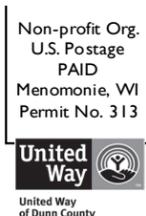




The Bridge to Hope
P.O. Box 700
Menomonie, WI 54751



Return service requested

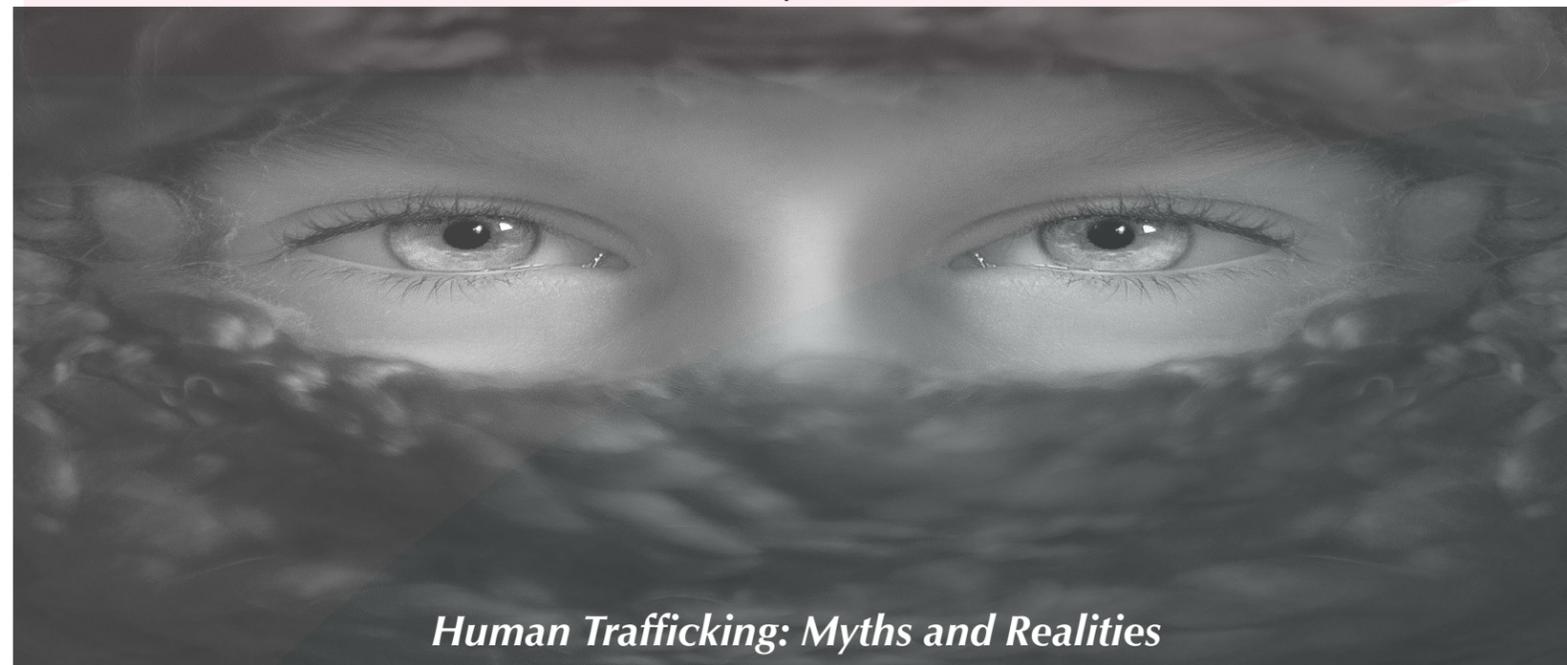
Advocacy services for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and human trafficking

Return Service Requested

Providing a bridge to hope that creates a safer, more just and compassionate society

March 2020 Newsletter

Editor: Brittany Olson



Human Trafficking: Myths and Realities

You've all heard the stories: cute high-school cheerleader gets kidnapped while shopping at the mall and forced into prostitution...child taken from grocery store when parents look the other way. Perpetrators of fear have convinced us that traffickers lay in wait and we are all potential victims. This fear and misinformation campaign has created a climate where single parents, and same sex couples are being stopped and questioned at airports because their child is of a different color; someone got suspicious and raised an alert.

