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# ANNUAL R E P O R T

2013-2014 | 2014-2015



Berks Women in Crisis  
Safety. Life. Hope.

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The past few years have seen a tremendous growth in the understanding and awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault. The Ray Rice video and the incidents of sexual assault on college campuses have brought these issues into the center of our national consciousness. We are now engaging more individuals, women, men and young people, to change the attitudes that allow this violence to continue unabated. Our prevention work in schools continues to challenge our notions of safety and the information that the media presents about gender roles, norms and stereotypes. We are encouraging critical thinking with our youth and they are rejecting those notions that isolate and make individuals vulnerable to violence.

In addition, we are implementing proven programs to increase safety and improve outcomes for survivors. Our Counseling Department's implementation of Trauma Informed Programming and the certification of counselors in the Trauma and Loss in Children curriculum have made a tremendous positive impact on the lives of those we help.

Further, the Lethality Assessment Program has allowed us to connect with those most at risk for extreme or lethal violence. These connections help to keep people safe, create more options for the future and allow them to access the services they need to heal and move forward in positive directions.

We are excited to continue to expand on these programs and we hope you agree that they are truly improving people's lives. We are also anticipating our upcoming 40th Anniversary where we can look back on the accomplishments that our survivors have achieved thanks to your most generous support. Domestic violence and sexual assault are not inevitable realities. We now see how to reduce this violence and we know that ending it is within our reach. Please continue to work with us to finally say NO MORE!!



Executive Director

*Berks Women in Crisis provides a safe haven and ongoing support system for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Our advocacy and education programs increase awareness and promote the prevention of domestic violence, sexual assault, and all forms of oppression.*

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*Jasmine Suarez*

## BWIC hires new Financial Director

Jasmine Suarez joined Berks Women in Crisis as Financial Director in December 2014. She comes to BWIC from the United Way of Berks County, where she served as Finance/Technology Director for seven years. Prior to the United Way, Jasmine worked for both High Industries and Avantext Inc. in accounting and finance positions.

Jasmine earned both her undergraduate and MBA from Alvernia University. She is also a graduate of Leadership Berks.

Her goal in her work with Berks Women in Crisis is to “ensure an accurate and timely financial picture of the agency and work to enhance both the employee and client experience with the agency.”

Jasmine is the mother of Tajiri, a sophomore at West Virginia University and Tatyana, a 6th grader in the Wilson School District. When she isn't at work, Jasmine enjoys cheering for her children on whatever court/field they happen to be playing on for the season, as well as coaching Field Hockey, watching movies and reading novels.

**Please join us in welcoming Jasmine and wishing her the very best in her new position.**

92% of BWIC clients surveyed agreed they **increased** their **ability to cope** and sense of **empowerment**

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### crisis services

- Safe House – 24/7/365 emergency shelter for 50 individuals for 30-60 days
- 24-Hour Hotlines in English and Spanish
- Rapid Response – 24/7/365 response by a counselor/advocate to the courthouse to assist a victim seeking an Emergency Protection from Abuse order
- Medical Advocacy – 24/7/365 response by a counselor/advocate to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in the local hospitals and health clinics

### counseling

- Trauma-informed empowerment counseling for victims and survivors, family members, and significant others
- Support groups
- Victim advocacy response to the Children's Alliance Center of Berks County

### housing

- Bridge House for six families for up to 2 months
- The Emma Lazarus Place – transitional housing for 3 months to 2 years
- Housing Advocacy – assist clients with securing safe, permanent housing options

### legal services

- Representation by an attorney at final Protection from Abuse (PFA), Sexual Violence Protection Order (SVPO) and Protection from Intimidation (PFI) order hearings.
- Court Accompaniment to interviews, hearings, trials, and sentencings
- Legal Referrals
- Custody Clinics – Free information sessions by local attorneys via the Berks Co. Bar Association

### education & community outreach

- Programs for children and youth in schools, colleges and universities, and community settings
- CAMPpeaceworks: Teen Alliance for Social Justice
- Professional trainings for systems partners, law enforcement, employers
- Programs and initiatives that raise awareness of DV/SA in the community

