



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

3B
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: June 27, 2013

Title of Item: Support Within Reach

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA	Action Requested:	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>

Submitted by: Jessica Seibert	Department: Administration
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Presenter (Name and Title): Caroline Larson, Executive Director (Support Within Reach)	Estimated Time Needed:
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Summary of Issue:

Caroline Larson would like to give an update to the Board on the Support Within Reach program.

Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:

Recommended Action/Motion:

None at this time.

Financial Impact:

Is there a cost associated with this request? Yes No

What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$

Is this budgeted? Yes No *Please Explain:*

Sue Bingham

From: Caroline Larson [c.larson@supportwithinreach.onmicrosoft.com]
Sent: Friday, June 09, 2017 10:54 AM
To: sue.bingham@co.aitkin.mn.us
Subject: Funding request from Support Within Reach
Attachments: image001.jpg; SWR Aitkin County Sexual Violence Services Grant 17-18.docx; Aitkin County Attorney Letter of Support.pdf

Hi Sue,

I am the Executive Director at Support Within Reach and am forwarding a request for funding and would like to be placed on the agenda for a board meeting to introduce myself and report on the continued good work of the agency. Please let me know if you need anything further from me.

Thank you,

Caroline Larson

Gender pronouns: she/her

Executive Director

218-444-9524



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JESSICA L. BROWN
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April 11, 2016

Support Within Reach
Amanda K. Ysen
Executive Director
403 4th Street N.W., Suite 140
Bemidji, MN 56601

Re: Letter of Support

Dear Ms. Ysen:

The primary purpose of this letter is to express my appreciation of the critical sexual violence services Support Within Reach provides to the Aitkin County community and of the mutually beneficial partnership that has been forged between Support Within Reach and the Aitkin County Crime Victim Coordinator. This partnership has developed to provide comprehensive service to victims without duplication of efforts.

The secondary purpose of this letter is to express my support of Support Within Reach's request for funding from local civic and governmental entities in order for Support Within Reach to continue its important work and to further sexual violence awareness.

Sincerely,



James P. Ratz
County Attorney

JPR:sls

Support Within Reach

Sexual Violence Victim Services in Aitkin County – Funding Request

Address: 312 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 2009

Aitkin , MN 56431

Phone Number: 218-927-6226 | 1-866-747-5008

Business Office Address: 403 4th Street NW Suite 140, Bemidji, MN 56601

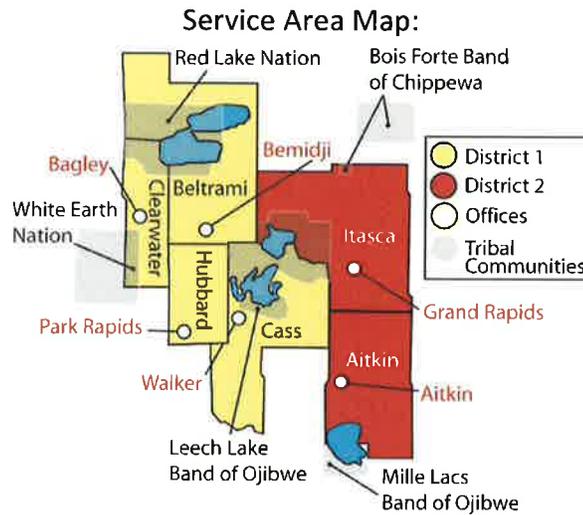
Phone Number: 218-444-9524

Requested Amount: \$1,500.00

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Support Within Reach (SWR) is a private, non-profit organization that was created in 1989 to serve the distinct needs of victims of sexual violence in both Itasca and Aitkin County. Our mission is to reduce the impact and harm of sexual in the communities we serve. On January 15, 2014, Support Within Reach (SWR) merged with the Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater and Hubbard Counties. The new organization adopted the name Support Within Reach and will continue to be a sexual violence resource and advocacy program sharing resources across the region. The newly merged organization covers a six county area including Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard, and Itasca County (see map at the bottom of this section for more information). The six county region is divided into two districts that provides service to the same service area. Each district has a headquarters (Grand Rapids and Bemidji) with the business office and administrative staff being located in Bemidji. The organization has 18 total staff which include an Executive Director that presides over the two districts, a program supervisor in each district that supervise various staff that provide programming and services. There are 4 outlying offices that are individually staffed including one in Aitkin City, Aitkin County.

