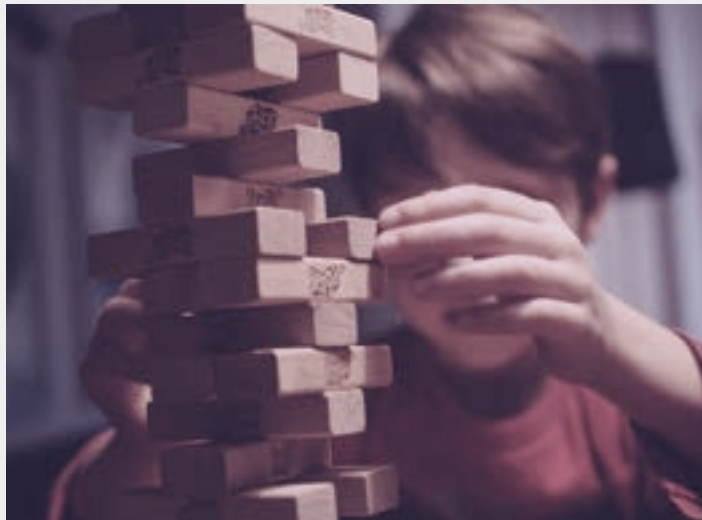




DEFINING MOMENT  
*Lasting Impact*



HARBOR  
HOUSE



## WHAT WE DO

We offer a full range of comprehensive services to support survivors of domestic violence at every stage of their journey. This includes 24-hour access to our hotline and chatline, trauma-informed individual, family, and group counseling, case management, support with the court system, emergency shelter, professional training, and community education.



## DEFINING MOMENT, LASTING IMPACT

### THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE.

This campaign, *Defining Moment, Lasting Impact*, represents a bold step forward in our mission to provide safety, support, and hope for survivors of domestic violence. We are at a pivotal point in our journey. The need for healing spaces, trauma-informed care, and accessible support services continues to grow, and we must grow with it.

The *Defining Moment* speaks to the decisions survivors make when they call Harbor House in crisis, connect for counseling, and make the bold decision to move from victim to survivor.



*we're here for you*

## OUR MISSION

Harbor House exists to empower individuals, families, and communities through domestic violence programs, advocacy, and prevention.



The *Defining Moment* represents the response from our community. This campaign is the community's decision to take a firm stance against domestic violence, demonstrating powerful support for Harbor House and survivors.

Thus, this is more than a building project. It is a promise to the individuals and families who walk through our doors, to the communities we serve, and to future generations. Within these pages, you'll learn how we are creating a new, intentionally-designed facility that not only offers more space for counseling, legal advocacy, case management, education, and healing, but also expands our emergency shelter capacity.



We also operate the **HARBOR HOUSE RESALE SHOPPE**, which serves as a vital source of support and community connection.

This is your opportunity to create a *Lasting Impact* — one that echoes through the lives of survivors reclaiming their futures with courage and dignity. **Together, we can build more than walls, we can build the foundation for hope.**





# A PIVOTAL MOMENT

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

*As the Executive Director and CEO of Harbor House, it is both a privilege and a deeply personal calling to lead this work alongside so many compassionate, courageous individuals who have made this mission possible.*

We stand in awe of the survivors who allow us to walk alongside them. Their courage inspires us. Their stories push us to do better, to reach further, and to make sure no one has to face their journey alone.

Our organization would also not be possible without the vision and dedication of the advocates who came before us. This campaign stands on the shoulders of those who laid the foundation for progress through their courage, compassion, and unwavering commitment. They laid the groundwork for progress with little recognition and few resources. We honor their legacy every time we move this mission forward.



Throughout the history of Harbor House, we have had many pivotal moments that have transformed lives. This journey to construct a new program facility is our next pivotal moment. Our campaign, *Defining Moment, Lasting Impact*, represents a chapter in our history where we must rise to the challenge and stand with survivors to create a future where safety and healing are not luxuries, but possibilities.

As you read more about this project, I encourage you to think about your own defining moments. This is your chance to help build something **enduring**. Something that brings light to those who need it most.

