



THE ROWAN CENTER
A Sexual Assault Resource Agency

ANNUAL REPORT
2019/2020

Proudly serving the residents of the eight towns of lower Fairfield County, with care and compassion, for over 40 years.



The Rowan Center
A Sexual Assault Resource Agency
Empower. Educate. Eliminate.

It's mid-September, and after 6 months of predominantly online programming, we are grateful to be seeing clients in-person again. While a bit surreal, our masked educators are teaching masked children in schools, and our masked counselors are in the office with their masked clients. There are also educators online, delivering presentations to those engaged in distance learning, and clients who remain more comfortable "Zooming in." Whatever it takes, The Rowan Center has adapted so that our work can go on uninterrupted.

Our COVID pivot, as we called it this summer, was extensive and energizing. It has put us in the strong position we are in today to respond to sexual violence in some new and innovative ways, but with the same guiding principles:

Empower. Educate. Eliminate.

We are, after all, a human service agency that needs to provide direct service, even in a pandemic. So we researched and embraced new technology that led to video calls, webinars, and virtual presentations. We invested in new software and computer upgrades so our educators could update and modify our entire Sexual Violence Prevention Education curricula to address every possible learning scenario. We recognized early on that if our work is important in "normal" times, it is **even more crucial during times of crisis**. Our hotline calls never stopped being answered, and we are again able to meet victims at the hospitals again. Calls to our crisis hotline are up almost 40%. The need is great, and more calls means that more people are getting help and starting to heal.

Last month, a former client emailed to let us know that she finally found peace. She asked us to share her note and use her story to help others. She wrote:

You need to know how important your services are. You are truly angels and you save lives. You saved mine. [My advocate] sat with me that day. I am so grateful for her. She was the first person I saw hours after my assault. She sat with me through the sentencing, and made sure I was okay afterwards. She truly saved me. I wouldn't be here today without you.

We hold so much respect and gratitude for this brave survivor. She is an example of why we do this difficult work. Trauma is personal and individual, and for us, very local. There are many stories of sexual violence and its pervasiveness in the national news these days. While there seem to be too many stories, this is the reality of sexual violence.

Thankfully those very public cases are garnering more attention than before and the victims are starting to be believed. We share the public outrage at these stories, professionally and personally. Every case of sexual violence impacts us and emboldens us in our mission to support survivors in our community- the victims who call us, and those who have yet to call.

And so our work continues, **24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

For over 40 years, The Rowan Center has been advocating and working for a world free from sexual violence. Prevention education, funded entirely by local foundations and individuals like you, has a real impact on the children we reach. Each day we teach children in our communities to resist exploitation, to expect more from their peers, to protect their friends, and to be good citizens. Each day we counsel and advocate for survivors, helping them to heal. Each day we strive to create a world where fewer of us have to wear the label "victim." Your support continues to bring us closer to a world free from sexual violence.

The pages ahead describe The Rowan Center's accomplishments over the last year. Read on and you will learn about our expanded services, our inroads with virtual education, our truly incredible volunteers, and our growing social media engagement. We reach out to you today to express our gratitude for all of the amazing individuals and organizations who make our work possible, especially in turbulent times. Please share in our pride for how far we've come, because together we can make a difference for today's survivors and secure a brighter future for all of our children.

Mary Forman Flynn
Executive Director

Sharon Walker Epps
Chair, Board of Directors



The mission of The Rowan Center is to provide counseling and support services to victims of sexual assault and to eliminate sexual violence through community-wide education programs.



The Rowan Center is the only agency providing free and confidential services to victims and their families in Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton. All of our services are available in English, Spanish and in Haitian Creole.

OUR 2019/2020 IMPACT



643

individuals received support services



60+%

of clients were BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)



38.3% ↑

in calls to our crisis hotline



We responded to

42

hospital calls



2500+

hours of direct service provided



We educated

9,709

individuals pre-COVID



50,000+

people reached online



200% ↑

in followers



7,500+

video views



850+

post shares



Luke Robbins on an episode of the 'Talking About It' podcast, with host Cindy Graziano and Monica Chimera from New Canaan Moms.

