



ROTARY DISTRICT 5020

# Poulsbo Rotary Rallies Against Domestic Violence in a Big Way

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The proof is in the pudding when a human services project produces nearly a 100% success rate.

That's what happened when The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation partnered with the YWCA of Kitsap County in the Housing First program, providing the funds to get domestic violence survivors into immediate permanent housing and augment that housing with supportive services. When the victims were supported with safe (longer term) living conditions and professional advocacy and support services; the cycle of violence ended. Neither the victims nor their children returned to their perpetrators.

With the Housing First success, Rotary leaders across Kitsap County began taking note of this recovery model. Longtime Rotarian Ardis Morrow had experienced the tragedy of domestic violence, first-hand, when her 3-year-old great nephew, Eli, was brutally kicked by his father, then left to die alone in his bedroom in 1986. Ardis directed her grief to the greater good, campaigning to change child-protection laws. Because of her work, abusers in the state of Washington are now removed from the home, and not the victims.

She also got the ball rolling in her Poulsbo Club. Over the past 20 years that Ardis has been involved with Rotary, the Club's Committee focused on Domestic Violence Prevention & Recovery has grown strong. In recent years, Amy Sanford, herself an abuse survivor, joined Poulsbo Rotary, and with her willingness to openly discuss her experience and her excellent speaking skills, new light has been shed on the critical nature of this particular community peril.

Currently the Domestic Violence Prevention & Recovery Committee is chaired by Chad Solvie, CEO of Martha and Mary. Comprised of a solid core of about 12 Rotarians and others who are community leaders and connectors, the Committee's vision is to raise \$2.1 million to fund Morrow Manor, a supportive housing project to

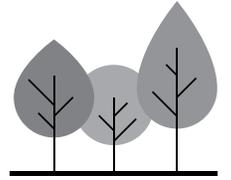
be developed in partnership with the YWCA of Kitsap County. Upon completion, Morrow Manor will provide long-term, stable housing solutions for domestic violence survivors and their children.

The Campaign to Build Brighter Tomorrows was born to fund the construction of Morrow Manor: four new buildings that can house up to eight families in longer-term supportive housing located in a peaceful neighborhood setting where they can rebuild their lives. After securing a \$500,000 grant from the C. Keith Birkenfeld Memorial Trust, support from Tim Ryan Properties of Poulsbo, a major gift from the estate of Sandra Boro Hill, and other gifts and pledges, the Poulsbo Club is half way there. The Club and its individual members have demonstrated their "skin in the game" with over \$400K already committed to the Morrow Manor project themselves.

Truly great leaders fan community movements through inspiration. The Poulsbo Rotarians involved in this project are a great example of this leadership and inspiration.

Rotary International encourages us to create lasting change by developing projects and engaging fellow Rotarians around solutions that will strengthen our communities. Through its work on the Morrow Manor project, Poulsbo Rotary is on course. When completed, Poulsbo Rotary will deed Morrow Manor, debt-free, to the YWCA of Kitsap County to manage with vision and expertise.

If you would like a presentation about domestic violence and the development of the Morrow Manor partnership involving Poulsbo Rotary and the YWCA of Kitsap County or if you would like to be involved in the Morrow Manor Project, please contact Elsa Watson, Campaign Director at (206) 330-6445 or [info@supportmorrowmanor.org](mailto:info@supportmorrowmanor.org).



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