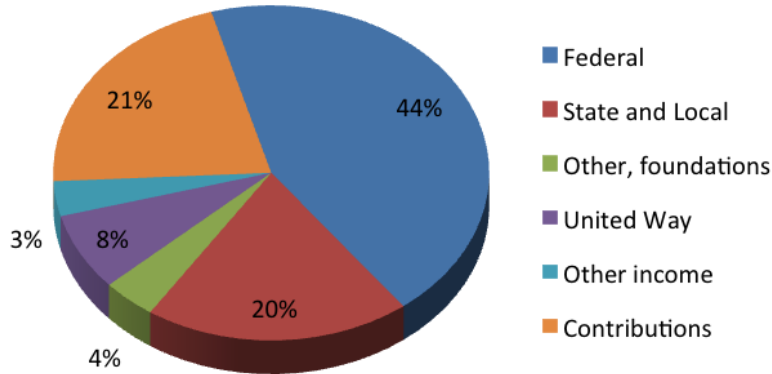
### systems advocacy

- Advocating for best practices and a victim-centered response to domestic violence and sexual assault
- Advocating for the rights of victims, and offender and systems accountability
- Advocating for justice for all survivors of DV/SA



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## 2013-2014

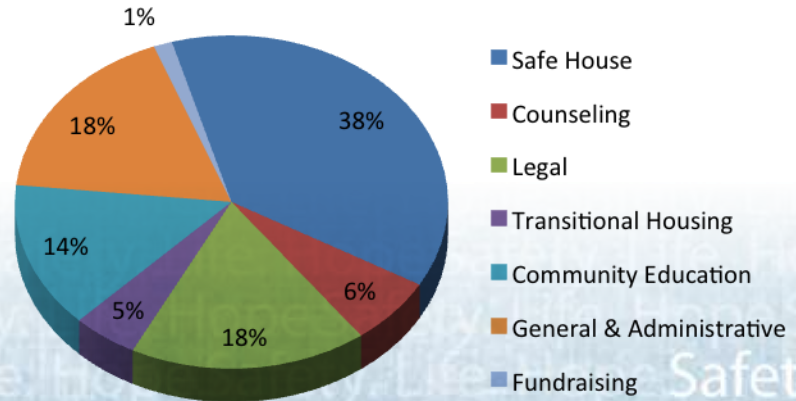


### Operating Income:

Federal	973,531	44%
State and Local	435,514	17%
Other, foundations	88,000	4%
United Way	165,118	7%
Other income	74,449	3%
Contributions	471,800	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,208,412</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Grants from government agencies</i>	<i>1,416,327</i>	

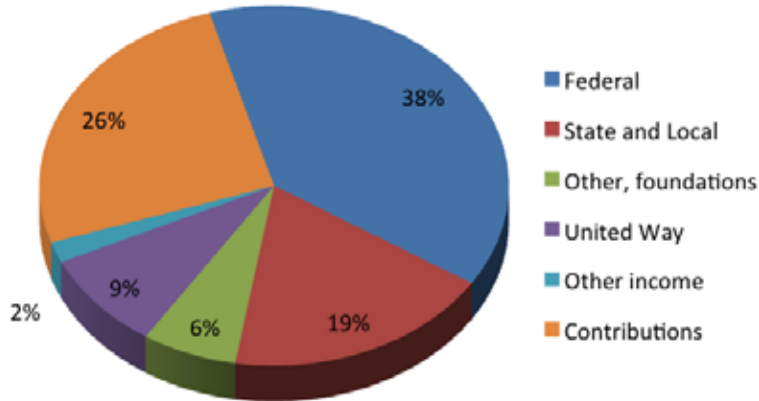
### Operating Expenditures:

Safe House	856,324	38%
Counseling	148,512	7%
Legal	403,053	18%
Transitional Housing	110,787	5%
Community Education	322,439	14%
General & Administrative	398,383	18%
Fundraising	31,729	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,271,227</b>	<b>100%</b>



