



**35**  
YEARS OF SERVICE

**SAFETY**  
**LIFE**  
**HOPE**

## Our Message

This past year has been a challenging and exciting one for us at BWIC. We are embarking on a new chapter in the development of our agency with the construction of our permanent home on Third and Chestnut Streets in Reading. The creation of one safe, efficient, and accessible home for all of our services has been a dream for decades. We are thrilled that this dream is finally coming true.

The needs for immediate safe shelter for the women, men, and children we serve have grown exponentially in the last decade. With this new site, our capacity will finally meet the need. In addition, this new facility will allow us to overcome many barriers to accessing services that have been experienced by those coming to us from outside the City. Providing secure on-site parking and eliminating barriers to those with mobility challenges are two examples. To the new site, we bring not only our passion, but also effective tools for serving victims of domestic and sexual violence and resources to prevent this violence in the future.

All of our programs have measurable targets for success and a streamlined process for maintaining fiscal and statistical data. This allows us to meet the reporting requirements of the various funding sources. At the same time, these practices provide the relevant data we need to inform our work and to better serve those who need us.

We have all been challenged by the economic recession of the past several years and decreasing sources of funding. Yet, we have managed to provide the highest quality of services to our community and to plan for our future. We are incredibly grateful to all of you who continue to be our solid community foundation.

We look forward to continuing our work together and welcome you to join us in our new facility. We hope you find this annual report reflects on 35 years of innovative and dedicated services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in our community and a blueprint for our future work.

- *Mary Kay Bernosky, Esq.*  
Executive Director



## Our Mission

THE MISSION OF BERKS WOMEN IN CRISIS IS TO PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS AND TO ELIMINATE DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN BERKS COUNTY.

## *Our Beginning*

In 1976, twelve dedicated women met at the YWCA in Reading to begin the monumental task of providing services to women victims of domestic violence. They met to discuss the details of providing Hotline, counseling, and temporary safe housing services to victims.

On both local and state levels, they were pioneers as they sought to end family violence and to help all victims. They attended the first meeting of the Pennsylvania Coalition against Domestic

Violence held on November 12, 1976, in Lancaster, and the women became some of the Coalition's first members. Working tirelessly, they established the framework to make families safe—piece by piece. Pooling their resources and doggedly pursuing the support of the greater Reading Community, they did not give up. The community responded to their efforts.

Berks Women in Crisis is the product of the inspirational leadership, determination, and insight of its Founding Mothers.

