024 than in 2020. And it is true now as we consider the impacts of massive federal funding cuts and reductions in other public funding at the local level. We are doing everything we can along with our community partners to preserve the lifesaving services that protect and empower survivors.

How we are meeting the moment today is largely guided by our current strategic plan, and we are proud of everything that has been accomplished in the past year. Here are a few highlights:

- To improve services and access to confidential advocacy for survivors of sexual assault in Clackamas County, we launched a partnership with Providence Hospital to place CWS advocates in the emergency room on a full-time basis. This first-ever initiative has resulted in more immediate access to resources and, more importantly, a caring and focused response to the needs of survivors of sexual assault.

- To preserve and protect advocate privilege and confidential services, CWS led a successful legal appeal challenge all the way to the Oregon Supreme Court. The result protects confidentiality, which is the centerpiece of trust-based advocacy on behalf of survivors.
- As the Latinx population in Clackamas County continues to grow, CWS has secured resources to expand capacity for services and outreach in the rural community. At the forefront of this effort are our Promotoras who, as volunteer leaders in their communities, are helping to connect survivors with culturally-specific services and information.
- As part of our strategic goal to Raise Awareness of Our Mission and Services, collectively across programs we reached more than 11,000 people through outreach efforts, tabling at events, and community education.

As you read the stories and the outcomes shared in our Annual Impact Report, I hope you will take a moment to reflect on how you helped CWS lean in to meet these moments and how you have equipped our organization to remain relevant and responsive in the days, weeks, and months to come.

We are proud of all that has been accomplished over the past 40 years, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to breaking the isolation of domestic and sexual violence. In these unpredictable times, our work has never been more important. Thank you for helping to make it possible. Please join us at our 40th Anniversary Gala on October 3rd as we celebrate and honor our journey together. We'd love to see you there!



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Erlbaum'.

**Melissa Erlbaum**  
Executive Director

**Clackamas Women's Services  
provided comprehensive lifesaving  
services to more than 2,500 survivors  
in 2024.**



**Our mission is to  
break the isolation  
of domestic and  
sexual violence.**

"All staff have been so caring, kind, respectful, and knowledgeable. Your services are so easy to navigate hard situations. Thank you for being here to help me." —Sara, survivor

"The staff truly care and are supportive from the moment you walk in the door to when you leave." —Jackie, survivor

"Everyone at CWS and the staff that's helped me and my kids get through everything from being in shelter to having my own place is just amazing. I don't have any family here and everyone has made me feel welcome and like family with all the support." —Nancy, survivor

**Our programs and services are free and confidential. We support people regardless of their backgrounds, life experience, ages, immigration status, or who they love to ensure anyone escaping interpersonal violence can access the resources they deserve.**

We honor the depth and diversity of lived experiences across our community. Alongside survivors, community partners, donors, students, volunteers, faith communities, and many others, we're building a community that honors survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, elder abuse, and trafficking.

# There's No Place Like Home

## One survivor's journey

The keys shook in my hands. It still doesn't feel real. I mean, I didn't believe them when they told me they found an apartment. After how badly he ruined my credit and rental history, I didn't think anyone would approve me. Choosing to leave him, knowing we'd be on the streets, was the hardest decision of my life. But when I thought of Lacy, I knew I had to. I planned for weeks, and every time I thought we could leave, he would do something that prevented us from escaping.

I still remember how it felt the night we left. How I had to plan to sneak out a few comfortable blankets so we could keep warm in our car, how I had to explain through hushed whispers to Lacy that she could only bring the toys in her backpack, how I worried that I was forgetting something critical like my ID or the little money I had in my wallet.

It still feels so surreal. If any of the things that happened to get us here hadn't work out, I don't want to think about where we'd be right now—the police officer who gave me the crisis line, the shelter having a room open, all the support they gave me there, and now my case manager who has walked alongside me and given me hope through the process—I don't know where we'd be without her. Nothing seemed simple or smooth. She keeps saying that it was me who did the brave and hard work to get us here, but I still have my fears and doubts. Can I really do this? Will it last? I have to have faith. As my case manager often reminds me, it is one step that leads to the next and the next.