SWR is governed by a volunteer board of 17 members from all across the six county service area who works to develop and set agency policy and procedure. Board members provide continuing direction for planning and operations, program evaluation, as well as related organizational activities consistent with the mission and goals of the organization. SWR's Aitkin County office has one full-time staff that assists victims. In 2016, SWR utilized a total of 5 sexual violence volunteer advocates and student interns (in the Aitkin/Itasca County area) who donated 1,546 hours for a total of \$52,915 as in-kind contribution to SWR. These volunteer advocates provide additional assistance through coverage of the after hour's crisis line and assisting in prevention and awareness efforts in the District 2 service areas.



AITKIN COUNTY OVERVIEW

Support Within Reach (SWR) seeks to enhance the quality of life for those in Aitkin County through four primary programs: 1) Victim Support & Advocacy Program, 2) Volunteer Program, 3) Coordinated Community Response, and 4) Prevention Education/Awareness Program. The term sexual violence includes a number of actions that are carried out in a manner intended to groom, control, intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, harm and silence the victim. Unfortunately, sexual violence comes in many forms, including: sexual assault/rape, incest/child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation/trafficking of youth and adults, intimate partner sexual violence, date/acquaintance rape, and alcohol/drug facilitated sexual assault, sexual harassment, bullying, and stalking.

In order to address the issues of sexual violence victimization and its impact on victims' lives, SWR has developed multiple services such as: 24-hour crisis line, crisis intervention, ongoing support and encouragement, basic awareness and education, support groups, information/referral, medical advocacy and individualized civil/criminal court advocacy and assistance. Being that SWR is the sole provider of sexual violence supportive services and prevention education programming within Aitkin County, we welcome collaborative opportunities in order to build a safety net of services for the clients and the community that we serve. Through SWR's awareness and prevention education program, participants develop an increased awareness of the services our agency provides as well as improved understanding regarding the issues surrounding sexual violence. SWR's Prevention Education/Awareness

Program creates presentations based on the needs of the organization requesting. Typical categories of presentations are for pre-school, elementary, middle school, high school, and post-secondary school, and at risk populations such as chemical dependency, youth-at-risk, and physical disabilities.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Support Within Reach's (SWR) Support Services and Advocacy Program maintain a crisis/information line that is staffed by trained sexual assault advocates (staff and volunteers) 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. SWR staff cover the crisis line during office hours, while trained volunteer advocates attend and respond to incoming calls for assistance after hours. Specific services provided are crisis intervention, basic counseling and support; support groups, follow-up and referrals to community agencies; accompaniment to medical exams and law enforcement interviews; information and updates related to case progress in the court system; and assistance in filing protective/restraining orders. SWR works to provide information and options each step of the way in order to help clients to make informed decisions that will assist them in their healing process. For example, SWR staff are able to help victims and their family understand the complex reporting process which is very different when looking at different situations involving the age of the victim and perpetrator and the relationship between the victim and perpetrator.

SWR reaches out into the outlying areas of Aitkin County in order to reach specific populations that are vulnerable to sexual violence (assault/abuse) victimization. We provide supportive services and prevention education to residents who reside in outlying areas who have no/little means of transportation to the Aitkin area. SWR relies heavily upon our collaborators to fulfill our mission and to carry out our programming.