## Founding Mothers 1976

Louise Grim

Judy Henry

Lorraine Condeelis

Linda Ludgate

Marge Swanson

Nancy Eldon

Paula Herman

Barbara Hart

Cathy Saunders

Genny Esterling

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Marie Morrissey



Honorable  
Judge Linda Ludgate



Louise Grim

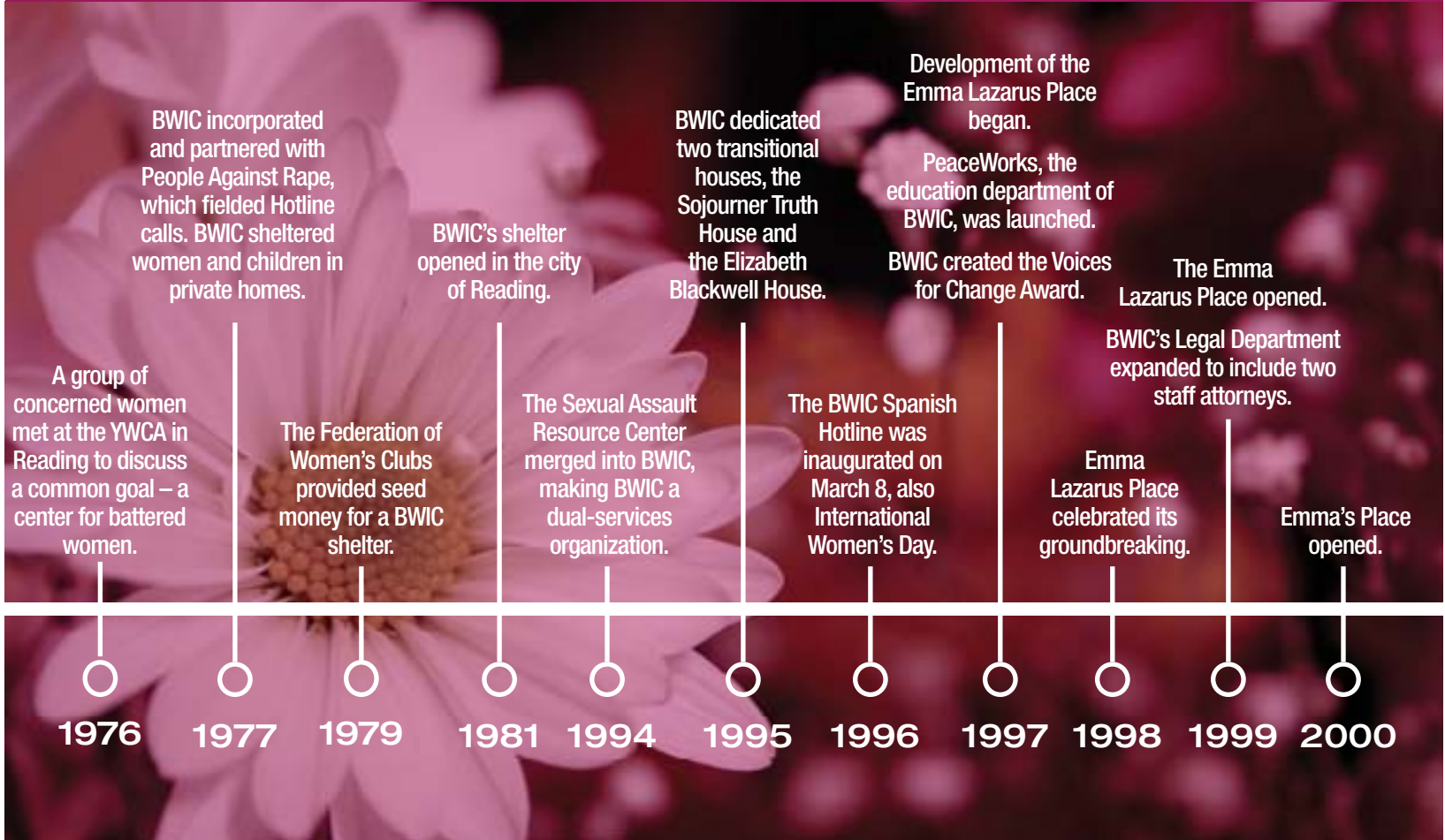