"As a counselor, the experiences with Zoom sessions have reinforced the impact visual encounters have in building a survivor-counselor relationship. These times have given new energy to our commitment and mission. It's my hope that our efforts complement the resilience of survivors in their healing journey."

- Marsha Placide, Bilingual Crisis Counselor & Volunteer Coordinator at The Rowan Center



The Rowan Center, at our virtual staff meeting, dressed in teal to celebrate Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April 2020



COUNSELING & ADVOCACY

At The Rowan Center, crisis counseling and advocacy for victims and their families is always free and confidential, and for 40 years, it has been face-to-face. This year COVID-19 forced us to change our traditional counseling model and respond to client needs in new and creative ways. We began offering video counseling services to both returning and new clients in early March, and expanded to include online support groups and trauma-informed yoga classes once individuals felt safe and comfortable meeting virtually. Our online services provided needed flexibility for clients with childcare and work challenges, and enabled students who were home from college, as well as high school students who typically meet with their Rowan Center counselor at school, to continue their healing and their schooling without interruption.

We have increased our outreach to make sure that people can get help, wherever they are. Early this year we reached facility sharing agreements that will enable The Rowan Center to offer satellite offices in 5 of the 8 towns we serve. This will make our counseling services more accessible and convenient for clients comfortable meeting in person. Until then, the data shows that most victims of sexual assault and abuse know and are even related to their perpetrator, and that times of crisis generally escalate violence. Perhaps you heard our ads running on the radio, letting survivors know that even if they were fearful of Emergency Rooms due to COVID, our services are still available? We are grateful for the Emergency COVID Response Grant that we received from Fairfield County's Community Foundation to help fund our outreach, to ensure that victims confined to unsafe homes are aware that our hotline is live and waiting for their call.

As we slowly and carefully reopen our office and return to hospitals, we are grateful to be back, without a disruption of care, and thankful to now have new ways to meet survivors where they are and help them get where they need to be.

Luke Robbins, LCSW
Director of Counseling

CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE
TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE 
Support. Advocate. Prevent.

PREVENTION EDUCATION

We dedicate ourselves to sexual violence prevention education, because it is the only proven way to end sexual violence. When our in-school programs came to an abrupt halt in early March, we immediately shifted gears to solve the new challenge facing us: how do we continue sharing our lessons on empathy, respect, and boundaries to youth scattered across the eight towns we serve? We adapted our curriculum so that it could be delivered as effectively as possible online without face-to-face interaction with students and teachers. We “guest-starred” in Zoom classes, created Google Docs for middle and high school students, and initiated virtual storytimes for our elementary-aged audiences. This was quite the spring semester!

"I just want to say thank you to you and your organization! I really liked the new presentation on Consent, as well as the Harassment presentation and activity. Both educators were wonderful- a nice combination of professionalism and student-friendliness. They delivered the presentations clearly and masterfully!" - A Middle School Teacher, Greenwich, CT

We continued in high gear this summer, crafting and refining all of the available options we identified with schools and teachers for this academic year: in-person, online, live and recorded presentations. We also expanded our relationship with LiveGirl, a New Canaan-based nonprofit building girls into leaders, launching our [Peer to Peer Leadership Program](#) virtually this summer. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response, we will continue to offer this program indefinitely. Our educators embraced sexual violence prevention in innovative ways this summer, including creating Instagram TV videos that highlight different aspects of the work we do—offering tips, advice, and guidance. We created a 4-part webinar series with each session focusing on a different component of [healthy relationships](#). For our younger audience, we started a virtual story time collaboration with the Norwalk Public Library, featuring local community members reading picture books that promote body autonomy, consent, and respect for the physical boundaries of others. These initiatives allowed us to blanket the region with information for people outside of school-based programming, and moved us closer to the cultural changes we aim to create for the next generation.

Thank you for joining our efforts, for supporting our work, for liking our posts, and for spreading the word about The Rowan Center. Together we can empower survivors, educate our community, and eliminate sexual violence.