COLLABORATION

Support Within Reach (SWR) is the sole provider of sexual violence services in Aitkin County. SWR works with organizations across Aitkin County to provide victim services and education/awareness. The organizations include:

- Aitkin County Law Enforcement Agencies – SWR works with all law enforcement agencies in Aitkin County. SWR provides referrals to law enforcement agencies, works with officers and investigators throughout the investigative process. We have found that in cases where a sexual violence advocate is involved that victims tend to stay involved and more active with the criminal justice system.
- Aitkin County Attorney's Office and Victim Assistance Program – SWR's Aitkin County Coordinator assists on cases involving criminal sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, etc. We have found that in cases where a sexual violence advocate is involved that victims tend to stay involved and more active with the criminal justice system.

Aitkin County Sexual Violence Services

- Aitkin County Health and Human Services – SWR’s Aitkin County Coordinator assists in cases involving child abuse, parents who have current or previous sexual violence history, etc. We are able to provide ongoing support and education for families experiencing this part of the system.
- Advocates Against Domestic Abuse – approximately 75% of domestic violence victims indicate that they or their children are also victims of sexual violence. SWR works with AADA to ensure proper referrals for victims of sexual and domestic violence in Aitkin County.

SWR works closely with each of the entities above in order to coordinate services. This is done through cross referrals, working together on a case when a client authorizes it, cross training between the different organizations, establishing protocols or practices on how we as collaborating organizations will work together.

The Aitkin County area has one hospital and 3 law enforcement agencies. SWR worked on a total of 18 cases involving the criminal justice system in Aitkin County in 2016. These services range from with law enforcement reporting and accompaniment, prosecution meetings, assistance in developing a safety/risk assessment plan, assistance in filing for protection orders, and connecting with health and human services. SWR and the multi-disciplinary team continue to address barriers and reasons why victims are choosing not to report recent incidents of sexual violence.

Additionally a full time employee was not available the second half of 2016 and will be in place by the second half of 2017. Needs of CAPC, SMART Teams, and client needs are being addressed.

Victim Support Services & Advocacy Program

SWR provides a variety of services that provides a network of support services for victims of sexual abuse/assault and their families/loved ones. In 2016, SWR staff and volunteers provided a total of 197 service types in Aitkin County. Note 2016 reflects less than average crisis intervention due to lack of staffing or knowledge that services are free and confidential 24/7.

- SWR attended to a total of 9 new sexual violence victims (primary and secondary), with 49 ongoing client contacts, 3 unduplicated, and 31 service in 2016.
- Crisis Intervention (2 so far in 2017)
- Risk Assessment/Safety Planning (4 in 2016 and 2 so far in 2017)
- Ongoing support and case follow-up (37 – similar to 2015 and 41 so far in 2017)
- Personal Advocacy, i.e. jobs, school, etc. (13 in 2016 and 3 so far in 2017)
- Accompaniment to medical exams (0 in 2016 and 1 so far in 2017)

Aitkin County Sexual Violence Services

- Criminal Justice Support and Advocacy – this includes law enforcement, prosecution, and probation (27 in 2016 and 11 so far in 2017)
- Civil Legal Advocacy: Filing Harassment Restraining Orders and Orders for Protection, Mandated Reporting Issues, Human Services Requested Education (2 in 2016)
- Emergency Financial Assistance (0 in 2016 and 6 so far in 2017)
- After hours Crisis Calls (1 in 2016 and 1 so far in 2017)

SWR uses the following strategies to ensure access to sexual abuse/assault services:

- SWR makes sexual abuse/assault services available at our office located in Aitkin. We have a full-time staff that works in that office and 4 other staff available in Grand Rapids as needed.
- SWR provides a 24 hour crisis line that is available 365 days per year
- SWR provides outreach to outlying areas like Hill City, Jacobson, and McGregor.
- SWR mobilizes the community – our volunteers in 2016 donated 1,546 hours for a total of \$52,915 as in-kind contribution to SWR
- SWR participates in a Sexual Assault Multi-Disciplinary Action Response Team in Aitkin.
- SWR provides training to criminal justice system responders related to sexual violence and our services.