Most child kidnapping cases in this country involve custody disputes between parents. 90% of child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by a family member or by someone known to the family. The stranger-danger myth keeps us looking elsewhere, instead of in our own backyards.

The reality of human trafficking is usually much different than the media portrays. Most victims are either homeless, part of the foster care system, undocumented workers, or run-away teens fleeing abusive homes. They are the people who are often invisible to us, and they are easily preyed upon. A teenager or immigrant who is hungry and scared is vulnerable, and can easily find themselves in a situation where they are coerced or forced to do what they are told to do in exchange for food, shelter, or protection. They may be getting beaten if they refuse. And they may be given drugs, only to find themselves addicted and desperate.

The Bridge to Hope offers emergency shelter and services to human trafficking victims and has done so for many years. Several of the victims we provided services to were immigrants who became victims of labor trafficking; they had been brought to this country under false pretenses. Others, who we might label as victims of sex trafficking did not define themselves that way. A more common scenario is a vulnerable woman with a boyfriend who had treated her well in the beginning, but started making her do *some favors for him* to make money. Sometimes a person struggling with drug addiction will do whatever they have to do to get drugs rather than suffer the pain of withdrawal.

We are here for victims regardless of the path they took to become one. The reality is that many of them have been traumatized since childhood, and are just surviving the best way they know how. We offer them another path, we help them with resources, and we reassure them that they deserve better.

Naomi Cummings,
Executive Director

Designer Purse Bingo



Benefiting The Bridge to Hope

FEATURING DESIGNER PURSES FROM
COACH • MICHAEL KORS • KATE SPADE
• 14 ROUNDS OF BINGO • RAFFLES •

APRIL 25, 2020

DOORS OPEN AT 11:30 A.M. BINGO BEGINS AT 1:00 P.M.
TICKET PRICE: \$40.00

OFF BROADWAY BANQUET CENTER
1501 N BROADWAY ST.
MENOMONIE, WI

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS AT EVENTBRITE:

<http://bit.ly/bth-designerpursebingo>
MUST BE 18 YEARS OF AGE TO PARTICIPATE
LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE!

THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 SPONSORS:



KEYES CHEVROLET
PEOPLES STATE BANK
CENTURY FENCE
COMPANY
TOM HARRIS
CARTER ANDERSON



**TAKE BACK
the Night
2020**

Featuring Guest Speakers
Angie McIlquham ♦ Dr. Markie Twist ♦
Ryan Leckel ♦ Dr. Rickie-Ann Legleitner
♦ Mayo Clinic SANE Nurse ♦ AND MORE

Open Mic / Letters to Survivors / Moment of Silence
.....
Tuesday, April 7 ♦ 6:00 - 8:00 pm

The Raw Deal
.....
**Support Survivors
Break the Silence
Take a Stand
Against Sexual Violence**

This event is sponsored by:
The Bridge to Hope Working to End Abuse
COFFEE raw deal ROASTER
monarch house
wima

Sexual Abuse in Schools

Unfortunately, a small percentage of educators use their position of power to sexually exploit their students. The word “educator” not only includes classroom teachers but can also pertain to coaches, counselors, administrators, tutors, and aides. Sexual misconduct by educators has received increasing attention over the past decade. Sexual assault/abuse in schools is an *unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with a student’s ability to learn, study, work or participate in school activities*. The educator may begin grooming by giving the student special attention, support, or rewards. “Grooming” describes the process in which the offender lures the victim into the sexual abuse. Given their level of interaction with students, educators are in a unique position to do this. Grooming can also serve to make the student feel complicit in the behavior. A teacher may provide the student with increased attention while slowly initiating sexual behavior, including asking questions about the student’s sexuality or increasing general physical contact. The rewards and extra attention are meant to aid in the attachment of the child (and potentially the child’s parents) to the teacher, while the behavior tests the student’s ability to keep a secret and be compliant with the wishes of the abuser.

