



WOMEN'S GIVING
ALLIANCE
THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

VOICES RISING

ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

PREVENTING, SURVIVING, THRIVING

For over 20 years, Women's Giving Alliance (WGA) has focused on making grants that impact the lives of women and girls. WGA's approach is research-based; we seek out data, then identify the most pressing issues, especially those affecting vulnerable groups in Northeast Florida.

WGA is a vibrant collective giving circle of nearly 500 women from six counties. Beginning in 2012, WGA Membership chose to concentrate its efforts for multiple years on a single area of focus (e.g. Improving Gender-Specific Access to Mental Health Care; Breaking the Cycle of Female Poverty).

In 2023, WGA refreshed its research. For a year, a Member-led task force interviewed grantees and community leaders on challenges facing women and girls. These findings were combined with secondary data and presented to Members at five vigorous Town Halls. The outcome is WGA's new focus area for its grants and community efforts for 2025 and beyond:

ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

4 AREAS OF EMPHASIS

- » **HELP GIRLS** be safer and more empowered at home, school, and online.
- » **EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY** about violence against women and girls.
- » **BROADEN SHORT- TERM SERVICES** for female victims (and their children); shelter is critical but may only be the beginning.
- » **EXPAND LONG-TERM SUPPORT** enabling transition to self-sufficiency (and independence from the abuser).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS DEFINED

TYPES

- » Child abuse & neglect
- » Harassment & bullying
- » Intimate partner & domestic violence
- » Predatory social media
- » Rape
- » Sex (human) trafficking

FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- » Physical
- » Sexual
- » Emotional & verbal
- » Economic
- » Other means of exerting power & control

wganeft.org

Women together...changing lives

Many girls in NEFL are in peril



1/3 OF GIRLS

report feeling unsafe at school



2/3 OF GIRLS

report verbal bullying; 35% report cyberbullying



GIRLS,

specifically ages 12–17, are the most at-risk to human trafficking



Duval County has significantly

HIGHER RATES

of child abuse and neglect than the state of Florida



SUICIDE RATES

have increased among girls under 17 in three of six counties in Northeast Florida

MYTH
1

Violence against women & girls is an issue that only impacts females.

1 HELP GIRLS

Be Safer and More Empowered at Home, School & Online

Promote programs to educate girls, parents, educators and the community about abuse, neglect, sex trafficking, harassment, and bullying experienced by girls. Encourage replication of proven models for identifying, empowering, and reducing violence against girls.



pace
Center for Girls.

Chantell Miles,
Executive Director,
Pace Center for Girls

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Pace provides free year-round middle and high school academic services, counseling, and life-skills training for girls experiencing adversity of any kind.

“Many of our girls have experienced violence,” Executive Director Chantell Miles says, **“but there are so many forms, and each girl responds differently.”** The entire staff is trained in trauma-informed care, but **“we start with the girl’s needs – not the trauma.”**

Pace focuses on helping girls define healthy relationships. **“If a girl’s boyfriend wants to know everywhere she goes, she thinks it proves he loves her; we help her understand it’s controlling.”**

Girls also have experienced bullying for years. But today, technology amplifies everything. **“Social media is a lot about comparison and appearance; girls may actually tolerate more abuse now**

because of their TikTok image. Online videos show girls would rather be with an abuser than a guy without the right lifestyle.”

What can society do? **“We need to rephrase the narrative and we need to call out the unacceptable behaviors. We need to operationalize for girls what healthy behaviors look like. And quite frankly, we need progress on educating boys as well.”**

Can we change the cycle? **“Absolutely! We do it one girl at a time, and research shows it likely will carry to the next generation.”**

“Girls have been socialized to accept violence and demeaning behavior since the beginning of time.”

REALITY

Violence affects the physical and mental health of women and children in nearly all aspects of society. It incurs high costs for everyone.

MYTH
2

Violence against women primarily occurs in low-income, poorly educated, minority or dysfunctional families.

2 EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY

About Violence Against Women & Girls

Expand everyone's understanding of violence against women and girls (i.e. domestic violence, sex (human) trafficking, rape, child abuse and predatory social media). Focus on all socioeconomic classes and demographics. Promote proven awareness programs including tools for safe and appropriate bystander intervention. Affirm for women and girls that the violence is not their fault.

"We're talking about extreme victimization. The abusers are smart, patient, charming and work hard. It's essential to understand this and not lapse into blaming victims."

