

# MERCY CENTER *for* WOMEN



2018-2019 Annual Review



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## Mercy Center for Women

1039 East 27th Street

Erie, PA 16504

(814) 455-4577

[www.mcwerie.org](http://www.mcwerie.org)

**Sponsored ministry of the  
Sisters of Mercy**



## Mission and Vision Statement

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### *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.



## *Dear Family and Friends of the Mercy Center,*

Another year has gone by for the Mercy Center for Women. A year where the 25th Anniversary evolved into a beautiful journey full of memories. Each event celebrated brought true meaning to the mission of “serving others.” The 25th Anniversary Gala was the “Signature Event” and provided the Sisters of Mercy the opportunity to be recognized for their time, talents and treasures.

The Annual Review for 2018-2019 shares the generosity from family, friends, businesses, acquaintances and our community. The stories are surreal and the outcomes serve to inspire the women with a journey full of hope. Our donors believe and support the mission of the Mercy Center. Our program is filled with women and children who hunger for a tomorrow of independency. Our community partners work together to provide the resources necessary to nurture both mom and child.

A trip around the corner can transform an indifferent acquaintance into a passionate lifetime friend. These are the friendships developed and retained at the Mercy Center. The clients we serve make deep meaningful relationships. They share in life a harmony only understood by each other. It is the passion which motivates their stratagem of life.

What is the forecast for the Mercy Center in 2020? A new building to enhance the existing mission into permanent housing. The former Holy Rosary School building will serve as an Anchor building with collaborative partners in EUMA, Early Connections and supportive health-services. This 2.5-million-dollar campaign will positively impact lives. The building design will offer 14 apartments, both single and double occupancy, with a living room, kitchen, bath and bedroom.

You make the dreams of those we care for – a reality. The burning passion to help others is recognized throughout the Annual Review. If you hold tightly to your possessions, you will never fully know the life you may have changed or inspired. If you are willing to think big and dream great dreams, there are no limits to what you can achieve.

Thank you for sharing your gifts with our women and children seeking a better tomorrow. You may not realize it, but you may have saved a life along the way.

Christmas Blessings,

*Jennie*

Jennie Hagerty  
Executive Director



*I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me; it is a sort of splendid torch which I've got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it off to future generations. ~ George Bernard Shaw*

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## *Melinda Albright, MCW Graduate of the Year 2019*

When you first meet Melinda, you instantly notice her vibrant personality and free spirit. She has a way about her that draws you in and makes you want to know her. She successfully completed the program at the Mercy Center for Women in December of 2018.

Growing up in Clymer, NY she had a childhood where rules and accountability were inconsistent. Her mother struggled with undiagnosed mental health issues but loved Melinda to the best of her ability. Her dad, however, led a more organized lifestyle. He also had a love of learning and of music, and he and Melinda held a deep passion for classic rock.

At a Christmas Eve gathering when she was eight, Melinda tried her first drink. She liked the feeling it gave her; she felt excited and more engaged with her surroundings. She began associating with older kids who drank, did drugs, and shoplifted. This was the beginning of an addiction which continued to escalate during her teens and into her 20s.

Melinda moved around often, sometimes staying with family, other times with friends. She reconnected with a childhood friend, Tom, and they began a relationship which included partying and emotional co-dependency. Although their relationship could be tumultuous, they truly cared for one another. They share a son together named Tommy.

On their way home from a county fair, they were hit by a drunk driver. While recovering from the accident, they became addicted to the opioids that were prescribed for pain. Tom went to a rehab facility in Buffalo to detox, but Melinda wasn't ready for that yet. Her first time in rehab came when Tommy was two years old. When she was released three weeks later, she immediately relapsed.

After attending AA meetings and having stretches of sobriety, Melinda continued to seek help but unfortunately relapsed. Her moment of accountability came when she was arrested in New York and extradited to Pennsylvania on warrants. She spent three months in the Erie County Prison. While she was there, she had the realization that the only person who could help her was herself. When she was released, Melinda spent an additional three months at the House of Healing before arriving at Mercy Center.

She spent eight months healing and finding the inner peace that she had always sought. After graduating from Mercy Center, Melinda moved into her own apartment and worked at Steak n' Shake. When the business closed, she used it as an opportunity to become a Certified Recovery Specialist, which is a peer-based program that helps those in recovery get the services they need to be successful. Melinda also completed classes to become certified in medical billing and coding.

Currently, Melinda works in the ER at Millcreek Community Hospital. She keeps in touch with everyone at Mercy Center and is always willing to "pay-it-forward" to help others. As she continues to grow as a person, Melinda aspires to be a dependable mother to her son Tommy, a better daughter, and loyal friend. She is definitely on her way to achieving these goals.







25  
YEARS

MERCY CENTER  
*for* WOMEN

MCW 25th Anniversary



The Mercy Center for Women celebrated 25 years with family, friends and community leaders highlighted at the Bayfront Convention Center on October 5, 2019. Family, friends and community leaders came together to recognize the Sisters of Mercy. Through their vision, the Mercy Center for Women provides a future of countless opportunities for women and children. 25 years later, the Center continues to move forward in building collaborations with community agencies and leaders.



Sister JoAnne Courneen and Sister Patricia Whalen shared the story of how the Mercy Center came to fruition. The audience was captivated by the beginning of Hope House in 1985. The Sisters walked the journey with the women from inception. They served as house managers working 12-hour shifts, providing a safe home for women and children to rest and become independent. Bishop Lawrence T. Persico shared in his remarks his admiration and respect for the Sisters of Mercy. Bishop Persico also applauded the efforts over the years to maintain housing and a nurturing environment to homeless women and children escaping domestic violence and addiction. Mayor Joe Schember acknowledged the Sisters and their contributions to the Erie Community. He was grateful for the vision of growth and expansion in the future. Both Bishop Persico and Mayor Schember were humbled to be a part of this wonderful milestone.