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## 2014-2015

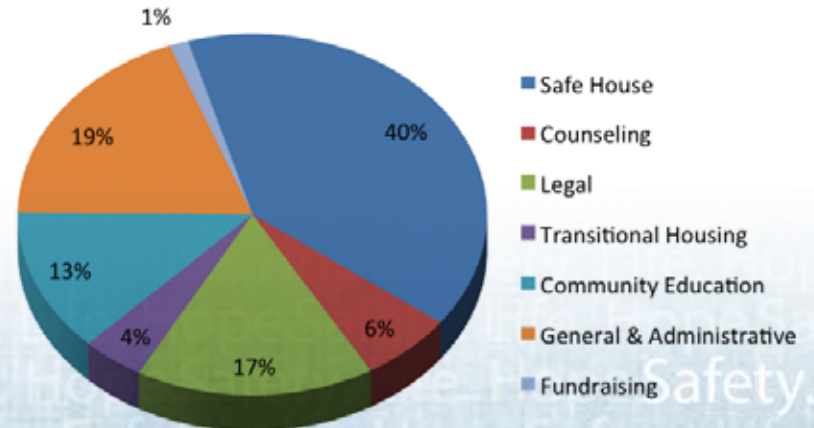


### Operating Income:

Federal	989,168	38%
State and Local	476,135	19%
Other, foundations	167,857	6%
United Way	226,484	9%
Other income	47,394	2%
Contributions	659,068	26%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,566,106</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Grants from government agencies</i>	<i>1,465,303</i>	

### Operating Expenditures:

Safe House	970,361	40%
Counseling	156,519	7%
Legal	401,907	16%
Transitional Housing	104,701	4%
Community Education	314,601	13%
General & Administrative	466,937	19%
Fundraising	32,113	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,447,139</b>	<b>100%</b>



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*Fightin' Phils sport the "No More" eye black*

On April 18, 2015 BWIC held the First Annual WALK FOR NO MORE\* (WFNM) at First Energy Stadium, home of the Reading Fightin Phils. The fact that it was opening weekend for the 2015 season, combined with picture-perfect weather, drew a huge crowd to the stadium and provided a perfect venue for our first WALK FOR NO MORE!

We estimate that 500 individuals participated in the walk, including 40 teams made up of BWIC supporters, college and university students, local businesses and organizations, and candidates for public office. Each team and/or individual was encouraged to use the peer to peer fundraising vehicle crowdrise.com to solicit donations to support their participation. This is the first time we have used an online fundraising platform and it was very effective: WALK FOR NO MORE raised over \$25,000 to benefit BWIC programs and services!

Prior to the game, WFNM T-shirt clad walkers gathered near first base to begin the mile-long walk around the stadium. Participants promoted the national NO MORE campaign in chants and signage; NO MORE ads were featured on the stadium scoreboard.

In addition to our own WFNM participants, the event attracted a lot of attention from members of the general public who were attending the game. They asked questions about BWIC, giving us an opportunity to educate and raise awareness with a large audience on the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault in our community. In addition, they visited our information and raffle table set up on the stadium plaza.

We hope you will join us in 2016 as we plan to return to First Energy Stadium on Opening Weekend (exact date to be announced) – with a bigger and even better WALK FOR NO MORE!

#### \*What is NO MORE?

NO MORE is a unifying symbol and campaign to raise public awareness and engage bystanders around ending domestic violence and sexual assault. Launched in March 2013 by a large national coalition, NO MORE is supported by hundreds of national and local groups and by thousands of individuals, organizations, universities, and communities who are using its signature blue symbol to increase visibility to end domestic violence and sexual assault.



*Joan Crater, Residential Services Director & Daniel Bross, Counselor*





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In November 2014 Berks Women in Crisis partnered with the Reading Police Department to implement the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) here in Berks County. Developed by Dr. Jacqueline Campbell, Johns Hopkins University and a team of researchers working with the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, the goal of LAP is to reduce DV related fatalities and enhance the safety of victims by immediately connecting them to DV services.

The LAP requires thorough training for law enforcement and DV advocates along with the use of a protocol and screening tool to help officers identify those victims at high risk of being killed. Once a determination has been made that a victim is in high danger according to their responses on the screening tool, the protocol is enacted. The officer calls the BWIC hotline and along with the advocate encourages the victim to seek services and provides safety planning information for the next 24 hours.