Since 2012, Rethreaded has provided employment to help survivors of human trafficking.

"My lens is human trafficking,"
Founder & CEO Kristin Keen says,
"but I've learned that most violence against women and girls is similar."

What are the chief barriers to people having an informed view? **"First you must make people believe it's happening and in their zip code."**

Second, people must let go of the perception that women and girls have choice. **"If your audience thinks deep down women could leave if they only wanted to, you lose compassion."**

There is also a life to rebuild. Keen says there are 72 identified barriers to achieving self-sufficiency independent of the abuser. **"You've got to address all of them, all at once – and it is likely you are in a state of trauma, which steals your ability to think rationally."**

What challenges are being explored in the movement locally? **"There is a need for direct services; it is dire and immediate. We also need to begin focusing on systematic cultural change."**

» **How does our community reduce demand?**

» **How do you hold buyers of sex accountable?**

Closing thoughts for WGA? **"I hope you initiate dialogue in our community (like you did with mental health). Services are essential, but the largest lack of funding and attention right now is in education and social change."**



RE threaded

Kristin Keen,
Founder & CEO, Rethreaded

What would survivors at Rethreaded most want people to know?

"They just want people to see them."

REALITY

Research shows that violence doesn't discriminate. It is present in all socioeconomic classes and all types of families.

MYTH 3

If women really wanted to leave a violent relationship, they would.

REALITY

Leaving is the riskiest time. It takes careful planning and can be very difficult with children and/or without a job or a safe place to go.

3 BROADEN SHORT-TERM SERVICES

For Female Victims (& Their Children); Shelter is Critical but May Only Be the Beginning

Safety is most important, but it is only the beginning. Female victims of violence of any age (whether from rape, trafficking, intimate partner violence or other forms of abuse) need trauma-informed medical help, mental health services, legal assistance, housing, food and a host of other services. So do their children.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATION IN NASSAU COUNTY

(a model shared by all six counties in Northeast Florida)



FOOD, CLOTHES, HEALTH CARE, JOB COACHING



LAW ENFORCEMENT/ VICTIM'S ADVOCATE



LEGAL SERVICES



RAPE RECOVERY SERVICES



MICAH'S PLACE

HOTLINE
SHELTER
INJUNCTIONS
COUNSELING

**A Survivor's Journey is Complicated...
and leaves a deep impact.**



"Everywhere we go, people take us aside and tell us their story. It might have happened 10 years ago or yesterday but their life has been deeply affected."

Lisa Rozier, Community Engagement Coordinator, Micah's Place

CERTIFIED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTERS

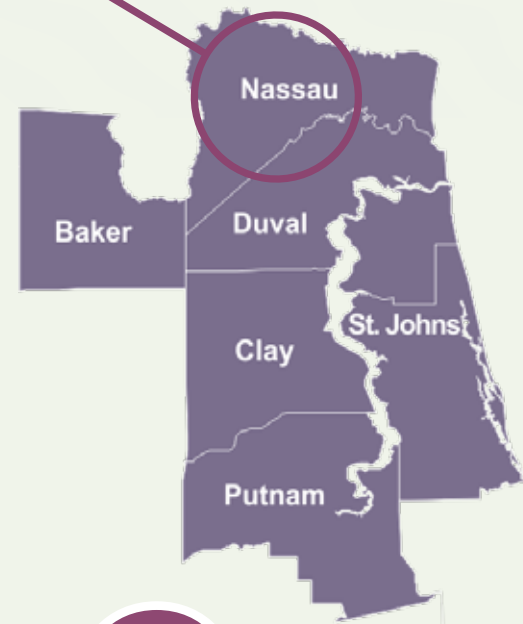
MICAH'S PLACE
(Nassau)

HUBBARD HOUSE
(Duval & Baker)

BETTY GRIFFIN CENTER
(St. Johns)

QUIGLEY HOUSE
(Clay)

LEE CONLEE HOUSE
(Putnam)



MYTH
4

Victims have the types of personalities that seek out and encourage abuse. They have low self-esteem.

REALITY

There are no personality traits that encourage abuse; strong women experience it too. Abusers are skilled at persuading women it's their fault.

MYTH
5

Survivors and victims are unable to break the vicious cycle of violence.