We look forward to the future of the Mercy Center as we begin the transformation of Holy Rosary School where we will be able to serve more families in need. Our affiliate, Dress for Success Erie will be moving their services and boutique to Holy Rosary in early 2020. The former classrooms will be transformed into seven apartments during the first phase of the renovations. Phase two will be completed in 2021.

Thank you to our generous sponsors and donors who have helped make this dream a reality. We are grateful for the Erie community's belief in our mission, the leadership of our Executive Director Jennie Hagerty, and especially for the vision of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.







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# Financials

## Sources:

Grants	\$371,611
Gifts	\$332,516
Contributed Services & Facilities	\$298,366
Client Service Fees	\$35,837
Special Projects & Fundraising	\$139,561
Investment Return	\$114,303
Miscellaneous Income	\$2,383

**TOTAL REVENUES** **\$1,294,577** **100%**

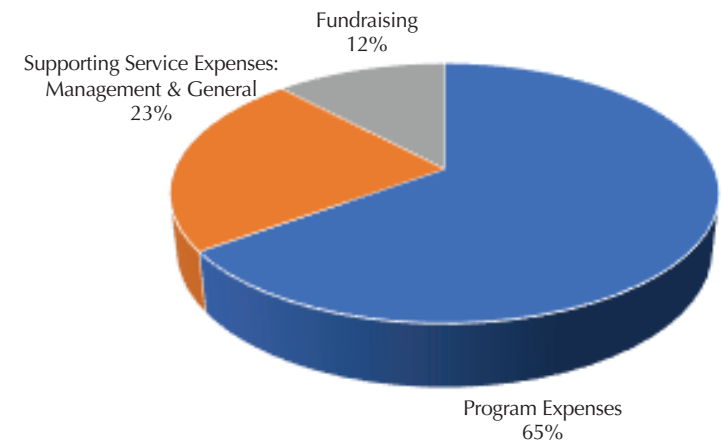
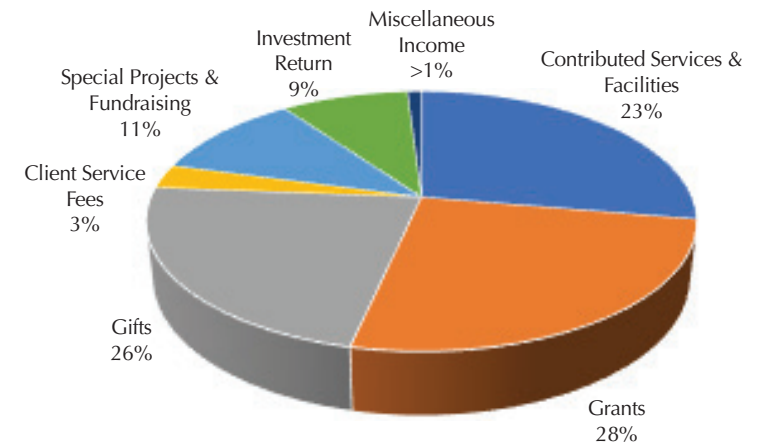
## Distribution:

Program Expenses:	\$856,280
Shelter & Dress for Success	
Supporting Service Expenses:	
Management & General	\$303,929
Fundraising	\$166,269

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$1,326,478** **100%**

## Grants Received

City of Erie Emergency Shelter	\$11,242
PHARE	\$41,666
County of Erie Office of Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities	\$31,746
Erie County Office of Drug & Alcohol Abuse	\$33,265
NAP	\$74,290
WEAR/Going Places	\$16,167
PA Workwear Program	\$122,741
Other Grants	\$40,494
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>	<b>\$371,611</b>





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## Dress for Success® Erie & W.E.A.R. Program



The Mercy Center's Dress for Success® Erie is excited for spring 2020 when they move into their new location on the east end of Holy Rosary School. After an amazing year, they are looking to continue to improve and expand their programs, meeting the specific employment needs of women in the Erie community. Dress for Success® Erie goes beyond the suit ideally supports clients from job search, to employment, and beyond.

The W.E.A.R.-Women Empowered Achieve Results job readiness program has served over 70 women in the last two years. The one day a week, 7-week program, runs 3 cohorts per year. It is open to any woman who is unemployed or under employed who can make a commitment to attending all seven classes. The dynamic curriculum is specifically designed to be informative, interactive, and immersive. The W.E.A.R. program guides women to improve their career prospects and self-confidence.

Dress for Success® Erie's mission is to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. This is accomplished

not only through the W.E.A.R. program, but also through the suiting program that provides appropriate clothing for interviews and new employment. They also continue to promote women with resume writing and interview preparation.

Women who have successfully gained employment have the opportunity to extend their journey by becoming members of W.E. - Women Empowered of Dress for Success Erie. Members of this supportive networking group participate in monthly events to enhance their professional and personal development by the following seven pillars. These include workplace etiquette & communication; career & leadership development; work-life balance; handling personal finances; health & wellness; time management; and relaxation & art therapy.







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## Women & Children Served:

Women in Families		24
Single Women		18
Children		39
Total Number Served		81

19% of the women we served are counted as homeless youth between 18 to 24 years old.

95% of the women we served have a mental health diagnosis

57% struggle with drug and/or alcohol abuse

83% of our women have a history of domestic violence, while

59% of them are currently fleeing domestic violence

Total Shelter Nights 7,164

Dress for Success® Erie Suitings 482