In Maryland, where the LAP is implemented in every law enforcement agency and all DV programs, the incidence of DV homicides has declined by an average of 25% over the past six years. So far in Berks County there have been 141 LAP screens administered, 80% screened in as high-danger, 78% of those victims spoke to an advocate on the hotline and 66% have

since come to use other BWIC services, like safe house, legal services or counseling. Our goal is to have every police department in Berks County participate in the LAP so that we may strengthen those partnerships, connect victims to services and reduce the occurrence of DV fatalities in our community.

Sgt. Flanagan, Domestic Violence Liaison for the Reading Police Department, comments, “The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) has been an effective tool for the Reading Police Department since the program was implemented in November of 2014. The LAP screen assists officers in identifying high-risk domestic violence victims and in return the officer is able to immediately connect the victim to BWIC services. The protocol is easy and only takes a few minutes to complete. By having our police department work together with BWIC to help prevent a victim from a lethal domestic violence situation, we are making a lasting difference in the community”!



*(L) Jennifer Snyder, BWIC Bilingual Legal Advocates Coordinator & Sgt. Jackie Flanagan, Reading Police Dept. Domestic Violence Liaison spearhead the Lethality Assessment Program.*

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Over the past two years, BWIC has worked toward becoming a trauma-informed agency in all areas of practice. Trauma-informed care is an approach to engaging people with trauma histories that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives.

When a person experiences trauma, the experience of terror is stored in their body. Trauma is experienced through our senses – what we see, hear, and touch – and for this reason it is necessary to heal at a sensory level. The Center for Trauma & Loss in Children, or TLC, provides a practical, easy to use, structured intervention tool that encourages the trauma survivor to heal at a sensory level by utilizing art and sensory questions. The tools allow the survivor to know and understand their normal body trauma reactions, and help them to know what to do when they experience them.

TLC was established in 1990 with the mission of providing school professionals, crisis intervention teams, medical and mental health professionals, child care professionals and clinicians

70% of BWIC clients surveyed indicated that the **services** they received helped them to deal **more effectively** with problems.

with trauma education, training, consultation, referral services and trauma-specific intervention programs and resources materials. TLC has multiple curricula that are specific to children, adolescents and adults. These tools are critical to the healing process for those traumatized by violent or non-violent trauma inducing incidents. TLC's programs are supported by published evidence-based research, and have been used following many natural and man-made disasters.

In 2014, the first BWIC counselor earned Level-1 Trauma and Loss Clinical Specialist Certification through TLC, providing training and resources to the entire department and throughout the agency. As a result, the approach to individual crisis counseling sessions has changed. Using TLC has empowered the counselors, allowing them to be a witness to the survivor's traumatic experience.



Members of the BWIC Counseling Dept. - Diossanta Robles, Daniel Bross and Wendy Tiburcio

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We wish to acknowledge the businesses that made a contribution to Berks Women in Crisis through the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program in 2013-15:

Carpenter Technology

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Gage Personnel

Lift, Inc.

Meridian Bank

Metro Bank

National Penn Bank

Philadelphia Indemnity Ins Co

Quadrant Engineering Plastic Products

Susquehanna Patriot Bank

UPMC

Vist Bank

Weis Markets Inc

By participating in the EITC program, a company not only supports a worthy cause, but also gains the appreciation of its employees by helping an organization that helps the community. The EITC program offers tax credits equal to 75% of the contribution, or 90% if it is the same amount for two consecutive years.

EITC contributions to BWIC support “Ready to Read,” a literacy development program within which BWIC provides both instruction and assessment for children in our Residential program and is aligned with many Berks County School Districts. Our outcomes for this program show marked improvement in reading proficiency for our children, a necessary element for success in school.



*BWIC Children's Advocate Zylkia Torres-Perez reads to children in BWIC's residential program.*

*Thank you, EITC contributors!*

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				Susan Probst	Michelle Sowers	

78% of BWIC clients surveyed said they **felt supported** through the **legal system by staff** from the agency.



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