



Our History

- 1980** Three Rosenberg residents recognized the need for domestic violence services and founded The Fort Bend County Women's Center, Inc. At its inception, a crisis hotline was installed to provide emergency counseling and referral services.
- 1981** Increased concern for the health and safety of abused women and children led to the acquisition of a shelter. A rented home in Stafford, Texas offered survivors shelter, food, clothing, respite, protection and caring reassurance for themselves and their children.
- 1986** A sexual assault component was added and expanded to include a part-time staff person. The Personal Accompaniment Volunteer program was added to provide clients with extra support. A George Foundation grant made the permanent acquisition of a shelter facility possible and increased the shelter's capacity from 21 to 30 residents.
- 1989** The new Resale Center yielded over \$32,000 during its first year of operation.
- 1990** The hotline expanded to a 24-hour service. Increased networking with Polly Ryan Memorial Hospital (now Oak Bend Medical Center) provided immediate assistance to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- 1991** A 3,000 square foot home, donated by Mr. and Mrs. John Lipinski, was renovated by the Knights of Columbus and converted into a facility for mothers with teenage boys.
- 1992** A children's program was added to work actively with clients' children, provide assessment tools, parenting skills, experiential field trips and learning opportunities for children and their parents. Because many clients were leaving the shelter with insufficient skills to maintain an independent household, a transitional housing program was added. This program provided clients with rental assistance, in-home visits and other support for an 8-month period after leaving the shelter. The program reduced the rate of women returning to their batterer from 65% to 10%.
- 1993** Life skills training was added including attire for interviews, resume preparation and a computerized GED training program. Phase I of shelter renovation was completed. The Resale Center moved to larger quarters at 416 Highway 90A.
- 1995** The Resale Center moved and expanded to open an "As-Is Shop," specializing in reduced price merchandise, and added a "Sweet Charity" furniture pick-up service. A major reorganization of the Center was completed. The Director of Sexual Assault was made a full-time position, enabling further expansion of the Sexual Assault Program.
- 1996** Phase II of the shelter renovations and installation of a two-room building for the children's program was completed.
- 1998** FBWC's focus became a three-tiered approach to domestic violence: 1) continuation and expansion of Shelter programs, 2) increased education in the schools down to the elementary level to stop intergenerational family violence, 3) non-resident counseling,

childcare, literacy services, job training, case management and other supportive services that address the multiple needs of women who leave to begin new violence-free lives. A capital campaign was launched that successfully raised over \$2 million to build a new shelter.

- 2001** The agency's new state-of-the-art shelter was opened. The new facility was built to house 60-65 women and children, a 50% increase over the previous shelter. It allowed the Center to add features such as an on-site clinic and learning resource center. Also, the children's area more than doubled and a teen room was included so that teens' special needs could be addressed.
- 2005** The Fort Bend Women's Center celebrated 25 years of service to Fort Bend County, Harris County and other surrounding counties. The Center continues to provide emergency shelter, crisis intervention, counseling, support services, and educational outreach to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children.
- 2010** The Fort Bend County Women's Center celebrates its 30th anniversary and is proud to have served more than 35,000 women and children! From a single hotline to a full-service agency able to provide counseling, case management, advocacy, learning resources, outreach and so much more to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, the Women's Center has been a beacon of hope for the community.
- 2014** The Women's Center opened a brand new, specially designed building in Richmond. As well as providing our original PennyWise store with much larger premises, the building is also home to the Center's management offices.

PennyWise's Stafford store relocated to new, larger premises.

Fort Bend Women's Center continues to serve almost 1600 individuals every year through its range of services.

- 2015** FBWC celebrated its 35th anniversary with a special evening featuring Ashley Judd and 200 guests.
- 2016** PennyWise is growing! FBWC opened its second Donation Center in Katy making it easier for residents in West Fort Bend County to donate.