Prevention Education & Awareness Program

SWR is active within the community developing and presenting customized education and awareness opportunities throughout Aitkin County that meet the needs and requests of a particular audience. Through SWR's awareness and prevention education program, participants develop an increased awareness of the services our agency provides as well as improved understanding regarding the issues surrounding sexual violence. In 2016, SWR provided 8 awareness events, 5 prevention programs, and 2 training programs to 135 participants in Aitkin County. Specific presentations provided are as follows:

1. Pre-school/Daycare – 4th Grade:
 - Body Safety (previously known as Good Touch/Bad Touch)
 - Respect and Boundaries
 - Bullying
2. Middle School/High School:
 - SWR services/location
 - Self-Esteem, Respect, Boundaries and Body Safety
 - Difference between Sexual Harassment & Flirting
 - Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships
 - Handling peer pressure to be sexually active

Aitkin County Sexual Violence Services

- Internet Safety/Teens & Technology
- Date/Acquaintance Rape

- 3. Other Presentations:
 - Developmentally Disabled
 - Youth At Risk – area group homes,
 - Professional Development for Adults – Sexual Harassment, Special topics involving sexual violence, Stalking, Medical Providers, Law Enforcement Agencies, etc.

- 4. Community Awareness Events:
 - Stalking Awareness Month
 - Sexual Assault Awareness Month
 - Child Abuse Awareness Month
 - Volunteer Awareness Week
 - Crime Victim’s Rights Week
 - Community Connect
 - National Night Out
 - Aitkin County Fair

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Provide free and confidential services to primary and secondary victims of sexual violence (primary = the actual victim of an incident of sexual violence, secondary victim = anyone else who is impacted by sexual violence including family and friends of the primary victim).

Objectives:

- SWR provides a confidential 24-hour crisis line for primary/secondary victims impacted by sexual violence. SWR will continue to offer our after-hour crisis/help line to facilitate routing after-hours calls involving sexual violence to our volunteer advocates/staff.
- Provide crisis intervention and basic counseling services to children and adults. This service works to normalize feelings after traumatic events and recurring trauma that occurs overtime. SWR maintains an up-to-date therapist list of counselors who are proficient at working with victims of sexual violence in order to assist us in providing appropriate referrals.
- Assist clients in identifying/reaching their basic needs for healing and personal safety. Provide referrals to other agencies as necessary.
- Provide 24-hour advocacy and support for primary/secondary victims at law enforcement centers, First Witness Interviews, hospital emergency rooms and clinics, and criminal/civil courts matters.

Goal 2: Promote Services and Strengthening Relationships with other agencies and service

providers.

Objectives:

- SWR will publicize our crisis/help-line, along with our 800 number via newspapers, ICTV, public service announcements and brochures/literature disbursed throughout the county (monthly).
- Promote our website: www.supportwithinreach.org and engage with community members online through our agency Facebook page.
- Continue to strengthen ties and develop creative and unique ways to reach out to vulnerable populations across Aitkin County. This practice serves to create a network of supportive services for victims of sexual violence.
- SWR will continue to be a part of Aitkin County Health and Human Services meetings (ongoing).
- Continue to develop a list of locations within the community where SWR can meet privately with clients in outlying areas of the community (as needed).

Goal 3: Provide prevention/awareness education programming to residents of Aitkin County.

Objectives:

- Provide prevention education and awareness programming within schools and daycares reaching children grades preschool and k-12 and parents with the focus of awareness and safety. .
- Provide prevention education and awareness programming to youth-at-risk residing within group homes.
- Provide prevention education and awareness programming to developmentally disabled population.
- Provide presentations and training to professionals within the community (law enforcement, medical providers' educators, etc.) to support understanding of social issues which are significantly impacting children and families.
- Create at least two community awareness campaigns related to sexual violence through newspaper articles, and placing brochures/literature throughout the community.