Jessica Feighan

Director of Education, Outreach, & Operations



Our staff in orange to support Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month



"The #MeToo workshop gave our teens the space to discuss their feelings around the #MeToo movement and where they fit within that movement, and the Sexual Harassment in the Workplace training was offered to the girls in our SHE WORKS internship program. This is vital information and training for girls who are newly entering the workforce."

- Sheri West, Founder & CEO, LiveGirl

Danielle Walker, Community Educator, recording audio for an educational video, with COVID precautions demonstrated by Jessica Feighan, Director of Education.



MEDIA MATTERS

Are you one of the 2,000 individuals who follow us on INSTAGRAM or Facebook? This year, The Rowan Center has prioritized social media outreach as a way to advance our mission. As we build new audiences and enlist new supporters, we hope to reach more survivors, prevent abuse and assault, and help change the culture. Nearly 40% of our counseling clients are between the ages 13-24; 20% are in high school, so it isn't all about the likes! We want to be sure young victims and their friends and confidants find The Rowan Center when they look for help online. In our posts each week you can find tips on self-care and mental health practices, as well as prevention education program highlights. We encourage the teens we meet in schools to follow us on social media platforms, so they can share our information with their peer groups. Our staff film short videos on a variety of topics for RowanTalk, a weekly IGTV series. With over 50,000 individuals reached over the past year, and our IGTV and Youtube videos viewed more than 7,500 times, social media has proven to be an effective medium for sharing our message with new communities and individuals.

It's not just for the young, so please join us! Follow us! Click to Subscribe!



Sample of Rowan Center Instagram posts-original content



@therowancenter

VOLUNTEER POWER

The Rowan Center asks a lot of our remarkable volunteer victim advocates- taking a lengthy state-certified training program, covering 3-4 shifts a month, and sometimes, leaving their warm bed in the middle of the night to sit by the side of a **victim in the Emergency Room**. Armed with information, a bag of clean, comfortable clothes, and empathy to spare, our advocates support victims as they navigate medical evidence collection and police investigations. Sometimes it's **just a phone call** to answer, but for the person on the other end, that too is a critical lifeline, whether it's a teen reaching out for the first time, or an adult reminded of something painful long buried. Regardless, our **advocates answer the call**. Even at the height of the pandemic, The Rowan Center's amazing volunteers continued to staff 70% of hotline shifts! That's admirable dedication. Their combined contribution of time- over 5,500 volunteer hours- saved us as much as \$95,000 in staffing costs. But to us, they are a priceless asset whose personal sacrifices in service to others can never be fully measured!

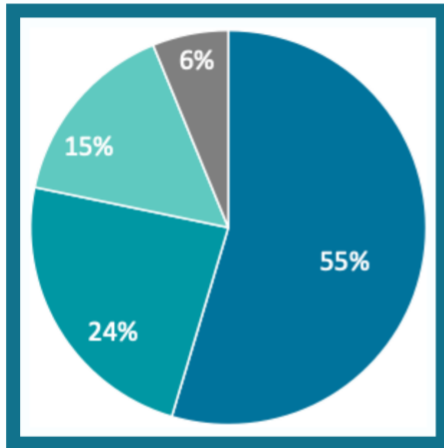
"I was surprised by the impact of the advocate role, how important the work is...I love knowing that I am helping people in their time of need. I find myself thinking about those I've spoken to on the hotline or at the hospital and wondering how they are doing."