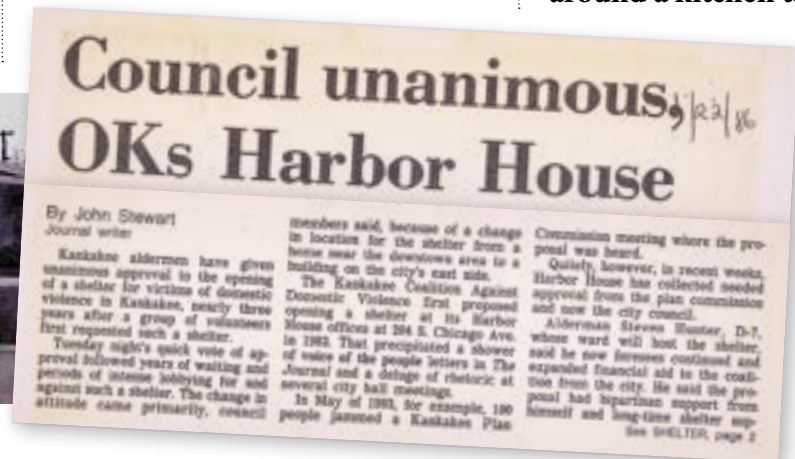
With deep appreciation,  
**Jenny Schoenwetter**  
*Executive Director and CEO, Harbor House*

## OUR STORY

**Harbor House began in the 1970s**, born from a small group of committed individuals gathered around a kitchen table in Kankakee, united by one purpose: to create a safe place for survivors of domestic violence. **What started as a grassroots network of volunteer safe homes quickly grew into something more.** When a local church stepped in to lease the group a house, the momentum was building — but the path forward was not easy.



**Despite early setbacks** — including a rejected city ordinance and resistance to opening a shelter in a residential neighborhood — these early advocates refused to give up. After nearly three years of political pushback and tireless determination, **Harbor House opened its first emergency shelter on the outskirts of Kankakee in 1986.** A second location in



Watseka followed shortly after, though it would later close due to lack of funding. Still, the mission endured.

**Today, Harbor House continues** that legacy of resilience and care. We provide 24-hour shelter and hotline support, counseling, support with the court system, and community education and training. **What began as a conversation around a kitchen table has become**

**a lifeline for hundreds** — proof of what is possible when a community chooses hope over silence.



## KIRA'S STORY

**Kira's life began in violence. Her mother went into early labor after being physically assaulted by her father. By 18 months old, Kira's mother had remarried, but the abuse continued. For over a decade, Kira endured physical and emotional abuse at home before finally running away.**

At 14, homeless and ill, she met Joseph. "I thought I'd finally found safety," she said. But the relationship quickly turned controlling. Kira had no access to money, no bills in her name, leaving her with no independence. When Joseph stopped paying utilities, she was left with four children in a home with no heat, water, or food. "I didn't know how to take care of myself. I didn't exist in the grown-up world."



When she began to push back, after more than 20 years together, Joseph left, saying that he did not care what happened to her, and took the children. Kira was left with nothing. She had no job experience, no credit, and no support system. She spent the next three years homeless.

Then she met Ethan, who continued the cycle of abuse. "I was pregnant, and he threw me into a nightstand. I thought, 'The baby's not going to be okay. I can't do this.'"

That moment was a turning point. Kira's teenage son connected her to his friend's mom, who gave her the number for Harbor House.



"From the very first phone call, Harbor House made me feel like it was going to be okay." Kira entered the shelter and began her healing journey. "I came to them as broken as a person could be, and they just met me where I was." Through counseling, support groups, and case management, Kira opened a bank account, earned her GED, and found a job working with children.

Today, she's using her story to empower others. "My home is a sanctuary — peaceful and safe. That started with Harbor House. They helped me break the cycle."

Reflecting on her journey, Kira observed, "Harbor House is where you go when life throws you away, and they show you that you are not garbage."



## OUR SERVICES



### 24-Hour Hotline

Our 24-hour hotline is the first point of contact for many survivors, offering immediate, confidential support, safety planning, and connection to services, anytime, day or night.



