

March, 2025

FRIENDS, Inc.

SPRING NEWSLETTER

MISSION/VISION UPDATE

On January 10, 2025, our Executive Director and Board of Directors came together to review our mission and vision statements. With renewed enthusiasm, they reaffirmed their commitment to supporting survivors in our community and strengthening our impact.

Our Mission

To Break the Cycle of Domestic and Sexual Violence through Shelter, Support Services, and Education.

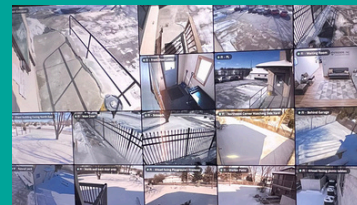
Our Vision

We envision a community where every individual lives free from the threat of Domestic and Sexual Violence, where people are educated and empowered to support survivors, and where healthy, respectful relationships are the norm.

Shelter Security Improvements

We are thrilled to announce that, with the support of West Bend Insurance Company, we have upgraded our facility's security with a new, state-of-the-art camera system. This enhancement helps ensure a safer and more secure environment for all survivors. These improvements enable our staff to respond promptly to incidents, such as unauthorized individuals on-site, and take quick action to maintain safety.

A heartfelt thank you to West Bend Insurance Company for making this possible, and to Verkada and Rescue Dogs Technology for their expert product recommendations and professional installation!



SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH: EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is any sexual activity or behavior that occurs without the consent of the other person. It encompasses a wide range of behaviors, including rape, attempted rape, groping, and sexual coercion. Consent is the key element—without it, any sexual act is assault. Unfortunately, myths and misconceptions about sexual assault persist. Commonly held beliefs like "they were asking for it" or "real assaults happen only in dark alleys" can prevent victims from coming forward. It's important to understand that **sexual assault can happen to anyone**, regardless of age, gender, or background. **It is an act of power, not passion.**

THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The impact of sexual assault can be both immediate and long-lasting. Survivors often experience a range of emotions, including shock, confusion, guilt, shame, and fear. These feelings can interfere with daily life, making it difficult for survivors to trust others, maintain relationships, or function at work or school. Physical injuries can also result from sexual assault, but the psychological effects are often more profound. Many survivors face mental health struggles like anxiety, depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts. The impact of trauma extends beyond the individual, affecting families, friends, and communities.

The Role of the Community in Prevention and Support

We all have a role to play in ending sexual violence. By creating a culture of respect and consent, we can challenge harmful attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate sexual assault. It is important to:

Believe Survivors: Offering support and validation is critical for the healing process.

Educate Others: Share information on healthy relationships, boundaries, and consent.

Speak Out: If you witness harassment or inappropriate behavior, intervene or report it.

Create Safe Spaces: Ensure that survivors know there are resources available to help them, including advocacy, counseling, legal support, and shelters.

HOW YOU CAN HELP DURING SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH:

Wear Teal: Teal is the color for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Show your support by wearing teal throughout April, and be sure to tag us on social media to spread the message!

Get Involved: Participate in FRIENDS, Inc.'s Sexual Assault Awareness Month events or volunteer with FRIENDS, Inc. to provide support to those in need.

Spread the Word: Help us amplify the message by sharing posts from FRIENDS, Inc. on Facebook and Instagram. Your voice can help break the silence.

Donate: Your donations to FRIENDS, Inc. provide essential services for survivors!

UPCOMING EVENTS

DENIM DAY: DENIM DECORATING

Join FRIENDS Inc. and the League of Women Voters at Moraine Park Technical College to decorate jeans and raise awareness for Denim Day! Sponsored by the MPTC West Bend Student Senate, this event is a powerful way to support survivors and spark conversations about ending sexual violence. Supplies are provided—just bring your creativity and passion for change. Stop by to decorate or learn more—every voice matters!



**APRIL 30TH, 11AM-1PM,
MORAINE PARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE COMMONS
2151 N MAIN ST, WEST BEND, WI**

WHAT WERE YOU WEARING? AN EXHIBIT

FRIENDS Inc. and the League of Women Voters are proud to present the What Were You Wearing? exhibit at Moraine Park Technical College. This powerful display aims to break the stigma that clothing plays a role in sexual assault. Through survivor stories and recreated outfits, the exhibit challenges misconceptions and encourages meaningful conversations about victim-blaming.

This exhibit will be open for a full week. We invite the community to visit, reflect, and stand in support of survivors!

**APRIL 28TH-MAY 2ND,
MORAINE PARK TECHNICAL
COLLEGE LIBRARY
2151 N MAIN ST, WEST BEND, WI**



1st Annual Steps Against Sexual Assault 5K



FRIENDS, Inc. invites you to lace up your running shoes and take a stand against sexual assault at our **first annual Steps Against Sexual Assault 5K!** This fun, family-friendly event is more than just a race—it's a chance to raise awareness, support survivors, and make a meaningful impact in our community.

**APRIL 26TH, 10:00AM, RIDGE RUN PARK
2600 WHEAT RIDGE LN, WEST BEND, WI
REGISTER HERE: [HTTPS://FORM.JOTFORM.COM/250434196755159](https://form.jotform.com/250434196755159)**

Enjoy a day of fitness, fun, and fundraising with a 5K run/walk, a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle, a pizza lunch, and prizes for top runners. Awards will be given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, fastest runner under 13, and our special "Caboose" award for the final finisher—because every step counts!

All ages are welcome, so bring your family, friends, and energy for an unforgettable event. Register today and be part of the movement to support survivors and promote awareness!



AWARENESS COASTERS

This April, in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, FRIENDS, Inc. is partnering with local bars and restaurants to spread awareness and resources throughout the community. Keep an eye out for our coasters, which feature important information on our support services. Together, we can create a safer, more informed community. If you see one, snap a photo and tag us to help spread the word!