Barbara Hart

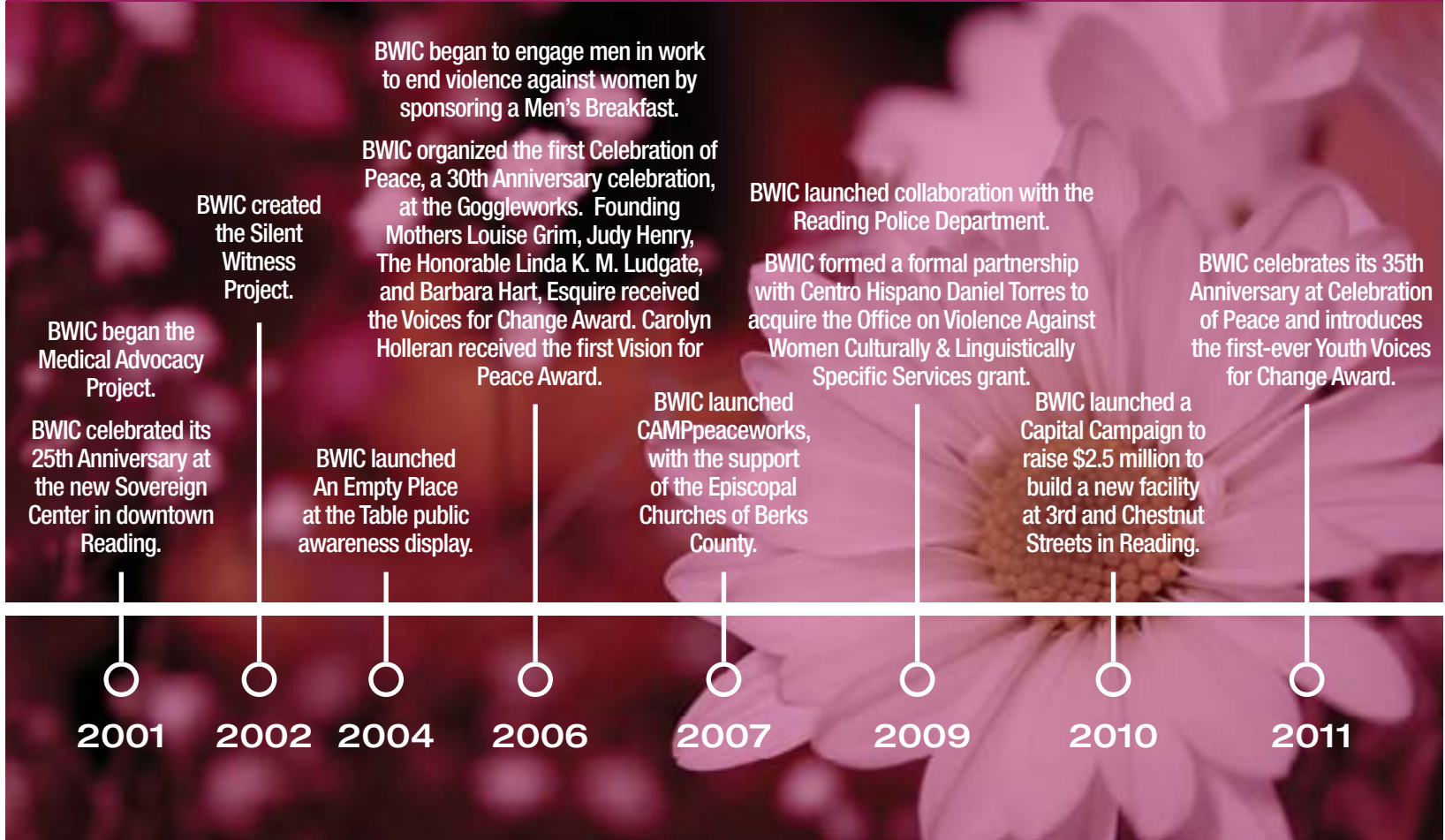


Judy Henry

# Highlights



# Highlights



## Our Services

Berks Women in Crisis serves all people without regard to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, age, income, or ability. All services are free, confidential, and available in English and Spanish.