### 24-Hour Chatline

For those who may not feel safe or ready to call, our online chat line offers a secure, discreet way for survivors to connect with an advocate and access help in real time.



### Counseling

We provide trauma-informed counseling for adults, youth, families, and groups to support emotional healing, build resilience, and help survivors process their experiences in a safe, supportive environment.



### Legal Advocacy

Our legal advocates guide survivors through the often overwhelming civil and criminal justice systems, helping with everything from filing Orders of Protection to navigating court appearances.



### Emergency Shelter

Our emergency shelters provide short-term, fully supportive housing for individuals and families in crisis, meeting their basic needs while they begin to rebuild their lives.



### Case Management

Advocates help survivors create individualized plans and connect with essential resources, both within our agency and the broader community, ensuring they are supported in every step of their journey.



### Domestic Violence Prevention and Education

We work to stop violence before it starts through youth prevention programs, system-level advocacy with institutions like hospitals and law enforcement, and broad community education and training initiatives. Our partners and the community at-large ensure we are never alone in this work.



### Resale Shoppe

Our Resale Shoppe is both a vital source of unrestricted funding and one of our strongest community outreach tools in Iroquois County, offering affordable goods while supporting our mission. Often, survivors arrive with nothing as they flee dangerous



situations. In these moments, our advocates can request essential items directly from the Resale Shoppe to help survivors and their families begin rebuilding their lives with dignity and care.

**IN THEIR WORDS:** *Survivors*



Harbor House was an anchor to me as my world was spinning out of control. They directed me to the resources I needed to take my life back. From counseling services to help me and my children process our feelings to legal services that helped me to officially claim my freedom.



I was so distraught when filling out an Order of Protection. [I] didn't know who I was calling when I reached out to Harbor House, but they were a godsend and walked me through everything. They offered so much support, and I leaned on them.



Harbor House helped me navigate unfathomable situations that I could have never imagined I'd be in. They helped me recognize abuse, particularly when it was subtle and ingrained and a generational pattern.



The staff was warm and loving. [They] understood my situation, went above and beyond to help with the necessities, and made me feel welcomed. They were more than a shelter, they felt like a family.



**IN THEIR WORDS:** *Community*

“Harbor House is essential to the quality of life in Kankakee County. As law enforcement leaders, we see firsthand how critical Harbor House is in giving victims of domestic violence a safe place to turn. They represent hope, healing, and a lifeline for families in our community when it’s needed most.” — ALAN SWINFORD, *Chief of Police, Manteno Police Department*

“Harbor House gives HOPE to domestic violence victims and their families in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. The incredible Harbor House staff provides all inclusive supports and sends them the message: ‘YOU ARE NOT ALONE, in this difficult journey.’” — SISSY O’CONNOR, *Community Leader and Educator*

“Harbor House plays a critical role in strengthening the business community by fostering stability and safety for individuals and families. A community where survivors are supported is one where businesses can attract talent, retain employees, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.” — JEFF BENNETT, *Managing Broker, McColly Bennett Commercial*

“Harbor House strengthens the very fabric of our community as a critical resource for those impacted by domestic violence. When survivors are given the opportunity to heal and rebuild, our neighborhoods become safer, our families stronger, and our community as a whole more vibrant.” — BARBI BREWER-WATSON, *Executive Director, City of Kankakee Economic and Community Development Agency*

## HARBOR HOUSE RESPONDS TO A COMMUNITY CRISIS

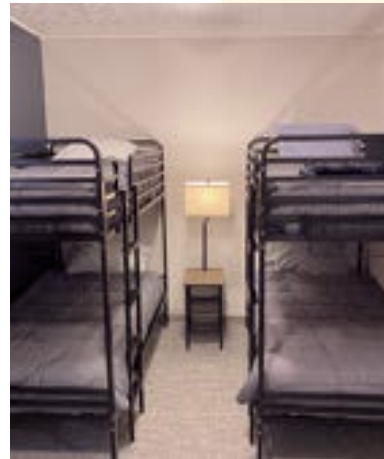
Domestic violence continues to be a pervasive, lethal community epidemic and public safety crisis — more than 10 million adults<sup>1</sup> and 15 million children<sup>2</sup> experience domestic violence each year. Furthermore, more than two-thirds (68.2%) of mass shootings have a domestic violence connection<sup>3</sup>, confirming that domestic violence is not a private, family problem, but a community problem.

