Mission and Vision Statement

Our Mission:
Mercy Center for Women is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and is committed to enhancing the dignity of each person it serves through the healing of body, mind and spirit.

Mercy Center for Women provides:

❤ Safe and supportive transitional housing, education and counseling for homeless women with or without children.

❤ Connection with social service agencies and volunteers to form a network of ongoing support, mentoring and education to our residents and women in the community.

❤ An environment based on spirituality and ethical values.

Vision Statement:
Women to restore hope, wholeness and stability for self and children.
Welcome to the Mercy Center for Women 2017-2018 Annual Review. We take the opportunity each year to recognize our family, friends and generous supporters of our Mercy Mission. You make it possible each year for our dedicated staff to continue their passion in providing only the best to the women and children. We serve women and children 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Your generosity makes it possible to believe our work is cherished and essential within the community.

The Mercy Center for Women will celebrate “25 years” in 2019. We are beginning to plan the festivities and recognize the time, talents and treasures of the Sisters of Mercy, current and former staff, present and program graduates, family, friends and community. To our donors who have generously given to the Mercy Center from inception, 25 years is attributed to your belief in the mission served.

The front cover of the magazine tells a story, I believe every well-written story involves a picture. The old saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” holds true for the women and children featured on the cover. Each of these women came together as family. The smiles of the two girls are genuine and uplifting. This atmosphere is infectious and enriches lives. Does the Mercy Center mission change lives? Absolutely, but the women and children embrace each other to move forward and not look back. Their strength comes from within and as a family. In return the staff embraces their story and makes it a part of our daily blessings.

As you read the stories in the Annual Review, take a moment to reflect on how powerful the gift you shared has made a difference. Please know you made the best decision to invest resources into the lives of others. We all deserve a second chance in life. You have provided the opportunity over the past year to hundreds of women and children. Each is a story of different fabric woven together as one. We are the Mercy Center for Women about to embark upon our 25th anniversary.

Your commitment absorbed the loss of HUD funding on 2017-2018. We invite you to keep the momentum moving onward for the 2018-2019 Annual Fund. It only takes one person to motivate others to be the change in the lives of those we guide.

May your Season of Thankfulness and Giving include the Mercy Center for Women.

Blessings,

Jennie
Jennie Hagerty
Executive Director

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough; and more. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.
Melody Beattie
Kniok Knight

Kniok Knight, better known as Nikki to those of us at Mercy Center for Women, is a unique woman. She was born to a single mother in Joliet, Illinois, moved to Mississippi, then went back to the Chicago area during her childhood. She had an older brother, an older sister and a younger brother. She was in poor health for much of her childhood, confined to a wheelchair for nearly ten years. She endured many hospitalizations and was mostly homeschooled. Because of this, she spent most of her time around adults. She was always the new kid wherever she went and finds it easy to adapt to new situations.

After a short time in San Diego, she again returned to Mississippi. Upon turning 18, she wanted to be independent and started working. Her sister died, leaving four and seven-year old girls, and Nikki helped her mom raise the girls. She then joined the Job Corps for two years, returning home again because her mother was in poor health.

And then – Hurricane Katrina hit. The family was without electricity for approximately three weeks, making life very difficult. Nikki moved out and was on her own for a while, working in a nursing home for about six years. Then her younger brother was diagnosed with leukemia. She moved back home to help care for him until he died in August of 2014. Her mother died in December of 2014, and she also lost her grandparents and two cousins. At that point her older brother betrayed her over money. She went to stay with her Dad while he fought against cancer and then later died in a car accident.