We pulled in front of the building and Lacy's hand tugged on mine in excitement, startling me. I didn't realize how far I got lost in my thoughts. Staring out the window of the car was hypnotic.

One step. We just need to get through this next step. Walking through the door of this new place reminds me of when we first walked into the shelter. I'm so grateful that we had a place to rest and recover. I'm going to miss the colorful walls and having a community of people around.

And here we are... The furniture from Community Warehouse will arrive soon. It was fun to pick out our furniture together. Lacy got one of their special chairs. I think it will all match well enough, and Lacy and I will build our own little sanctuary of comfort and love here.

This is it—home. For now, at least. As long as he doesn't find us.

I didn't know how I'd feel in this moment after the long hard journey it's been, and even if it's fleeting, I'm allowing myself to feel a glimmer of joy and relief. Deep breath...

**Every day our Housing Case Managers work to place survivors into safe and stable housing where they can rebuild their lives and restore what violence has taken from them. Case managers often share that one of their joys is to see the change people experience over time in the program—from living at shelter to moving into safe housing to exiting the program to pursuing a new career and being on their own. It's beautiful to see survivors flourish.**

Yet not every story has a fairy tale ending, and some take longer to get there. What we know is that we're supporting survivors to create changes, whether that's one step at a time, or giant leaps of faith. We're here to help survivors find their feet when they land.

**Our Housing Program has grown to support over 1,100 people thanks to a combination of the regional Supportive Housing Services measure, new state funding from the Governor's Executive Order, and federal funds for special housing programs for survivors of trafficking.**

Housing is one of the top resources requested by survivors and growing our housing program to meet the need in accordance with available funding sources has helped thousands of survivors in recent years.

**514 adults and 615 kids** were safely housed across our continuum of resources, an increase of 21% from 2023.

**95% of households** continued to have safe, stable housing at exit from housing assistance.

**"Thank you to all of everyone who allowed me to progress...I felt more at ease than I had in forever. I learned so much from being here about things I never thought of...I can honestly say that this was a life changing moment for me...thank you isn't nearly quite enough to say. I will always remember and hold dear to myself for all that was done for me. Thank you, thank you, thank you." —Mary, survivor**

## A Win for Survivors in the Oregon Supreme Court

**CWS led a legal appeal challenge all the way to the Oregon Supreme Court to protect advocate privilege. The confidential services CWS and other providers offer survivors are essential to our ability to support them as they navigate interpersonal violence. CWS believes every survivor has a right to privacy and confidentiality.**



Photo credit © Josh Partee

As Melissa shared with the Oregonian, "The reason confidentiality is so key is because, as you can imagine, these are very personal details that people are sharing about their lives." She added, "The ability to be able to have a conversation with an advocate, to know that that is confidential ... that you can do so from a place of trust and confidentiality is really the core of what our work is built around." Confidentiality is especially important when survivors' lives may be at risk due to the threat of domestic violence. In the ruling, the Oregon Supreme Court said state law protects records created or maintained in the course of providing services to domestic violence victims from disclosure.

Thank you to Ashley Cadotte Law and Oregon Law Center for representing CWS in this case, and thank you to our community partners who filed the amicus brief on our behalf: The Oregon Crime Victims Law Center, Family Justice Center of Washington County, Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, The Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, Jessica Mindlin, J.D., The National Crime Victim Law Institute, A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County, and Victim Rights Law Center.

# Supporting Survivors at the Hospital

**For many victims of sexual assault, it is a moment marked by deep betrayal—when trust, safety, and control are taken in an instant, leaving lasting harm. “I didn’t think this could happen to me.” It’s something the CWS hospital response advocates hear daily. The team of three—Cassandra, Gisela, and Jojo—are for the most part, first responders. In many cases, before survivors see a doctor or a forensic nurse, they see a CWS confidential advocate in the Emergency Department at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center.**

“It’s probably one of the most invasive times in their lives and it’s important to me that we find resiliency in the human spirit. We want to be a safe space,” said Cassandra.

The thought, the feeling, the muscle memory of safety has been betrayed. What was once inconceivable is now a reality. This trauma compounds the actual assault, putting survivors into a further state of shock. “It’s definitely the boiling point moment, when they realize a person has the capability to hurt them in that way,” said Cassandra.

