



# Women's Advocates

## Breaking the cycle of domestic violence

### At the Shelter: Building Community Through Support Groups

When residents arrive at Women's Advocates, they often have been isolated by their abuser. They also find themselves living in a new environment at our shelter, living with total strangers. Morning support groups are hosted at Women's Advocates on weekdays, and they're a great way for residents and staff to build community together.

Support groups are opportunities for shelter residents to share with one another, learn together, and gain affirmation about their efforts to find stability and safety for themselves and their children.

- The Mindfulness Group is led by Women's Advocates' Mental Health Therapist.
- The Housing Group is co-led by Women's Advocates' Housing and Aftercare Advocate and our partner, the Community Stabilization Project, a tenants' rights organization based in the Rondo community.
- The Chemical Health Group is led by a licensed alcohol and drug counselor from Continuum Care Center.
- The Circle of Togetherness is the resident-led council, where residents drive the focus of the group, topics of conversation, and discuss issues that arise in a shared living environment.

### Partner Highlight: Dr. Sheila Sweeney, Peaces 'N Puzsouls

Since the Spring of 2019, we have been working with Dr. Sheila Sweeney, PHD, LICSW, a community-based therapist with deep experience working with young Black mothers. Dr. Sweeney leads reflective consultation twice a month at our advocate check-in meetings, as well as confidential, individual reflective consultation sessions for all staff.

Women's Advocates' Executive Director and Director of Programs and Services meet monthly with Dr. Sweeney to check in about the progress of the work and any observations or recommendations she has for leadership as a result of her interactions with advocates and other staff. Dr. Sweeney's presence has been helpful for our advocates and for our organization as a whole, in terms of building trust, improving communication, and addressing the impacts on staff of vicarious trauma.

Learn more about Peaces 'N Puzsouls [here](#).

Learn more about Community Stabilization Project [here](#) and about Continuum Care Center [here](#).



## History of our Movement: Defining Domestic Abuse

*Women's Advocates and Twin Cities PBS have co-produced a series of documentary short videos chronicling Women's Advocates' history and legacy and implications for the future. The following is excerpted from a blog post written by Women's Advocates Executive Director Estelle Brouwer and featured on Twin Cities PBS Originals [website](#).*

When Women's Advocates first opened its doors, a term for domestic violence didn't yet exist. Spousal abuse was generally thought to be a private concern, one not meant for public attention or response – and even the victims didn't have a frame of reference for their suffering. For Eileen Hudon, an early resident at the Women's Advocates shelter and now a domestic violence advocate and community leader, a chaplain helped her understand that, "There's a place for women like you." She remembers responding with a question: "What are women like me?" In that exchange, Eileen heard the term "battered woman" for the first time.

Of all the myths, prejudices and misconceptions surrounding domestic violence, the most pervasive and insidious is that it must be the victim's fault. "She must have asked for it" and "Why doesn't she just leave?" are two variations on this theme, still heard far too often today.

## Bringing Safety Resources to the Community

In January, Women's Advocates' small but mighty outreach team reached 300 individuals with the message of addressing violence where we live, learn, work, and gather. Our team has recently developed a brand new youth/young adult-specific resource to have available in schools and at other dating violence specific education events.

For those advocating or navigating safety resources, we are continuing to build our online resource hub, available [here](#). You can always connect with Women's Advocates and keep up to date on recent news stories, updates on our programs and services, and upcoming community-based events on Women's Advocates social media pages (@wadvocates on [Facebook](#), @womensadvocates on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)).

*The full post, which includes the videos mentioned above, can be found at [this link](#).*



## You're Invited: Community Events

Our community supporting Women's Advocates

### March 6: "Pour It Back" - Inbound BrewCo supporting Women's Advocates

You're invited to help us celebrate International Women's Day (IWD) a little early! The Inbound BrewCo. team has worked with other industry women brewers to brew a NEW Chipotle Sour Gose beer in honor of International Women's Day (March 8) and they're releasing the beer a few days early to benefit women and their children in the community.

On Friday, March 6, Inbound BrewCo. (701 N. 5th Street in Minneapolis) will donate \$1 from every pint sold all day (Noon-Midnight) to Women's Advocates.



