



Office of
Mayor Jay Ruais
NEWS RELEASE

Contact:
Carole Alfano
Communications Director
calfano@manchesternh.gov
603-496-0412 (Cell)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 8, 2024

Mayor Announces \$600K in Funding to Keep Domestic Violence Shelter Open
City and community partners secure ARPA funds for purchase of Emily's Place building

MANCHESTER, NH – Mayor Jay Ruais announced today that the city and its community partners have secured \$600,000 from the state in unobligated ARPA funds for the purchase of the building housing Emily's Place. The domestic violence shelter had been in danger of closing when its crisis services operators REACH and the YWCA ended their partnership. REACH has joined with Bridges: Domestic and Sexual Violence Support for leadership and fiscal oversight until REACH becomes an independent, nonprofit organization.

“Domestic violence is an abhorrent crime and we must be proactive in protecting those who suffer from this abuse,” said Ruais. “That’s where shelters like Emily’s Place play such a critical role in providing crisis services and a safe place to stay. I am deeply appreciative of Governor Sununu and all of the parties involved in obligating these funds. The financial support Emily’s Place has received from the State of New Hampshire has also been made possible by the outstanding advocacy from New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services. As a result, we now have an operational and purchase plan for Emily ‘s Place moving forward, guaranteeing it will remain a vital shelter for our at-risk population.”

“When Mayor Ruais made the case for Emily’s Place, it was clear that these funds would be put to good use to ensure these important services remain in place for this vulnerable population,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “The Queen City and Manchester residents have a tireless advocate in Mayor Ruais working around the clock on their behalf. I thank the City of Manchester for its partnership on this important project!”

Amanda Grady Sexton, Director of Public Affairs at the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence spoke about the importance of finding the necessary funding for Emily 's Place, "When there was the possibility we could lose a critical emergency shelter, the Governor's Office, GOFERR, the State Legislature, and the Executive Council each did their part to ensure that funding would be available so that victims and children fleeing domestic violence would not be displaced. We're especially grateful to Mayor Ruais for his advocacy efforts on this project and for understanding the importance of maintaining life-saving services for victims of abuse in the Manchester community," she said.

Dawn Reams, Executive Director of Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services, added, "We are thrilled that the Executive Council approved the funding to purchase Emily's Place. This shelter has been a vital resource to survivors in the Manchester area for decades, and we are grateful that it will remain available to those who need it. We are so thankful to Mayor Ruais and all of the stakeholders who worked to support this project."

Background

- Emily's Place opened as a domestic violence shelter for victims of abuse and their children in Manchester in 1988. The building was donated by two private donors, and the shelter was fitted, furnished, and prepared for service through additional donations and time volunteered by community members.
- Since its creation, Emily's Place has been operated by the crisis services program at the YWCA NH, known as REACH Crisis Services (REACH), and has been sustained by state and federal domestic and sexual violence funding administered by the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.
- Emily's Place has continued to serve this at-risk population, providing both confidential advocacy services (under NH RSA 173-C) and an array of other trauma-informed services, including support with court processes and financial literacy training. The shelter currently serves 60-70 individuals annually and is the largest shelter serving victims of domestic violence in the state.
- As of July 1, 2024, REACH is no longer part of the YWCA NH. Bridges: Domestic and Sexual Violence Support (Bridges) of Nashua is providing leadership, oversight, and support for REACH as a fiscal agent. REACH has filed to become an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit and a member program of the Coalition serving the Manchester area. As a standalone organization, REACH will provide greater visibility to victims in the Manchester community.

Funding Request

- Allocate unobligated ARPA funds for a one-time expense to sustain a vital, life-saving service for some of New Hampshire's most vulnerable citizens.
- As part of this organizational transition, it was the hope of both the Coalition and REACH that Emily's Place would remain with REACH, honoring both the original charitable donation of the property and the decades of domestic violence funding that have maintained the shelter for its stated purpose.
- In the current real estate market, it would be inordinately difficult for REACH to identify and secure a suitable alternative location if it were to lose Emily's Place, creating a significant gap for survivors of domestic violence in Manchester.
- The Coalition, REACH, and Bridges as the fiscal agent are seeking funding to purchase Emily's Place from the YWCA to ensure that services continue in Manchester without disruption, both for the families currently living at Emily's Place, and for victims who will need this essential service to empower them in their pursuit of safety and security in the weeks, months, and years to come.

Domestic Violence Shelter Programs & Housing Needs of Victims

- According to statistics produced by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), between 22 and 57% of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness. We also know that **38% of all victims of domestic violence** become homeless at some point in their lives.
- A victim of domestic violence will often attempt to leave an abuser multiple times before finally escaping the violence and can, therefore, experience multiple periods of homelessness.
- Everyday crisis center advocates across the state work with survivors who need support in fleeing violence or creating security within their homes. Advocates know and understand that when housing survivors, there are exceptional considerations to be made including safety and confidentiality. Over the last four years in New Hampshire, crisis centers across the state supported nearly 2,000 adults and children for more than 161,000 nights in emergency shelters. Of those guests, 1,138 were women, 41 were men, and 758 were children.
- Emily's Place is one of 11 domestic violence shelters in New Hampshire.

###