4 EXPAND LONG-TERM SUPPORT

Enabling Transition to Self-Sufficiency (and Independence from the Abuser)

WGA research highlighted the critical need for long-term transitional services to gain long-lasting stability and independence from the abuser. It is one thing to escape elder abuse, violence while homeless, sex (human) trafficking, or intimate partner violence; it is another to achieve long term self-sufficiency. Both are necessary.

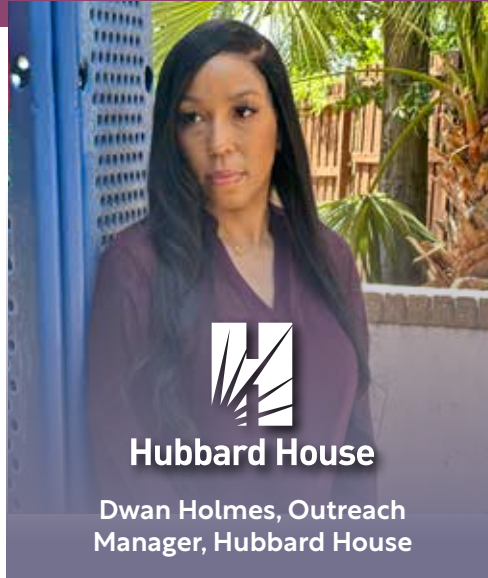
LONG-TERM SAFE HOUSING & SERVICES SAVES LIVES

The average stay at an emergency shelter is several weeks, but Hubbard House works to ensure that many are moved into safe long-term housing with continuing services.

Hubbard House's HOPE Program (Housing Options Promoting Empowerment), working with Quigley House and Micah's Place, supports survivors of domestic violence in Duval, Clay and Nassau Counties. HOPE provides housing post-shelter, financial assistance for rent and utility deposits, case management and access to all Hubbard House wrap-around support services for adults and their children for a year or more.

In the last 15 months, 140 survivors have been aided with long-term housing and services.

As women move from "surviving" to "thriving", Outreach Manager Dwan Holmes says **"the most dominant emotion is fear. There are issues around bills, income, rent, and legal matters. But there also is a huge fear of the unknown."**



Hubbard House

Dwan Holmes, Outreach Manager, Hubbard House

What's the biggest misconception about programs like this? **"How hard it is. In addition to the practical concerns, most survivors have significant trauma and may have mental health challenges."**

What's it like for the kids? **"At first, they just feel safe. But as they receive counseling and support with school, their trauma-related behaviors improve markedly."**

What are the outcomes? **"Actually, the majority thrive. It just takes time. We provide a boost with wrap-around services and financial help until they are safe and independent."**

Let the numbers speak!



There were

9,380

reports of domestic violence in Duval County last year



Typically

50%

of shelter residents are children



Hubbard House has

116

beds (and is at capacity most nights)

REALITY

Many survivors find help, achieve a violence-free future, and share their courageous stories to help other women.

MYTH 6

The problem is too big. There is little that can be done to stop violence against women.

REALITY

Violence against women is the product of learned attitudes. Just as such norms can be learned, they can be unlearned. Join us!

Four Tips to Help Change the Status Quo

» Check for possible biases.
» Do you tend to blame the
victim? Or the abuser?

» Start a conversation.
» Safely engage others in
discussions about violence
against women.

» What's going on in your zip code?
» Violence against women and girls is
happening in every neighborhood.

» Learn the signs of abuse, what to
do if you suspect violence,
and how to involve experts.

MEMBERS SPEAK



*"This is such a dark, complicated and ugly topic.
I'm proud of WGA for taking it on."*

*"WGA is well-suited not only to giving
strategic grants, but also to speaking out
in the community."*

"We could really make a difference."

JOIN US

We believe in openly sharing what we're learning to increase
understanding and support throughout Northeast Florida.



The Women's Giving Alliance, a proud initiative of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, is a dynamic group of diverse women who pool their philanthropic giving to make a lasting impact on the lives of women and girls in Northeast Florida. Since 2001, hundreds of women in Northeast Florida have become WGA members, making an annual contribution of \$1,500 each. Through those contributions, WGA has awarded grants totaling more than \$9.6 million to 74 nonprofit organizations. It also has built an endowment of nearly \$6 million to ensure the future of its philanthropic work. For more information: www.wganefl.org.

OUR MISSION

Inspiring women to be
strategic philanthropists
and investing in the lives
of women and girls in
Northeast Florida.



WOMEN'S GIVING
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THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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