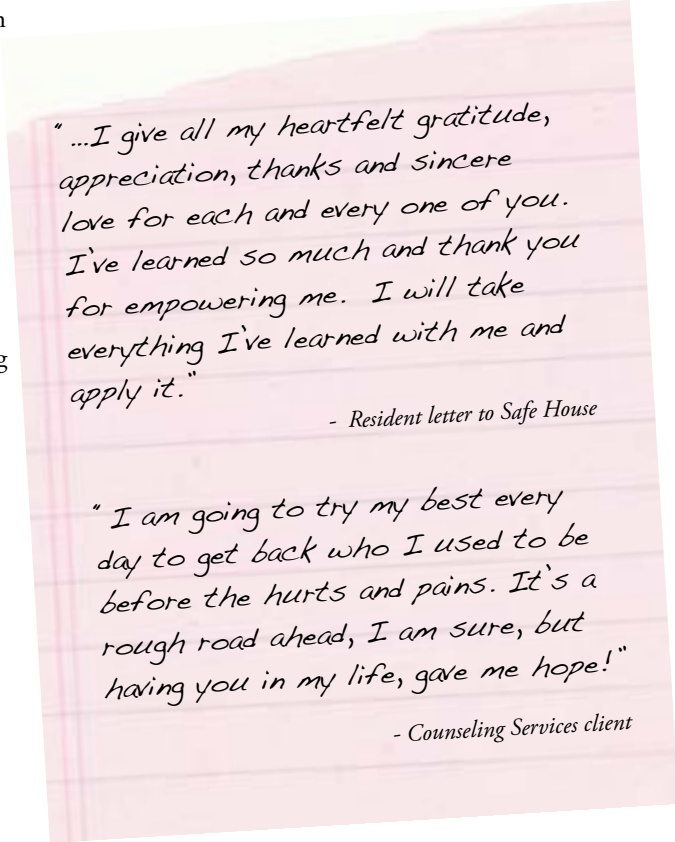
Immediate safe shelter is offered for up to 30 days for those fleeing abusive homes... for those fleeing abusive relationships...for those fleeing an abusive person. Counseling services are available to residents of the Safe House, the Transitional Housing Program, as well as community-based clients.

Our Transitional Housing Program offers several short-term transitional apartments, including Hilbert House, as well as 10 town homes called The Emma Lazarus Place (TELP), which are longer-term, up to three years. Program participants qualify for TELP through Section 8 or assistance from the Next Step Program. Safe House residents have precedence in joining the Housing Program, which assists women and children in obtaining short- and long-term goals as they become empowered and move toward self-sufficiency.

Counseling is offered to those who are suffering or have suffered the effects of domestic violence or sexual assault. A staff of experienced trained counselor advocates is available to help a survivor or a survivor's loved ones cope with the effects of abuse.

Staff attorneys and legal advocates provide free legal services to clients. Advocates accompany victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to police interviews, hearings, trials, and sentencing. Staff attorneys provide legal representation at final Protection from Abuse order hearings.

The Medical Advocacy Project (MAP) provides advocates for crisis response 24/7 365 days a year. Safety planning, support, and resources are offered to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault at both Reading area hospitals. Additionally, BWIC staff offer professional training on domestic violence and sexual assault to health care providers and other medical staff, serve on hospital domestic violence and sexual assault task forces, and supply print materials and public awareness tools.



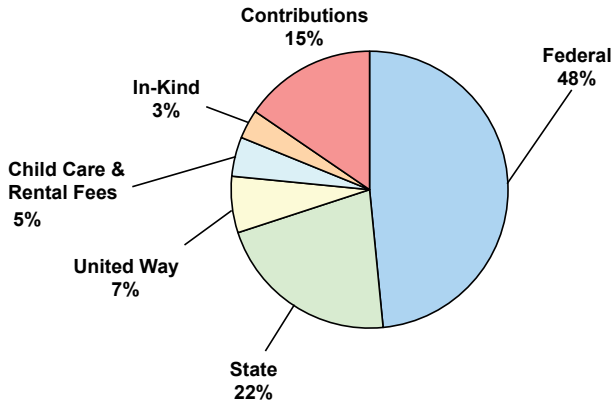
"...I give all my heartfelt gratitude, appreciation, thanks and sincere love for each and every one of you. I've learned so much and thank you for empowering me. I will take everything I've learned with me and apply it."

- Resident letter to Safe House

"I am going to try my best every day to get back who I used to be before the hurts and pains. It's a rough road ahead, I am sure, but having you in my life, gave me hope!"