When children experience sexual abuse by their teachers, it not only compromises their education but results in increased drop-out rates. Sexual abuse can also have a devastating impact on a child’s wellbeing and sense of self. Child victims often experience severe anxiety, problems with school, difficulty forming or maintaining healthy relationships, and a whole host of other adverse effects. With so many students experiencing educator sexual abuse, why haven’t we heard more about it? Although students are often abused in classroom/school, few students tell adults in authority about this abuse. Only about 6 percent of students report sexual abuse by a teacher or other staff member to someone who can do something about it. The other 94 percent don’t tell anyone, or, if they tell, they talk to a friend about it, and then swear the friend to secrecy. What should parents be looking for? Be aware if a teacher spends unauthorized time alone with your child or frequently compliments or rewards only particular children. Also, be watchful if your child exhibits unusual behaviors such as not enjoying activities they once enjoyed, are frequently ill with no explanation, or if your child develops new fears that they had never experienced before. If you have concerns or questions and want to discuss the situation, please give us a call at 715-235-9074.



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Angie McIlquham
Director of Sexual Assault Services

A new LGBTQ Support Group

The purpose of this group is to build a greater sense of community, foster connections, and encourage discussion. People who identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) often face increased rates of violence, and due to existing stigma and biases, they may encounter difficulty accessing support.

Youth who identify as LGBTQ+ are significantly more likely to experience school violence, bullying, and sexual violence. They are at greater risk for suicide, depression, substance use, and poor academic performance in comparison to their heterosexual peers. These experiences impact an individual throughout their entire life.

Coming together as a community is a step toward reducing the health risks and negative experiences those within the LGBTQ+ community face. Having a strong sense of community identity allows individuals to feel more socially, emotionally, and physically safe and supported.



LGBTQ+ Connections

This group is for LGBTQ+ identifying individuals in the Menomonie area to build a sense of community, foster connections, and support one another.

Meets at First Congregational-UCC

Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of Each Month • 5:30 - 6:30 pm

If you have any questions, please call
The Bridge to Hope at 1-800-924-9918



Breakfast with The Bridge at The Senior Center



The Bridge to Hope has started a Breakfast with The Bridge group at the Senior Center! The group is held on the first Thursday of every month starting at 9:30a.m. Come join us for a good breakfast and even better conversation. This group consists of fun activities and good discussions about the issues our community is facing in relation to abuse. Whether you just want to learn more, have experienced abuse and need support, or just want a good breakfast and some company, please feel free to come by and check it out! Registration with the senior center for this event is preferred, please call 715-235-0954.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. Children who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence are supported at The Bridge in processing their trauma by being in an environment that is violence-free, supportive, and that offers a listening ear. One of the spaces in which we aim to do this is during our Children’s Group.

Our Children’s group is an open space for children ages infant through teens, that is held at the same time as the Healing from Trauma adult support group, Thursdays from 5-6PM. Goals during the group are; promote a positive self-image, non-violent behavior, and opportunity for positive role modeling. We encourage children to develop a support system within their communities and families, help them name their ‘5 Safe Adults,’ and demonstrating how to process upsetting situations and feelings with those safe adults.

We aim to provide children with a safe, fun, and caring environment; while giving parents a break to talk about adult issues without the children present—because kids should be able to enjoy being kids!

Jennifer McDermid,
Family and Youth Advocate



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Stacie Breitung: **Treasurer**
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Volunteer Opportunities

Pantry Organization
Providing Meals/snacks
Office Help
Child Care Assistance

Interested?
Contact Jamie
jamiieg@thebridgetohope.org
(Volunteer opportunities that involve client contact will require a signed confidentiality form, and in some cases a background check)

Our Wish List

- Comforter Sets (Twin/Full)
- Fitted sheets (Twin/Full)
- Pillows
- Bath Towels
- Laundry soap
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Dish washer soap
- Printer paper
- Gas Cards/ Gift Cards
- Full sized hygiene products
- Socks/underwear (new)
- Nail clippers/files
- Razors