There is a lot of affirmational work that goes into sexual assault and strangulation hospital response. Self-blame is a common feeling after the abuse. Survivors may tell themselves, *I shouldn’t have been doing this, and If I were to have done something different, this wouldn’t have happened to me.* These questions can descend into rumination. Asking over and over again, *Why did this happen to me?*

“That’s where having someone in the room who is advocating for a survivor, reassuring them, ‘I believe you. I know you’re struggling. It wasn’t your fault.’ can be really powerful,” shared Gisela. “A CWS advocate is able to approach the situation with a lot of empathy and understanding.”

“I genuinely want survivors to know they are cared for and valued,” said Cassandra, “We work really hard to focus on the whole person, highlighting the goodness that exists, even using laughter at some points, to ground survivors.”

Gisela supported one survivor who just wanted to hear silly jokes to get through the experience of being in the hospital for the forensic exam. They shared ‘dad jokes’ for two hours straight. Grounding might also involve coloring in a book, touching a soft plushy, playing with fidget toys, or simply holding an advocate’s hand. Advocates all agree that “it’s an honor to hold space for survivors.”

That time spent together can last anywhere from 6-8 hours. “It’s a critical time,” said Cassandra, “Many survivors don’t know what will happen to them once they get there, arriving by ambulance, law enforcement, a friend, or family member. Often, they don’t know that they have options.” Those options include what information they may choose to disclose, whether they get an exam, or if they want to make a report to law enforcement.

“To have someone available to answer questions is helpful,” said Jojo. “We’re there to track how the survivor is doing throughout the process, and we can be that voice to ask them if they need a break if they’re looking overwhelmed.” Advocates say it’s a lot of decisions that can be difficult to navigate when you’re in crisis.

“We carefully walk with them through next steps and the logistics, making sure they receive follow-up care,” explained Cassandra. Every survivor has their own unique healing journey. CWS advocates are there to meet survivors where they are on that path—providing skills, tools, and resources—along the way.

“When I see a survivor reframe their self-blame to believing they deserve good and fair treatment in this world,” said Cassandra, “It’s a beautiful thing to witness.”

## Our Partnership with Providence Hospital

**In April of 2024, CWS began a partnership with Providence Hospital to place advocates full-time in the emergency room—a first of its kind in Oregon. In our first year, we supported 75 survivors of domestic and sexual violence through some of the hardest moments that no one should experience.**

Confidential advocates, whose sole purpose is to support the survivor, share information on the process, provide options and resources, and advocate on their behalf, make a substantive difference in the outcomes for survivors.

Breaking the isolation of sexual violence begins with a survivor being heard and believed. To have someone meet their gaze and say, “I believe you.” We are there to be that voice, and to be a trusted ear to listen—a safe place to share the full spectrum of their lives, the complexity and nuance of their experience, and what they want, fear, know, and feel. We approach each and every person with empathy and understanding while offering trauma-informed care.

At the heart of what we do is help give control back to survivors, which is especially important in the busy, often chaotic environment of a hospital emergency department. We are grateful to our partners at Providence, the forensic nurses, and our Sexual Assault Advocate Team. They are making a difference every day for survivors at crucial moments to provide the care survivors deserve.

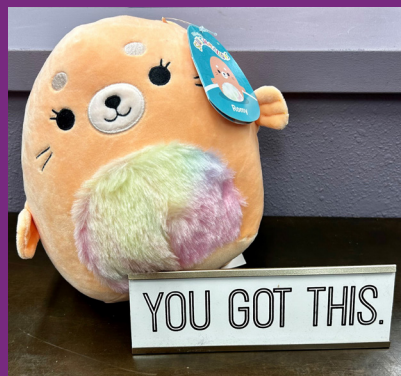
**CWS is thrilled that Providence opened the S.A.F.E. Center, which is available for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, including strangulation and psychological abuse, as well as human trafficking. We are honored to support Clackamas County survivors at the S.A.F.E. Center as well as at Providence Milwaukie and Providence Willamette Falls hospitals. This trauma-informed space allows survivors to receive care in a controlled environment that was designed to increase safety and well-being.**