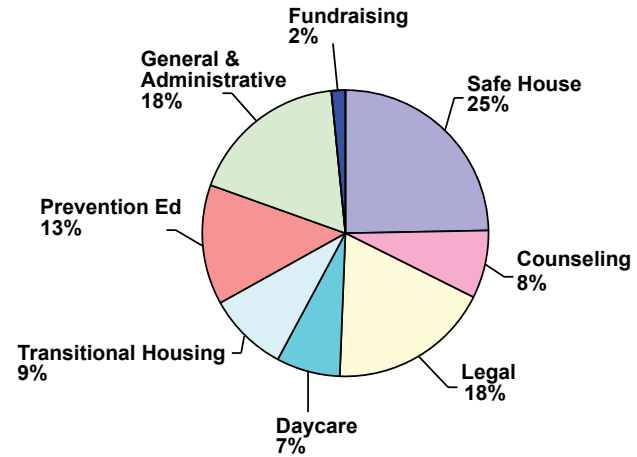
- Counseling Services client

# Operating Income and Expenditures



FY ended 6/30/2011  
REVENUE

Federal	State	United Way	Child Care & Rental Fees	In-Kind	Contributions	TOTAL
983,890	437,385	133,675	93,359	68,908	313,990	2,031,207



FY ended 6/30/11  
EXPENSES

Safe House	Counseling	Legal	Daycare	Transitional Housing	Prevention Ed	General & Administrative	Fundraising	TOTAL
471,415	146,661	348,579	137,497	173,542	258,476	342,967	30,087	1,909,224

*An independent accounting firm conducts an annual audit of Berks Women in Crisis. A copy of this independent public accounting audit report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State.*



# Capital Campaign

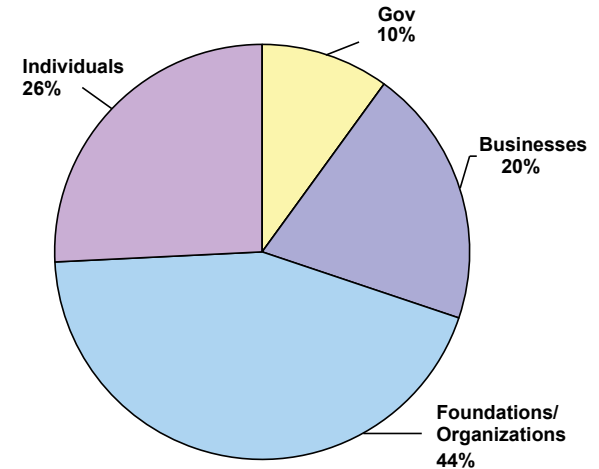
Berks Women in Crisis launched a capital campaign at the close of 2009 to address a critical need. The plan was to acquire a site at Third & Chestnut Streets in the City of Reading and to construct a four-story building that would accommodate:

- Emergency Shelter for up to 50 individuals who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Bridge Housing for families who require additional time to secure safe housing beyond the maximum 30-day shelter stay
- Program space for the supportive services offered to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault

With a desire to remain within the City of Reading in order to best serve the agency's clients, a team of professionals, including an architect, engineer, developer, BWIC's Executive Director and Board Members, explored the acquisition and renovation of an existing facility. The team determined that new construction was a better plan in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. In the interest of city redevelopment, the former home of the Garden State Tannery, which had been vacant and had fallen into disrepair, was selected.

A new and larger shelter facility will allow Berks Women in Crisis to accommodate almost twice the number of individuals per night in the Safe House; provide greater accessibility to those who are physically challenged; and allow greater operational efficiency and security.

### Breakdown of Contributions



Entity	Amount	%
Government	\$300,000.00	10.00%
Businesses	\$604,722.20	20.16%
Foundations/Organizations	\$1,322,135.00	44.07%
Individuals	\$773,249.00	25.77%
	\$3,000,106.20	100.00%



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## *BWIC's Education & Community Outreach Program: PEACEWORKS*

During the 1990's, Berks Women in Crisis continued to expand services and programs as funding and support for new initiatives became available. The Education & Community Outreach Department of BWIC, PeaceWorks, was established in 1997 – based on the knowledge that no matter how comprehensive our services for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, community outreach and prevention education are necessary components of a complete community approach to ending the cycle of violence.

