

## **Women's Center Receives Challenge for Transformational Gift**

The Women's Center, Inc. announced today a matching gift opportunity that would eliminate the mortgage on the only domestic violence shelter in our area. Lucy Grove, the organization's president, said, "Harbor House will be completely paid for when we complete a matching gift offered to us by generous donors who hold the Women's Center dear to their heart."

The donors, Rod and Holly Aldrich, will match all gifts in 2018 that are directed to pay off the \$507,000 mortgage. Any pledge of \$20,000 or more can be paid in two or more installments through 2019, Grove added.

"Paying off Harbor House will greatly improve our ability to help women, men and children in crisis well into the future," said Grove.

To date, \$124,000 has been raised towards a goal of \$253,500. Local foundations, such as the M. E. Davenport, the Frazier Fund, and the Phyllis and Max Reynolds Foundation, have all provided substantial gifts towards the match. Executive Director Beth Casady is currently working with other foundations and businesses in the area. Also, several individual supporters of the Women's Center have donated \$33,400.

The Women's Center purchased the shelter in 2005 with a USDA loan to pay for the house and for necessary renovations to make 16 beds available. Harbor House is the sole emergency shelter for survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Marquette and Alger counties.

The shelter costs about \$90,000 a year to operate. It provides a 24/7 support line, emergency response and crisis intervention, a safe haven for women, men and children, individual and group counseling, resource and educational information and a wide array of advocacy services to survivors and their children.

"While state grant funding is available for program costs, and we have successfully earned these grants for 20 plus years, there is no public funding at the local, state, or national level to help with the shelter itself. Eliminating the mortgage makes us much more sustainable immediately," said Grove.

Last year, Harbor House protected more than 120 women, men and children for 3,552 days and nights. While not all those served by the Women's Center programs need Harbor House, for those escaping violent circumstances, it literally saves lives and makes it possible to begin building a life free of violence.

“When survivors of sexual and domestic violence can feel safe, they can begin the process of healing with our counselors’ help. Harbor House is a refuge for many survivors with few resources or anyone to turn to for help,” said Grove.

“The Aldrich’s are offering a fabulous gift to us,” added Casady. “If we can free up \$31,200 a year from being mortgage payments, we can use that money to provide more outreach and help in the areas where they are most needed. Harbor House is our community’s house. We have to ask ourselves, ‘What would it look like if we had no place for survivors of violence to go when a crisis occurs?’ ”

Information on Harbor House and this matching gift is available at [www.mcmqt.org](http://www.mcmqt.org) or by calling 906-225-1346.