

Charity Writer: Social Examiner

If these walls could talk

A little girl sobs while pleading for help. In the background, yelling and crashing sounds fill the air—along with frightened high-pitched pleas to stop. A 911 operator tries to calm the young child on the other end of the phone line and find out where she is. Almost inaudibly, you hear, “NO! What is he doing? Make him STOP!”

For a few moments – that feels more like an eternity – the young child pleads with her father to stop hurting her mother. She begs the 911 operator for help. Then, she emits one final sobbing plea, and then the line abruptly goes dead.

Three women sit at a table in an eerily silent room, tears streaming down their cheeks. Then, a woman at the front of the room realizes she forgot to put a box of tissues on the table. These three women participated in an “If These Walls Could Talk” exercise at the Women’s and Children’s Alliance (WCA) in downtown Boise. Everyone in the room was safe; however, the 911 phone call was real, heartbreaking, and recorded.

The police arrived in time, and the woman and her children were safe that night; her husband was taken to jail. Following that particular 911 call made by her young daughter, the woman made the decision to break free of her life of abuse.

Through the WCA, the woman and her children were provided a safe home, counseling, and the training they needed to learn to live a healthy life. Sadly, this woman is far from alone in her experience with domestic violence. According to the WCA, approximately 16,000 Idaho children witness their mother or female caregiver being abused every year.

For three decades, the WCA has been providing education and awareness throughout our community, as well as vital services to women and children in violent circumstances. Each year, the WCA shelters hundreds of women and their children. Approximately 75 percent of the women who come to the WCA bring children.

Through the WCA, women and children can access:

- Secure emergency shelter (housing for 90-120 days)
- Two transitional homes
- Two 24-hour domestic violence and/or rape crisis hotlines
- Individual counseling for adults and children
- Group counseling for adults (ongoing) and children (at various times throughout the year)
- Victim therapy and support groups
- Case management
- Rape victim advocacy
- Court advocacy (for individuals experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence)
- Child and adolescent outreach
- Substance abuse counseling for women and their children

There are thousands of families here in the Treasure Valley in need of safety from domestic violence and abuse. As of mid-December, 25 children and 69 women were on the waiting list to receive counseling through the WCA.

Violence and abuse don't have to be passed down from generation to generation, and the WCA is working diligently to ensure that it is not by providing specialized counseling for children in abusive homes, helping them to heal, and giving them the tools they need to break the cycle.

Learn about domestic violence in the Treasure Valley and how the WCA is helping women and children in our community. For more information, visit the WCA's [39](#) or [click here](#) to see the WCA's [Web site](#).