In response to this crisis, Harbor House annually serves about 600 adult and youth survivors, answers more than 3,500 hotline calls for help, and provides about 10,500 nights of safety between both shelters to families fleeing violence.

However, in fiscal year 2025, our emergency shelter was unable to provide refuge to 730 requests for shelter from adults and youth due to a lack of space.

Furthermore, our need to support residential and non-residential survivors has been crippled by our lack of a confidential, trauma-informed space for our professionals to assist survivors.

Advocates answer hotline calls just feet from one another, without the privacy survivors deserve. We lack appropriate space for group activities, and our small living room must serve as a dining room, case management office, craft area, playroom, and support group setting all in one.



### A LOOK INSIDE THE NEW FACILITY

To respond to these statistics and the ever-growing need for additional and larger support services and emergency shelter spaces, we are building a new, survivor-centered 12,000-square-foot program facility. This new facility will contain larger, more functional offices and program collaboration spaces, six individual units, four small family units, and two large family units.



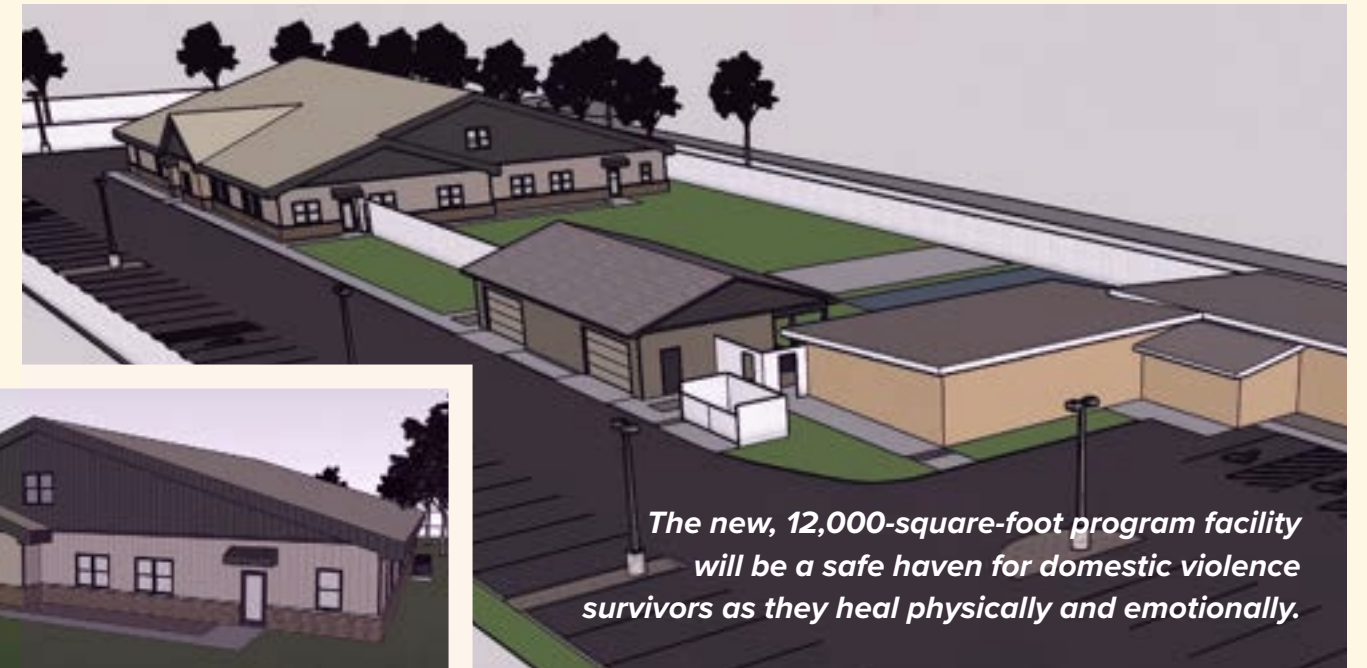
*While we do everything possible to connect survivors with care, it's clear we need more room to offer the safety, dignity, and healing environment every survivor should have.*

This facility will create a *true place of healing*: where survivors will find not only safety, but also the space and support to breathe, grow, and begin again.