PeaceWorks provides age-appropriate classroom presentations and educational groups within Berks County schools and youth programs. In 2007, BWIC launched CAMPpeaceworks, a week long summer day camp for youth ages 13-17 to explore the “isms” as the roots of violence in our communities. CAMPpeaceworks was featured as a “promising primary prevention strategy” in a report by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center in 2011.

While the foundation of PeaceWorks is its programming for youth, PeaceWorks also creates and stages awareness events throughout the year—during October (Domestic Violence Awareness Month) and April (Sexual Assault Awareness Month). BWIC's Awareness Projects raise the consciousness of the community around domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as provide an outlet for the grief, sadness, and even hope for change associated with the issues.

The Silent Witness Project, based on the National Silent Witness initiative, is a display of life-sized red silhouettes, each of which carries the story of a woman, man, or child killed due to domestic violence in Berks County. The Project travels throughout Berks County during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In 2004 BWIC created An Empty Place at the Table©, which consists of place settings for domestic violence homicide victims with photographs and personal mementos created by their families and friends.



# BWIC's Education & Community Outreach Program: PEACENWORKS



The Shoe Project for Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a collection of shoes with attached true stories from survivors of sexual assault in Pennsylvania. Carefully selected, one can imagine each shoe being worn by the adult or child telling the story. For the Clothesline Project, also a national initiative, survivors of domestic and sexual violence create t-shirts with personal messages based on their

experiences, which are hung on a clothesline and displayed for the public to see in parks and on college campuses.

In 2011, BWIC launched its own adaptation of the international initiative Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®, [www.walkamileinher shoes.org](http://www.walkamileinher shoes.org), during which men march in women's high-heeled shoes to raise awareness and stand in solidarity with women to end domestic violence and sexual assault. This project reflects newer strategies to involve men and boys in the work. Women and children march beside them.

PeaceWorks has two broad goals: to educate children and teens with the hope that they will grow up to practice peace and to impart the message to the community in general that only when ALL of us refuse to tolerate the domestic violence and sexual assault that is pervasive in our society will the violence end.

*©An Empty Place at the Table is a project of the Women's Resource Center in Scranton, PA.*



- 3,836 adult clients received 8,203 hours of supportive counseling for domestic violence.
- 719 adults and children were housed in the Safe House for 4,459 shelter days for adults and 4,172 shelter days for children.
- 257 adults and children were turned away from the Safe House.
- Trained bilingual advocates answered 2,263 Hotline calls for incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Staff attorneys represented 745 clients to obtain final Protection from Abuse orders.
- 1422 clients worked with legal advocates who accompanied them to Protection from Abuse order hearings, criminal court hearings, and police interviews.
- In schools and throughout the community, 481 prevention-education programs on domestic violence and sexual assault reached an audience of over 13,000 people.
- 615 adult clients received 1,696 hours of service for sexual assault.
- 64 patients at both Reading area hospitals received advocacy, support, and options counseling 24/7 through the Medical Advocacy Program.



# PeaceTrust 200

PeaceTrust 200 is a leadership giving campaign envisioned by one of BWIC's strongest advocates, Carolyn Holleran. Over the last five years, PeaceTrust donations have provided solid, dependable funding for the agency. Partners pledged a minimum of \$500 a year over 5 years to help sustain BWIC's support services for victims and prevention-education programs for the community. Ending domestic violence and sexual assault in Berks County is the mission, and PeaceTrust dollars are making an impact.

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**Safety. Life. Hope.**



## Contact Information

### **Berks Women in Crisis**

50 N. 4th Street, Suite 101

Reading, PA 19601

Phone: 610.373.1206; Fax: 610.372.4188

[peace@berkswomenincrisis.org](mailto:peace@berkswomenincrisis.org)

[www.berkswomenincrisis.org](http://www.berkswomenincrisis.org)

### **24-Hour Hotline**

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault  
Information, Referral, and Support

**610-372-9540**

All services are free and confidential.

### **Mujeres en Crisis de Berks**

Violencia Doméstica y Abuso Sexual  
Línea de Emergencia disponible 24/7  
Información, Referencias, y Apoyo

**610-372-7463**