After so many losses, she decided to move to Erie where her cousin lives, and eventually moved to Mercy Center for Women where she loves to plan the monthly Women’s Nights. She decorates, plans the food, works on craft projects for the women to try and just enjoys coming up with fun activities. Nikki says, “she is doing it on her own from the bottom up.” She will eventually move to her own apartment, but in the meantime is a ray of sunshine at Mercy Center!
Brittany Garity

MCW Graduate of the Year 2018

Something new this year, in addition to honoring an Alumna of the Year, Mercy Center for Women honored a Graduate of the Year at its annual Alumnae Banquet. The Alumna is a woman who graduated from the program and has shown continued growth and success over a number of years. The Graduate of the Year is someone who has graduated the program in the last year who worked a solid program while at MCW, looked out for others, but always kept herself on track, and who showed outstanding moral fiber.

Brittany Garity was chosen as the very first Graduate of the Year and honored at the Alumnae Banquet on September 13th. She entered Mercy Center in April 2017 upon completion of drug and alcohol treatment at the House of Healing. Like many of the women we serve, she needed some further assistance transitioning to full independence. She was very motivated and refused to let her many challenging times define her. Instead she chose to be empowered and use her past experiences to fuel the fire that kept her going. In less than three months at MCW, Brittany had completed intensive outpatient drug and alcohol treatment at Gaudenzia and had phased up in Treatment Court. She was a shining example to her fellow residents and quickly became a “house mother” of sorts. She motivated the other women and helped to keep them on track and accountable. She spent her free time with her two daughters Kassidy and Kylie and developed close relationships with the other women and children at MCW. She wanted very badly to begin working again, however due to mistakes in her past, she was having a hard time finding a job. In August she took an unpaid internship at Logistics Plus as a way to prove herself.

In October, she not only moved into her own place but assisted other women from MCW to locate apartments, and helped them move. In November, she was hired as a paid employee at Logistics Plus, in December, she completed outpatient drug and alcohol treatment at Gaudenzia and in February 2018, she completed Mercy Center’s Aftercare Program. In May she offered to help out another MCW alumna by temporarily caring for her three young children in addition to her own two. Even with this new and incredibly huge responsibility, Brittany continued to push ahead and remain focused on her goals. The following month, she graduated Gaudenzia and Treatment Court, two very big accomplishments.

Brittany continues to give back to Mercy Center, celebrating the friendships and successes of the women here. She organizes events such as a picnic in the Mercy Center backyard for the current residents and alumnae of the program, and a Halloween party. She has chosen time and time again to be the best person she can be, to be brave, to be strong, to never take life for granted, to lift others up when they are down, and to always lend a helping hand.
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Event Sponsor
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Dan & Marianne Levstek

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Jim Laughlin
Patrick & Leslee Burns

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Frontier General Contracting Inc
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Mayor Joe Schember and two clients at the Women Making History Reception
March 27, 2018

Crop Walk at Presque Isle
September 23, 2018

“Our kids” having fun!

Current and Past Clients with Jennie Hagerty at the Alumnae Dinner September 13, 2018 at the Bayfront Sheraton
Financials

Sources:
Grants $334,308.00
Gifts $624,023.00
Contributed Servies & Facilities $275,375.00
Client Service Fees $32,159.00
Special Projects & Fundraising $119,793.00
Investment Return $120,878.00
Miscellaneous Income $245.00

Total Revenues $1,506,781.00 100%

Distribution:
Program Services $916,427.00
Administration $178,911.00
Development $142,163.00

