

**Dear Friends,**

With only a couple of months remaining in 2020, we welcome the end of what can best be described as a tumultuous and challenging year. We cannot help but hope for a calmer, healthier, and kinder 2021.

In March, the WISE team quickly adapted to working in a remote environment, remaining in full support of survivors, and maintaining a sense of virtual connectedness. While I am in awe of this amazing group, I am not surprised. WISE staff and volunteers are truly a remarkable group of people.

As we close out this difficult year and enter our 50th year of supporting survivors in the Upper Valley, we are reminded of the constancy of WISE. WISE has been in the community through many different eras, evolving as an organization, and is stronger than ever. We are grateful for each and every one of you who have been here with us, growing with us, and moving forward together in our shared commitment to ending gender-based violence.

Warmly,

  
**Peggy**



## Save the dates

**WISE Writing Group**  
**Wednesdays 5:30-7:00 pm**

*Please email [pam@wiseuv.org](mailto:pam@wiseuv.org) to sign up*

**Foundations of Gender-Based Violence**  
**Scheduled for March 2021**

*Please email [stacey@wiseuv.org](mailto:stacey@wiseuv.org) for more details*

**Covered Bridges Half Marathon**  
**June 6, 2021**

**Early registration opens November 18, 2020**

*Please visit [wiseuv.org/join-us/#events](http://wiseuv.org/join-us/#events)  
for more information*

## Board Members

Patricia Spellman, President  
Martha Goodrich, Co-Vice President  
Kate Griffiths Harrison, Co-Vice President  
Margaret Rightmire, Treasurer  
Emily Dentzer, Secretary  
Gail Gentes  
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Gretchen Rittenhouse  
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Jenny Levy  
Jenny Williams  
Karen Colberg  
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Mindi Laine  
Pat Glowa  
Peggy O'Neil, Executive Director  
Susan Dewees, Board Emeritus  
Jane Maglaque, Tuck Revers Board Fellow  
Stylianios Chasapopoulos, Tuck Revers Board Fellow

*We are excited to introduce you to our newest board members. More details inside!*



“You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.” - *Maya Angelou, Letter to My Daughter*

## More ways to connect

Although there was no way to anticipate the Covid-19 pandemic, the capital improvements that we made to our communications systems provided a relatively seamless transition as shelter-in-place orders went into effect. In March, we shifted to remote advocacy and increased options for survivors by adding new ways to get in touch.

You can now access WISE support in the following ways:

Call 866-348-WISE (9473) for immediate support. Advocacy is available every hour, every day.

Chat online through the website or [resourceconnect.com/wiseuv/chat](https://resourceconnect.com/wiseuv/chat). Response times may vary.

Text 603-836-9472. Response times may vary.

Browse our online resources on our website [wiseuv.org](https://wiseuv.org).

We are also able to meet through HIPAA compliant video chat and socially distanced in-person by appointment.

## re-sil-ience (n) the capacity to recover from difficulties; toughness

Almost every day we see examples of resilience at WISE. It is the student sitting at the edge of the hospital bed declaring that she will not let the sexual assault define her. It is the mother who leaves our Safe Home, moves into a new apartment with her children and says “we’re home.” It is the writer who finally shares the family secrets that have been kept hidden for decades. And sometimes it is the survivor who is simply able to get out of bed in the morning. These victories, large and small, inspire us and keep us going during hard times.

The pandemic has made many things more challenging for our country, and more so for people who were already suffering. Survivors now face additional barriers with fewer resources. Social service procedures continue to evolve and change in response to heightened or relaxed distancing guidelines. Many experience reduced economic resources, and may be isolated from friends and family because of health precautions and travel restrictions. Families struggle with additional child care burdens because of changes in schools and child care centers. Local attorneys who generously provide legal services for low or no fees are completely overwhelmed with need, and court systems are doing their best as they were backed up long before the virus slowed everything down.

And yet, even during these tough months, we see that some changes are happening that make us a stronger Upper Valley community. As organizations implement remote options for meetings and services, we find that survivors in remote geographical areas can access critical services that previously were out of reach. We work hard to make sure that survivors who have been impacted financially by the pandemic can access CARES act funding streams and additional housing and food resources. It is hard to predict what lies ahead in the months to come, but we are confident in the resiliency of survivors and our Upper Valley community.



