



## **Organizational Background**

For 40 years, Wellspring has helped Saratoga County victims of domestic violence to find safety, support and healing. Sadly, domestic violence affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men. In Saratoga County, it is the number 2 violent crime (second only to drunk/drugged driving) and the primary cause of family homelessness. While many are familiar with our crisis services (24/7 hotline that answers 1,500-1,700 calls a year, emergency domestic violence shelter, and forensic exams), most people aren't familiar with the scope of our work. In 2019 alone we:

- Provided in-person counseling and case management services for ~1,000 abuse survivors
- Provided 70 people (adults and children) with safe housing in rent subsidized apartments throughout Saratoga County for a total of 14,971 nights of sleep without fear of abuse
- In partnership with Soroptimist International of Saratoga County, offered an 8-week financial literacy program for 55 women (with childcare and dinner for their kids) so they can achieve a safe future and be financially self-sufficient
- Daily, provided legal advocacy, court accompaniment, next day follow up when police have responded to a home for an abuse incident, and two free legal clinics each month
- Offered comprehensive case management services to help people with basic needs, including: employment, housing, health care, transportation, food, clothing, household items, and more.

***“Thank you for your understanding and help throughout an extremely difficult time. You all gave me an opportunity to begin my life again. A second chance many may never have. For this I am grateful beyond words.”***  
*A Wellspring client*

While we will always be here to assist abuse survivors, our true goal is to end relationship and sexual abuse. This requires getting ahead of the problem through prevention and social change work, including:

- Prevention programs in local high schools and colleges for ~5,000 students annually
- Social change programs like our Coaching Boys into Men and Athletes as Leaders programs which we offer at no cost to all athletics departments throughout the county
- Student leadership programs like our SAEDA (Students Active in Ending Dating Abuse) 4-day workshop
- Programs to help businesses provide a safe workspace (e.g., our Upstanding Hospitality program), and education and resources for supervisors about the impacts of domestic violence in the workplace, and
- Our newest initiative, Men with Wellspring, a social change program so that men in our community can become our partners in changing the norms that underlie relationship and sexual abuse.

***“It has been an honor and a pleasure watching our athletes grow in this program and develop a real sense of responsibility for their words, actions and the wellbeing of their community. Thank you for the opportunity!”*** Jason Burlingame | Boys Head Coach | Shenendehowa Track & Field

All services provided by Wellspring are free and confidential and are underwritten by the generous support of donors and through corporate and governmental grants.



## **The Case for Need**

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that domestic violence incidents increased 42% between 2016 and 2018, and the number of rape/sexual assaults increased 146%. For most of our 40-year history, we've been in the same office location, even as the agency has grown exponentially in programs offered, number of clients assisted, and staff size. We have been working for several years to identify a growth strategy, site, and design for a new facility as our present location is inadequate for the services we provide, that are essential to provide crisis and support services to victims of domestic violence in Saratoga County. While often hidden from view, the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault remain prevalent throughout our County. Our clients and staff are desperately in need of an improved space to meet as our current 'cubbies' are not suitable. Clients are coming to us in crisis, sharing parts of their deepest and most personal aspects of their lives during a difficult, vulnerable, and very emotional time. Our clients and our staff need a safe and appropriate space for these conversations. Our new space will include improved and increased private counseling spaces.

We are also in need of a space for our Prevention Programs. The only way to end abuse in the future is to prevent it from happening in the first place; to do so, we must educate our community. Wellspring is our County's primary Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault agency; therefore, we are the go-to resource. We need a space that allows us to be the most effective resource possible. Our new building will include expanded program space that allows Wellspring to be more visible, accessible, proactive, and community-focused in order to provide assistance before there is a crisis and invite community members to better understand the dynamics of domestic violence, so they recognize it and direct people they know for support.

Lastly, this new building will have space to teach clients job skills for career growth and financial skills to obtain self-sufficiency. Financial abuse occurs in 98% of domestic violence relationships, and many times victims will not leave abuse for fear of not being able to sustain themselves and their children. We need a space where we can teach our clients the tools they need to thrive on their own.

**And, a new factor was added to increase that critical need** - We have been working for many years on this plan, and then COVID happened. Our current counseling cubbies have staff and victims sitting less than 3 feet apart in very small rooms with poor ventilation. Most of our staff sit in an open office environment answering calls throughout the day with just 3 feet between them. So, while we have always prioritized safety—safety from domestic violence and sexual assault we now have another kind of safety to also consider- health safety. Our new space is needed now more than ever (and the design of the new building perfectly addresses both forms of safety).