## Community Based Advocacy

There is an intrinsic value to walk-in services for a survivor to explore their options—allowing the spontaneity of quick decisions when the opportunity to seek services arrives. CWS confidential advocates assist with emergency intervention services, safety planning, filing restraining orders, and helping meet basic needs like food, diapers, transportation support, and referrals to shelter. Increasingly, advocates support survivors with law enforcement interviews, referrals for Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors grants, and connecting survivors with resources and services from our community partners. Additionally, we created a new Civil Legal Advocate position to support survivors with contested restraining orders. In the last six months of 2024, this position supported more than 70 survivors with over 100 hours of education, support with paperwork, and court accompaniment.

**“Everyone here has been so kind and welcoming every time I’ve come in.”**  
—Anna, survivor



We also secured funding that CWS provides to Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO) to provide legal assistance to survivors referred by CWS and A Safe Place Family Justice Center partners. In 2024, we referred 99 survivors to LASO. We know that the need is increasing, and regardless of where a survivor is on their journey, we are here.

**1,604 survivors** served through community based advocacy.

**130 safety phones** distributed, as well as security cameras, emergency food, and hotel stays.

## 24-hour Crisis & Support Line



In the moment of crisis, or when someone just needs a supportive ear to listen, we are here—available 24/7—providing emotional support, safety planning, and resource referrals. We are here to help. We also provide consultation and support for service providers and people who want to support a friend or loved one.

**24-Hour Crisis and Support Line:**  
(503) 654-2288 or (888) 654-2288

**Confidential Text and Chat Line:**  
rc.chat/cws or (503) 461-2888  
Available Monday-Friday 9:30am-4pm

**2,422 calls** were received on our support line.

**419 text and chat conversations** were received on our confidential line.



## Youth Services

Our Youth Services Program interrupts the intergenerational cycles of violence through trauma informed interventions based on HOPE Theory and Positive Childhood Experiences research that focus on increasing protective factors within families to support their healing process. Whether it's hosting Camp HOPE America – Oregon, community-building events throughout the year, facilitating support groups, or providing confidential advocacy in Clackamas County schools, our Youth Services team supports youth through the joys and trials of navigating relationships, teen dating violence, and family violence. The team provided more than double the number of presentations to schools and community partners, and we had 137% more participation in our community-building events in 2024. We launched a new series of “Love & Life” support groups—covering topics like healthy relationships, self-care and confidence, coping strategies, and communication skills—at four different schools in partnership with each school’s counseling team. Two of our team members were also on the Sexual Assault Resource Center’s podcast highlighting Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in February of 2024.

**348 kids and adults** participated in our community events.

**23% of the survivors** we supported were youth.

**37 parents** received parenting classes, facilitated in English and Spanish.

**145 art-based youth sessions** were provided during the year.

**“As I was talking with two campers who want to come back as counselors, a common thread was how much they felt they have grown here at camp and how much they wanted to give back to the younger kids attending. It meant a lot to me to hear and see their growth and to know that I played a small role in that.”** —Camp HOPE Oregon Camp Counselor

## Latinx Services

To enhance culturally specific services, CWS initiated its Promotoras program in 2017. The Promotoras model seeks to break down barriers to bring critical safety resources into Latinx communities in a way that builds trust. In 2024, our Latinx Services program graduated 10 new Promotoras, a significant achievement that will greatly enhance our ability to connect with and engage members of the community. They received five training sessions, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to serve as trusted community liaisons for survivors. Their dedication and passion for empowering others brings hope to survivors navigating interpersonal violence.

Promotoras play a crucial role in expanding our outreach efforts to rural areas, facilitating access to resources, and fostering a stronger support network for survivors. Thanks in large part to the Justice Reinvestment Equity Fund grant we doubled the number of survivors who participated in our support groups and our outreach in the Latinx community has grown by 480% in 2024!

### 7,540 people

were reached through our outreach in Latinx communities.

### 38 adults and 40 youth

participated in our Latinx support groups.

### 25 service providers

attended the Latinx Provider Chat during the year.