## Volunteer spotlight: Emma in her own words

*“Volunteering on the WISE crisis line in the midst of the pandemic has had its challenges but continues to bring me a sense of hope during these uncertain times. When people started going into quarantine at the end of March, I worried. I worried about the isolation that people might face, about people quarantining with abusers, about the added burdens that folks might encounter as they tried to seek support. And yet, despite limited in-person access, WISE remained available, adapted and persevered. Volunteering in these times has given me a crucial sense of connection. Each conversation I have on the crisis line, every person who shares their experience, gives me a chance to connect and grow.”*



Emma joined the crisis line in the fall of 2019. Emma grew up in Strafford, VT and is the wedding coordinator at the Quechee Inn. Currently, she serves on the Hartford Selectboard.

*“With a global pandemic, political unrest and a world literally in flames, figuring out how to make positive change can be overwhelming. But all of these things only heighten the importance of supporting survivors and challenging gender-based violence. For me, being a WISE volunteer is a start at that, here, locally, in our community.”*

## Introducing our newest WISE Board members

As our fiscal year started in July, we ushered in new leadership and members to the WISE Board of Directors, recently elected at the WISE Annual Meeting. Our board is an incredible group of people highly engaged in our work. We are fortunate to welcome three new talented directors who are committed to ending gender-based violence.

Karen Colberg, CO-CEO of King Arthur Baking Company, brings considerable general management, financial and marketing skills to the board.

Jason Lichtenstein, Deputy General Counsel of White Mountains Insurance Group, offers substantial legal knowledge and is proficient in “legalese.”

Jenny Levy, Vice President of People, Community & Environment at Hypertherm, and contributes extensive leadership, business acumen and strategic orientation skills.

We are also honored to have two Tuck Revers Board Fellows this year. Jane Maglaque and Stylianos Chasapopoulos join us for a one-year term.

*“I believe that this broader focus on prevention, education, and creating an enlightened community of allies and citizens is our best strategy to actually ending gender-based violence.” - Jenny Levy*

## Appreciating local businesses

Shortly after local businesses were ordered to temporarily close, Jill Butler sent WISE an email with the subject line: “Thinking of you.” In the midst of this highly stressful time, Jill was thinking about survivors and how she could support them.

She put together a couple of outfits for survivors who were preparing for court appearances. Jill’s gorgeous clothes were used to supplement the wardrobe of a nursing mom as she attended custody hearings in a neighboring state, and a mom who just moved into the Safe Home. It was a wonderful way to offer something special to moms who rarely spend money on clothes for themselves.



Jill Butler, owner of *The J List: Fine Clothing, Exuberant Gifts*. Located on South Main Street in Hanover [www.jliststore.com](http://www.jliststore.com)

Local restaurants have been particularly hard hit, with many forced to close their kitchens. Robert Meyers, of Three Tomatoes, shifted his restaurant to an outdoor café while also supporting survivors.

Three Tomatoes provided numerous meals to all of our shelter guests, each of whom are struggling in different ways to make ends meet. One survivor, recovering from major surgery for an injury related to years of physical abuse was able to get meals for her and her visiting nurse. Three Tomatoes is always discreet and make things so easy for survivors accessing food.



Located on Court Street in Lebanon  
[www.threetomatoesrestaurant.com](http://www.threetomatoesrestaurant.com)

## Counting down to 50

We turn 50 in 2021 and are looking forward to reflecting on our past, highlighting our present, and celebrating our future.



*Celebrating 50 years*

WISE was founded in 1971 as a career resource center for women. Over the five decades our mission shifted and we have evolved into an organization that is dedicated to supporting survivors and committed to leading the Upper Valley to end gender-based violence through survivor-centered advocacy, prevention, education and mobilization for social change.

We hope you will join us in celebration throughout 2021. We will keep you posted as our plans unfold!

## Prevention adaptations

Last spring, our WISE Prevention and Education Program (PEP) was dramatically affected by Covid-19 as schools throughout the Upper Valley closed and shifted online. The PEP squad responded quickly and found new and different ways to connect with students, parents and teachers.

In a matter of weeks, the PEP squad created supplemental activities that could be explored at home for every single grade level kindergarten through high school. These were provided to 17 schools and made readily available on the WISE website, Instagram, and YouTube. We also populated our YouTube channel with videos of activities that adults can facilitate at home with their young ones.

