

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YWCA Clinton Crisis Services Announces Change in Services

Clinton, IA – November 12, 2014 – The YWCA-Clinton has announced it will be closing its Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs effective June 2015, and expanding their Rapid Rehousing, and scattered-site Transitional Housing programs.

“We have been strategically planning over the past year for a sustainable future for our Crisis Services program,” said YWCA Executive Director Shannon Sander-Welzien. “The State of Iowa Attorney General’s decision to regionalize victim services has left our shelter-based services in a very vulnerable position. As hard as we have worked to raise funds in response to the state’s decision, we simply cannot replace a \$250,000 cut in funding with local giving, each and every year going forward.”

In 2012, the State of Iowa’s Attorney General’s Office determined to regionalize services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Since that decision was made, Iowa was divided into six regions with funding available for only 1-2 domestic violence programs, 1-2 sexual assault programs, and 1-2 shelter programs in each of the regions. Due to its small size and non-centralized geographic location within this region, the YWCA-Clinton determined not to apply to be a regional provider.

“We are so thankful to our wonderful donors who have made it possible for us to continue serving our community in the face of a \$250,000 cut in state funding,” said Sander-Welzien. “We have been operating our Emergency Shelter with local donations since July 2014.” “We have, however, determined that this level of local giving is not sustainable in the long term,” said Sander-Welzien. The YWCA Board of Directors made the difficult decision to close the local Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs effective June 15, 2015.

“On a positive note, because of new government funding options, we will be expanding our Rapid Rehousing and scattered-site Transitional Housing programs to be able to serve more people in need,” said Sander-Welzien. “These two housing programs serve men, women and children in our community who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and homelessness,” said YWCA Crisis Services Director Ronelle Clark. “In addition, we will now be able to expand our services to include entire families who are experiencing homelessness.”

“Current research has shown that services that help to move participants into their own homes tend to be more effective over the long term than shelter-based services, and current funding trends reflect that,” explains Clark. “So while we are saddened to have to close our Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs, we are optimistic about the opportunity we have to expand our other two housing programs.”

The YWCA-Clinton has been serving those in our community who have been affected by domestic violence and sexual assault for over 35 years. In 1978, the YWCA-Clinton's Women's Resource Center was founded as a sexual assault resource center. Soon thereafter services for domestic violence victims were added, and in 1988 the organization began its Transitional Housing Program for women and children affected by homelessness. In 1992 the YWCA-Clinton expanded these services to include an outreach office in Jackson County as well.

"Over our past 99 years, we have adapted to our community's needs and trends in how to deliver services to those in need," said Sander-Welzien. "We are very proud of the work we do at the YWCA, and will continue to provide help and hope to our community for the next 100 years."

"Community support for our local YWCA is still very much needed and appreciated," said Clark. "We will continue to need donations of food, toiletries, gift cards, gas cards, and with our expanding housing programs, we will rely on local donations to support the case management services we provide, to pay for child care as our clients seek employment or further their education, and to cover the myriad costs and needs involved in starting over in a new home," said Clark. "We truly appreciate the heartfelt support our community has shown us over the years."

The YWCA-Clinton will stop accepting new participants into their shelter-based Transitional Housing Program in December 2014, and shift into serving those clients through their Rapid Re-Housing program. Current shelter residents will continue to be served through the closure date of June 2015. New clients will not be accepted into the YWCA Emergency Shelter after June 15, 2015. "The decision to close our Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs was made with the knowledge that SafePath Survivor Resources is established in the community and the YWCA-Clinton has resources and is committed to assist current participants with their relocation needs," said Clark. "We remain committed to the wellbeing and safety of survivors and will continue to advocate for the rights of victims."

SafePath Survivor Resources was selected by the state as this area's provider of shelter-based domestic violence/sexual assault services. SafePath Survivor Resources is a division of Family Resources and provides comprehensive domestic violence, sexual assault, sheltering and housing services to our multi-county region and may be reached at 866-921-3354.

The YWCA-Clinton is sharing an informational video which further details the upcoming changes to their services on the Crisis Center page of their website: ywcaclinton.org. Those with additional questions may contact YWCA Crisis Services Director Ronelle Clark at crisisdirector@ywcaclinton.org or 563-242-2110 ext.400.

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