The new building will offer supportive, trauma-informed spaces beyond basic housing needs.

Survivors and their families will have access to recreational and restorative areas such as a dedicated children's playroom, a workout room to support physical well-being, and other thoughtfully designed environments to promote holistic healing and empowerment.

References: <sup>1</sup>National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2011 <sup>2</sup>Journal of Family Psychology, 2006 <sup>3</sup>Injury Epidemiology Journal, 2021



The new, 12,000-square-foot program facility will be a safe haven for domestic violence survivors as they heal physically and emotionally.

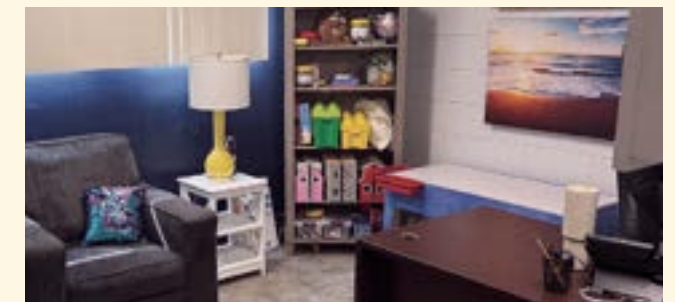
**FOUR  
KEY  
SERVICES  
AREAS**

**1 Professional, Confidential Programs Area:** Behind these doors, survivors find support. For the first time for many, they are not told what to do, but asked what they need. This area includes, but not limited to, offices for counseling, legal advocacy, case management, client advocacy, and more.

**2 Group Healing Area:** A space where everyone is welcome and no one has to feel alone. They can connect, heal, and grow side-by-side with fellow survivors. Spaces included here are the children's playroom, living room, recreation room, kitchen, and more.

**3 Family Shelter Area:** The large and small family units are where children play during the day and dream at night. Families can gather in apartments filled with gentle routines, warm meals, and the quiet comfort of safety.

**4 Individual Shelter Area:** Within these walls, silence is peaceful, not punishing. Survivors are able to have their own room to rest, reflect, and rise again.



## CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP



“Domestic violence is the number one violent crime in Kankakee County. More than shootings, more than robberies, more than any other violent act. It is a daily epidemic and it is happening right now. This is not a Harbor House crisis. This is a community crisis.”

— JIM ROWE, *Kankakee County State’s Attorney and Chair of Harbor House’s Capital Campaign*



“Everyone deserves to live a life free of violence. However, not everyone has the opportunity to do so. Domestic violence is an intergenerational problem. Some who have experienced abuse as a child may continue the cycle of violence. It is often ignored, causing more harm to communities and families. Harbor House shines a light on this issue.”

— PATRICIA SANDER, *Harbor House Founder, Honorary Chair of Harbor House’s Capital Campaign*

“Harbor House is the only safe haven and sign of hope for survivors and those fearful for themselves and their families. It’s a light at the end of the tunnel, so it’s imperative that we continue on the path we chose over 45 years ago. We’ve made great strides, and we still have a long way to go.”

— BEVERLY SEATON-JOHNSON, *Harbor House Founder, Honorary Chair of Harbor House’s Capital Campaign*



Yvonne Chalfant, a longtime community leader and fundraiser, is sharing her years of experience with us as Campaign Consultant.

## HARBOR HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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“This campaign is about standing with every survivor as they take their first steps toward healing. I am deeply committed to giving children a secure and nurturing place where they can dream without fear. This is our moment to create a space that will protect and inspire them for generations.”

— JOHN FITTS, *Board President, Harbor House*



**“Harbor House is where you go when life throws you away, and they show you that you are not garbage.”**

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 1824  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
Phone: 815-932-5814

Resale Shoppe

100 E. Walnut Street  
Watseka, IL 60970  
Phone: 815-432-3525



HarborHouseDV.org