**wise**  
@  
**Dartmouth**

## A new year at Dartmouth

Bailey, our WISE campus advocate, was invited to create a welcome video on behalf of WISE to all incoming Dartmouth students to be included as part of online orientation. The minute-long video included a warm welcome to the Upper Valley, a quick introduction to the campus advocacy role, and the “Three Most Important Things to Know About WISE: We are completely confidential, we are always available, and we are survivor-centered.” Upon receiving the recording, the Office of Student Wellness requested that it be available to other offices on campus for use in their orientations. It is now a permanent part of the first year sexual violence curriculum at Dartmouth. Check out the video on our website: [www.wiseuv.org/dartmouth/](http://www.wiseuv.org/dartmouth/).



*Bailey welcoming new students*

We were also invited to submit a few slides for inclusion in the graduate schools orientation programming. These invitations are heartening, and are good examples of the integration of WISE as an essential resource at Dartmouth.



*Social distancing with the rebels*



*Ciara making a rainstick at home*

All these activities and videos are available to you too! Explore our virtual sections at [wiseuv.org/prevention/#parents](http://wiseuv.org/prevention/#parents).

## Rebels of the Moon

After being out of the classroom this spring, we were excited to be hanging out with young people again! The PEP squad was invited to facilitate a discussion about gender stereotypes with Rebels of the Moon, a week-long girls (aged 12-17) empowerment camp in Fairlee. The camp, run by one of our amazing volunteers, Katrina Alden, offered a great opportunity to connect with young people in our community while practicing social distancing.

Using some of our in-class activities, we were able to have really deep, thoughtful, and rewarding conversations about gender assumptions and how our culture and social media affects our individual thinking.

## Wiser together

We are inspired by the many ways our community shows up, every day, in support of survivors. In the spring and throughout the summer, we received gift cards, a doll house, and changing table for our Safe Home. People sent beautiful hand-made face masks and hand sanitizer. Some shared their stimulus checks. We received beautiful and encouraging letters, reminding us that we are not alone.

Our two main fundraisers the RVC Spinathon and Covered Bridges Half Marathon were cancelled, and yet we were heartened at how many people still contributed to these events. The RVC Spinathon generated over \$20,000 in donations, even though it never took place. And, one of our CBHM Team WISE members, Sarah Wagner, continued training, raising money, and ran her own personal half marathon flanked by friends Ben Lynch and Izzy Kotlowitz. Fun fact: Izzy is one of our educators on the PEP squad! And for October, in celebration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a group of women created the Wicked Witches Doing Good For WISE virtual fundraiser.



On the CBHM course for WISE

Communication to the community was our priority, reminding everyone that we are still here and they are not alone. We put ads on the radio with Chelsea's calming voice, reinforcing the message through social media, community list serves, and in the Valley News and Vermont Standard. We collaborated with other community organizations on local Covid-19 task forces, coordinating a community response in our support of survivors.

As we shifted online and started Remote WISE, we searched for new ways to keep connected as staff. We established a routine – starting the day with inspiring and educational messages from the PEP squad and ending the day with messages from Peggy offering gratitude and poetry. We had Zoom staff lunches, celebrated birthdays, and mourned losses. We remain stronger as a team, and grounded in our shared commitment to the mission.



Chelsea recording radio ads

## FY20 (July 2019 - June 2020) by the numbers

### Advocacy Program

1,253 total people supported  
105 average people supported per month  
884 first time callers  
74 average first time callers per month  
10,442 total crisis line calls

### Youth Violence Prevention Program

469 lessons  
5,080 students  
29 schools  
9 school districts

### Professional Training

health professionals, law enforcement, educators  
42 presentations  
891 participants

### Community Engagement

court observers, ambassadors, volunteer advocates  
120 active volunteers



Remote WISE working at home



One of the WISE discussion guides

## WISE book discussions

Last year, the Etna Library selected Educated, by Tara Westover, for their book group and asked WISE to facilitate the book discussion. We were honored and realized that it is a wonderful way to talk with folks about gender-based violence in a different and more intimate setting. Since then, we partnered with Howe Library to read Big Little Lies, by Liane Moriarty, and most recently held a virtual WISE conversation with local author and longtime friend Gretchen Cherington about her new memoir Poetic License. Over 65 people showed up for the Zoom event!

All WISE discussion guides are available on our website [www.wiseuv.org/who-we-are/#publications](http://www.wiseuv.org/who-we-are/#publications). We plan on continuing and building our WISE library. If you would like us to facilitate a conversation with your book club, let us know by emailing [kate@wiseuv.org](mailto:kate@wiseuv.org). We are also happy to make suggestions for books.