*“Definitivamente estoy muy agradecida con esta agencia y todo el personal son un equipo extraordinario que me hicieron sentir como nunca antes. Realmente no saben la magnitud que esto a impactado en mi vida y en la vida de mis hijos para que ellos crezcan sanos y sin violencia. Gracias.” —Maria, survivor*



## Counseling

Healing from interpersonal violence is a journey as unique as the survivors we serve. This is why we offer counseling services to adults, youth, and families. Our counseling services offer a variety of modalities, including EMDR, ecotherapy, collaborative problem solving, mindfulness, and motivational interviewing. The variety of modalities our counselors offer means that wherever survivors are on their journeys, we can support them in taking the next step in their healing.



Artist @ Nikki McClure

### 1,808 counseling sessions

were provided to 178 youth and adults.

### 25 families

received counseling services.

*“I appreciate their approach, communication, flexibility, gentle reminders, empowering encouragement, and just ‘all the things’ about how they work with me.” —Julia, survivor*



## Community Education and Prevention

Our vision is to live in a society that no longer tolerates domestic and sexual violence but rather thrives on mutual respect. To get there, we must interrupt the cycles and patterns with which violence is perpetuated while increasing education and strengthening prevention. This is where our Community Education and Prevention program comes in. Our Community Education program more than doubled the number of training sessions provided in 2024, reaching 49% more people than in 2023. Our Violence Prevention team continues to provide age-appropriate curriculum to students throughout Clackamas County, reaching more than 8,000 students annually.

### 1,920 people

had community education in 122 sessions.

### 8,101 students

received violence prevention education lessons in 28 schools.

### 87.8% of 1,239 students

surveyed can identify healthy and unhealthy characteristics of intimate relationships after receiving violence prevention training.

## Emergency Shelter & Housing

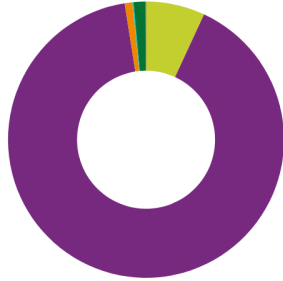
Shelter and housing are one of our most requested services by survivors escaping violence. At The Village emergency shelter, we connect survivors with the space and resources to rebuild their lives in a supportive community. At any given time, The Village can accommodate 15 adults and up to 25 children. Using our innovative Village Model developed in 2007, we prioritize increasing access, building community, and celebrating survivors. Our Village is an ever-expanding community of survivors, and we celebrate the joy and strength that community brings.

**97 adults and 95 youth**  
were sheltered at The Village.

**11,892 bednights**  
were provided to survivors.

# 2024 Financial Information

## Core Operating Resources (Revenue)



- Contributions - \$964,885
- Government Grants - \$12,656,757
- Donated Facilities - \$125,476
- Special Events - \$20,376
- Earned Income - \$191,649
- Other Income - (\$52,398)
- Interest Income - \$10,041

## Core Mission Support (Expenses)



- Program & Services - \$5,149,877
- Client Assistance - \$2,807,065
- Development - \$460,181
- Operations & Management - \$1,482,934
- Pass-through to Nonprofit Partners & Subcontractors - \$4,045,174



## Join us on October 3, 2025 for our 40th Anniversary Gala!

Together, we are celebrating 40 years of supporting survivors as they reconnect with the safety and well-being they deserve.

We are thrilled to invite you to support a special evening celebrating four decades of memories, achievements, and growth. Enjoy an evening filled with entertainment, delightful cuisine, and opportunities to support the incredible work of CWS along with wonderful company.

Learn more and RSVP at [www.cwsor.org/40th-anniversary-gala/](http://www.cwsor.org/40th-anniversary-gala/)

Not able to attend this year? You can support CWS by making a donation. If you would like to make a pledge for this event or inquire about sponsorship opportunities, please contact our Development Team at [development@cwsor.org](mailto:development@cwsor.org).



Based at A Safe Place Family Justice Center: 256 Warner Milne Rd, Oregon City, OR 97045  
(503) 655-8600 • [www.cwsor.org](http://www.cwsor.org) • [info@cwsor.org](mailto:info@cwsor.org)

24-hour Crisis and Support Line: (503) 654-2288

Confidential Chat: [rc.chat/cws](https://rc.chat/cws) (available Monday-Friday from 9:30am-4pm)