- Alison Waller, Volunteer Advocate



VOLUNTEER VICTIM ADVOCATES

Grecia Arteaga	Dominique Grant	Hillary Miller	Zoe Smith
Jasmine Bailey	Ruth Hannover	Evelyn Morales	Judith Sosis
Giovanna Caccialanza	Nida Ikram	Leighann Muldoon	Robin Spillane
Wendy David	Tunisia John	Jami Nicholson	Lexy Stauffer
Sara S. Desai	Jacquen Jordan-Byron	Brittany Ortiz	Kelly Trep
Natalie Dionisio	Elizabeth Kirshner	Heidi Pineda	Hannah Vogel
Lizzy Epps	Carolin Kuhmann	Johany Quiroz	Stacey Walker
Rachel Goldblum	Grace Leone	Celeste Ragin	Sharon Walker Epps
Lauren Goodman	Raquel Lopez	Maria Rauth	Alison Waller
Krystal Gourgue	Jeanine Maldonado	Daira Rivera	Kinsey Watson
Pam Graber	Kerry Malone	Jasmin Rodriguez	Nicole Weiss
Sheri Graham	Kelly Meany	Luz Sanabria	Emely Yanes



OPERATING REVENUE

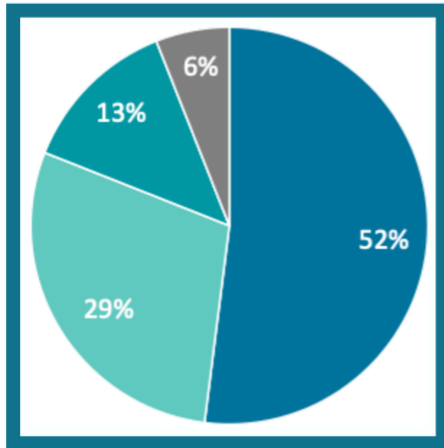
The CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence (55%)
\$483,949

Grants (24%)
\$209,622

Special Events (15%)
\$137,471

Other Contributions (6%)
\$55,000

TOTAL REVENUE: \$886,052



OPERATING EXPENSES

Counseling and Advocacy Services (52%)
\$424,618

Prevention Education and Outreach (29%)
\$236,806

Management and General (13%)
\$106,155

Development (6%)
\$48,994

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$712,403

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Secretary | Sarah Gleason | Gene Schreiner |
| | Pam Graber | Jayne Stevenson |
| | Grace Leone | Monica Tai |

THE ROWAN CENTER STAFF

- | | |
|--|--|
| Mary Forman Flynn
Executive Director | Kelly Idarraga
Case Manager & Bilingual Educator |
| Jessica Feighan
Director of Education,
Outreach, & Operations | Liat Kimmel
Finance & Donor Management
Administrator |
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Bilingual Community Educator |
| Melissa Gallaher-Smith
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| Marie Corriveau
Marketing Coordinator | Nora Reyes
Bilingual Crisis Counselor |
| Claudia Hason
Crisis Counselor | Danielle Walker
Community Educator |

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- | | |
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Centro Bienestar |
| Dudley Williams
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Human Resources,
Arch Capital Group |

\$20,000+

The City of Norwalk
Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence
Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Fund for Women & Girls
Fairfield County's Community Foundation
Greenwich United Way
The Pelletier Fund

\$10,000-19,999

Community Fund of Darien
Odyssey Group Foundation
The Pinkerton Foundation
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Kate Vivanco
Gayle & Seth Weinstein
Western Connecticut Health Network
Westport Young Woman's League
Alicia & Robert Wyckoff

\$500-999

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Michelle Ransom
Michele & Kevin Segalla
Erica Scioscia
Elizabeth Smith
United Way of Greater Portland

Westport Library Association
Whole Foods Market
Terrie Wood
Ivonne Zucco & Anthony Simari

Up to \$499

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Regan Allan
Louise Altum
Amazon Smile
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Jamie Antonopoulos
Gayle Appleby
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Dorian Feckl
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Michael Feighan
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Sarah Gleason
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Veronica & Robert Green
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Linda Handshy
Elaine Harris
Ana & Peter Hatzis
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Erin Heide
Lee Ann & Bruce Heller
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Liat Kimmel
Susan Kirschenbaum
Trevor Kliene
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CONTACT US

1111 Summer Street, Suite 202
Stamford, CT 06905
(203) 348-9346

24-Hour Crisis Hotlines:

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Spanish: (888) 568-8332
Toll-Free: (888) 999-5545

www.therowancenter.org



@therowancenter



NEAR & FAR AID
TARGETING POVERTY, CHANGING LIVES

