

Security Health Plan: Invests in Orenda Center to increase security and confidentiality

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MARSHFIELD – “According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, safety – protection and security – is the second tier of needs before someone can feel love, belonging, esteem and self-actualization,” Security Health Plan solutions analyst Lana Marsh said. “If someone doesn’t feel safe in their current environment, it puts them in constant survival mode as their basic needs of survival and safety need to be constantly maintained.”

Marsh said that is why she sought help from Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Inc., for financial assistance to replace an exterior gate on the Personal Development Center’s (PDC) Orenda Center property in Marshfield. The Orenda Center is the PDC’s shelter where individuals and families can seek a safe place when facing domestic abuse and assault.

Security Health Plan invests \$1,000 each month in a different charity or organization nominated by Marshfield Clinic Health System employees as part of the grant program. Health System employees are encouraged to nominate organizations making a positive difference in the community.

“The gate at our Marshfield shelter provides safety and confidentiality to the current residents. This gate no longer functions and causes safety concerns not only for the residents seeking shelter but also to our employees,” Marsh said. “Replacing that gate is essential but is very costly.”

With the help of the \$1,000 gift from Security Health Plan, PDC Executive Director Renee Schulz says the organization is now on track to get the gate replaced.

“We are so grateful to Security Health Plan for the donation,” Schulz said. “We are always trying to juggle how we can meet the needs of those we serve with the funding resources we have available. Unfortunately the cost to replace the gate is not an allowable expense for many of our funding sources, so meeting this need has been challenging and we are just very appreciative for the grant.”

Schulz said the PDC serves about 750 individuals each year, while the shelter is consistently at capacity. She said their maximum shelter capacity is 36 individuals, but that can fluctuate depending on the needs of those they’re currently serving.

“The gate is the first line of security for anyone coming in to shelter,” Schulz said. “When we have individuals affected by domestic abuse or assault the individual trying to cause harm is trying to find them. The level of risk can really elevate once they leave that unsafe environment. This gate is our checkpoint, we can’t have anyone getting access to our building prior to checking in. It also provides that barrier for increased confidentiality. It is a vital piece of our security for the safety of those we help to have that confidentiality. We’re feeling more exposed without that gate there.”

Marsh, who has been involved with PDC for nearly two decades, said the organization is a private, non-profit victim services agency that provides case management advocacy and prevention education to individuals and families in Wood and Clark counties. She said PDC has served the community since 1977 and has a history of identifying and addressing needs within an atmosphere of confidentiality and concern.

“They give hope to those who find themselves in a hopeless situation and can provide assistance that can actually have life or death consequences,” Marsh said. “The Mission of PDC aligns with Marshfield Clinic Health System in helping those in need of guidance and support. Whether the victims are suffering from elder abuse, sexual assault or domestic violence, PDC advocates and provides the needed assistance to help them.”

Schulz, who has been with the organization for 18 years, said that assistance can vary with each individual but includes guidance through all the systems: legal, law enforcement, housing, employment and childcare. But most notably, she said, it provides them with hope.

“I’m kind of in the background and don’t interact much with individuals when they

come in, but I see them,” Schulz said. “I can see the change in their facial expressions and body language – you can see them reach out for help and you can see the weight of the world is on their shoulders. You can see in that short amount of time when residents meet with advocates and are able to identify the situation and get clarity about their options. They are able to see there is hope in their situation and things can be better. When I watch them leave the office there is such a difference in how they carry themselves. It is absolutely remarkable to see them get that glimmer of hope. That reassurance can move mountains and it is pretty incredible to see.”

PDC’s primary funding sources are various grants but donations and contributions are always welcome and appreciated. The organization will always welcome monetary gifts, frozen meat and fresh produce, dairy products and juice, hand towels, wash cloths, paper products and bedding. To see a complete list of needs, or to learn how to make a contribution to the PDC Orenda Center go to www.pdcmarshfield.org and click on “donate.”