RSVP to the Facebook event [here](#).

-Brenisen, Women's Advocates' Education and Outreach coordinator at a recent University of St. Thomas volunteer fair

## Did You Know?

February is Black History Month. Read this powerful and important post written by former Education and Outreach Coordinator, Meggie Royer. Click [here](#) to read.

"We cannot continue to deny or minimize the harm that racism adds to the harm already caused by domestic violence. And we cannot continue to argue that recognizing the double-edged sword of racism and domestic violence is somehow equivalent to denying or minimizing the harm that white women also experience due to domestic violence."

Honoring  
Black History  
Month

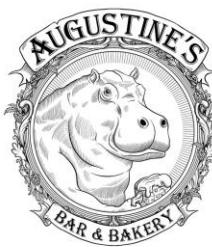
"Racism Compounds Domestic Violence Against Black Women. Acknowledging This Is Not the Same As Denying Violence Against White Women"

-Meggie Royer

Women's Advocates

## **March 30: "Dine for a Cause" - Augustine's benefiting Women's Advocates**

On Monday, March 30th, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm, 20% of all food sales at Augustine's Bar & Bakery (1668 Selby Ave. in St. Paul) will benefit Women's Advocates. We hope to see you there.



**DINE FOR A CAUSE:**  
20% of all food sales will benefit  
**Women's Advocates** in St. Paul, the first  
domestic violence shelter in the nation.

 Women's Advocates  
Breaking the cycle of domestic violence

Monday, March 30 • 5pm-8pm | 1668 Selby Ave, St. Paul

RSVP to the Facebook event [here](#).

*Full details for these and more upcoming events can be found on our [events page](#).*

### **How to Help Year-Round**

We seek community support to fulfill shelter and resident needs, including:

**Community Events:** Support from local business and groups in the form of fundraisers or donation drives is essential to Women's Advocates' shelter and services. If you'd like to host an event benefitting Women's Advocates, contact our Development team at [development@wadvocates.org](mailto:development@wadvocates.org).

**Facebook Fundraiser:** You can easily raise awareness and encourage your network to support our cause with just a few clicks. No fees are deducted for donations made on Facebook. Start at [our page here](#) and click "Create Fundraiser." Supporters also often use [GiveMN](#) to create their own fundraising page to support Women's Advocates.

**Gift Cards:** Gift cards to Target, Walmart, Cub Foods, and local gas stations are useful to help Women's Advocates fill immediate needs for

### **Donation Needs**

In-Kind Needs: Our current in-kind donation needs include:

- New full-size hygiene products
- New natural/multicultural shampoos, conditioners, hair oils, etc.
- New or gently used twin XL size blankets, comforters, bed sheet sets
- New hair barrettes, clips, hair ties, etc.

Clothing Needs: Currently, Women's Advocates has need for the following clothing items:

- New or lightly used seasonal clothing for all genders, sizes 2T-7
- New or lightly used women's sweats and leggings, sizes S-3XL
- Gloves for all ages, sizes
- New or lightly used women's sweatshirts in all sizes
- New sports bras and women's underwear in all sizes
- Hair scarves

If you are able to donate from the list above or have questions, please reach out to [donations@wadvocates.org](mailto:donations@wadvocates.org).

**AmazonSmile:** If you'd like to help fulfill our needs via Amazon, your shopping can create REAL impact for Women's Advocates. All you have to do is start your online shopping [HERE](#), designate Women's Advocates as your charity of choice, and the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to us. Please bookmark the link in your browser.

our residents and aftercare participants year-round.

**Volunteering:** Head [here](#) to view individual and group volunteering options at Women's Advocates. Please read through the requirements and eligibility information before submitting a volunteer application. Note: volunteer options may be seasonal and on-site positions are typically limited to weekdays during business hours.

*Any questions about volunteering, fundraising, or donating gift cards can be sent to [development@wadvocates.org](mailto:development@wadvocates.org).*

## Quick Links

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[Our Website](#)

[Donate Now](#)

[Volunteer](#)

[Wish List](#)

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

Crisis Line: [651-227-8284](#)