Total Expenses $1,237,501.00 100%

Grants Received
HUD - Project REACH $29,026.00
City of Erie Emergency Shelter Grant $13,110.00
PHARE $50,000.00
Erie County Office of Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities $53,414.00
Erie County Office of Drug & Alcohol Abuse $48,688.00
Going Places Network $35,000.00
Regional Center for Workplace Excellence Working Wardrobe $129,125.00
Brian & Amanda Farrell
Linda & Ken Fatica
Becky Fechner
Julie Feiders
Thomas & Angela Feeney
Fr. Jason Feigh
Lorianne Feltz
Erin Ferguson
Kathy & Steve Findlay
Jackie Fink
First Assembly of God
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Sabrina Fischer
Dori Fish
Ina & Edward Jr. Fisher
Alice Flanagan
Anna Flanagan
Kenneth Fleming
Michelle Floros
Diane Fogle
Shari Fogleboch
John & Kimberly Fontecchio
Mary M. Forjenie
Tammy Fox
Robert & Willa Francis
Lindsay Frank
Elaine Frantz
Vanessa Fremer
Andrew & Molly Fritts
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General Electric Matching Funds
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Shirley George
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Linda Graff
Mary Beth Graml
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Hank & Betty Graggo
Rick Graziani
Mary Graziano
Great Lakes Institute of Technology
Greek Ladies Philoptochos Society
Greene Township Lioness Club
Kathryn Creulich
Dana Grochulski
Tom Guelder
Elisa Guida
Sue Gushie
Patricia Gustafson
Pamela Gutting
Debbie Hafner
Tom Hagen
Caroline Hagerty
Jennie Hagerty
Kevin Hagerty
Barb Haggerty
Connie Halbach
Natalie Dwyer Haller
Marcia H. Haller
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Colleen Hammon
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Valerie Hartley
Danna Hartwig
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Suzanne Haynes
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Kenneth Hitz
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Dr. Jay & Sharon Kiessling
Rebecca Klinger
Gay Kilmer
Barb King
Kingsley United Methodist Church
Shirlee Kirk Harden
Kathy & Dennis Kitchen
Kiwanis Club of Erie
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Midge Klebes
Lyn Klobusnik
Knights of St. John
Amanda & Andrew Kochikra
Jen Kohler
Sally Kohler
Sue & Bob Koprowski
Thomas & Carol Korn
Pat Koschucki
Dawn Kraft
Karen Krahe
Connie Kraus
Allene Kraus
Richard & Corinne Kraus
Anita Kraut
Jennifer Kremer
Joy Kronenberg
Margaret & David Krupme
Jodie Krupme
Joanne Kubinski
Anita Kuchinski
Carla Kuebler
Barbara Kuhn
Jane Kuhn
Kevin & Tracy Kunik
La Nuova Aurora
Andrea Labowski
Robert & Patricia Lacy
Lake Erie Presbyterian Women
Elaine Lamm
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Janet Laskowski
Kathy Lastowski
Peggy Laughlin
Jim Laughlin
Judy & Floyd Lawrence
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Gary Lee
Virginia Leighton
David & Marie Lesh
Level Red Boxing
Dan & Marianne Levstek
Georgia Lewis
Laura Lewis
Sarah Lewis
Mary Ellen Lieb
Debra Liebel
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In 2018 Mercy Center’s Dress for Success® Erie established the W.E.A.R. Job Readiness Program which stands for Women Empowered Achieve Results. This intense seven-week session is for women who are unemployed or underemployed coming from any walk of life who can make a commitment to attending each class. Weekly strategic topics build on one another with dynamic curriculum designed to be informative, interactive and immersive; becoming a complete picture by graduation. The W.E.A.R. program helps women improve their career prospects and boost self-confidence. Dress for Success Erie continues to provide appropriate clothing for attending job interviews and starting their new jobs, resume’ building and interview preparation. Our women who have successfully gained employment have the opportunity to continue their journey by becoming members of W.E. - Women Empowered of DFS Erie. Members of this supportive networking group participate in monthly events to enhance their professional and personal development.
Women & Children Served:

Women in Families 18
Single Women 15
Children (full time with Moms) 35
Total number served 68

This does not include the children who only came on weekends, etc.

15% of the women we served are counted as homeless youth between 18 to 24 years old.

100% of the women we served have a mental health diagnosis.

36% struggle with drug and/or alcohol abuse.

76% of our women have a history of domestic violence, while 46% of them are currently fleeing domestic violence.

The average length of stay is seven to eight months.

Total Shelter Nights 9,531
Dress for Success® Erie suitings 497