



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES  
Where Meeting Basic Needs Inspires Hope

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



### **ABOUT THE COVER**

Youth participants from Community Advocates Milwaukee Brighter Futures' agencies helped create the artwork for this Annual Report. Youth from COA, the Latino Community Center, Milwaukee Christian Center, and Silver Spring Neighborhood Center created drawings based on the Community Advocates logo and this year's theme — Sometimes Hope Needs a Helping Hand. Congratulations to the young artists whose drawings appear on the cover of this report and thank you to the more than 60 participants who shared their hopes for the future with all of us.



## Dear Friends,

Sometimes hope needs a helping hand. We offer both at Community Advocates.

2008 marked a year in which we saw renewed dedication to meeting the basic needs of all Milwaukeeans — by local, regional and national funders, by community-based organizations and the private sector. This is no coincidence. The precarious state of the economy has strained an already burdened social service system with increasing need for basic services by an increasing number of families who are experiencing homelessness, poor nutrition, utilities disconnections and inadequate health care.

Community Advocates has never strayed from our mission to address these needs.

We offer that helping hand to the abused mother who will not attend a parent-teacher meeting because of a black eye or worse. We find a home for the laid-off worker who now wakes up in the back seat of a car instead of a bed. We provide transportation for the disabled man who was unable to leave his home. We help keep the lights on so a student can finish her homework. We help keep the heat on so that families need not huddle together under one blanket. We send the rent check to the landlord so a client with mental illness doesn't "invest" it with a "friend".

### VISION

*A community in which each person envisions a future with hope.*

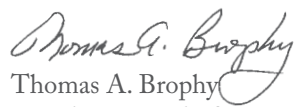
### MISSION

*To provide individuals and families with advocacy and services that meet their basic needs so they may live in dignity.*

Community Advocates has added additional staff, programs and resources to meet the increasing needs of our customers. Three new board members have volunteered their time and expertise to help Community Advocates carry out its mission. Because of the dedication and hard work of our staff, board, volunteers and friends, more than 50,000 people — adults, children, and entire families — have received basic needs advocacy services through Community Advocates this year alone.

We want to thank all Community Advocates' staff and friends for providing the helping hands that can turn hope into hope fulfilled.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas A. Brophy  
President, Board of Directors

  
Joseph L. Volk  
Executive Director



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# Autumn West Safe Haven



*Doug Kay, Todd Stafford and Matt Raymond*

## In danger of becoming homeless? Have you called Community Advocates?

In 2008, the national office of the American Red Cross advised local branches to transfer or suspend programs that no longer directly addressed its mission of emergency preparedness and disaster relief.

So naturally, when the American Red Cross of Southeastern Wisconsin needed to find a home for their Autumn West Safe Haven program and Homeless Outreach Nursing Center, they called Community Advocates.

Initially established as a rapid response to provide essential services and housing for homeless, mentally ill individuals in Milwaukee, Autumn West's services have evolved into proactive and comprehensive assistance programs.

To preserve these necessary services, the local American Red Cross transitioned the programs, their entire staff, and all the residents to the administration of Community Advocates—and it's a perfect fit.

*Autumn West is a safe haven project that provides 20 short-term housing beds serving more than 30 men and women who are homeless and mentally ill each year. 75% of all residents move into safe, affordable permanent or transitional housing after 7-12 months.*

Todd Stafford was a resident who made the transition. For more than two years, Todd was homeless. He was able to stay with friends and sleep on their couches, but he really had no place to call his own. Todd suffers from depression and has a history of multiple suicide attempts.

Todd found hope when he found his way to Autumn West and was able to access Community Advocates' in-house, wraparound services. Staff helped Todd apply for FoodShare and made sure he had transportation to his regular medical appointments. He has applied for disability benefits and is now living in his own apartment.

Now, Todd wants to give back. So he volunteers in the food pantry at the Mission of Christ Lutheran Church, sharing his time and his hope with others.

Welcome home, Todd.



*Cleo Walls and Ruthie Lombardo,  
Manager of Volunteer Services*

## **VOLUNTEERS**

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and clients, we extend a sincere thank you to our loyal volunteers who graciously donated their precious gifts of time in 2008. Volunteers are a valuable extension of our staff that enrich our services with their skills and commitment. We are honored to give special thanks to Cleo Walls and Marion Szudrowitz who have donated 23 and 18 years, respectively, to the Milwaukee Women's Center Emergency Shelter/Crisis Line.

In 2008, 202 volunteers donated 4,496 hours of their time valued at \$91,049. Thank You.

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# Milwaukee Women's Center



## Hope begins with you.

In 2008, the Milwaukee Women's Center remained a vital resource for women and children victimized by domestic violence and perpetrators of domestic violence seeking to change abusive and controlling behaviors.

As a result of the diminished economy, the Milwaukee Women's Center experienced an increase in the number of people seeking our assistance. In households where the potential for domestic violence exists, a declining economy and increased stressors such as unemployment can increase the likelihood that violence will occur. The Center saw a rise in clients facing unemployment and eviction as, absent the minimum-wage jobs which once provided some degree of financial independence, many clients fled abusive homes with little means of supporting themselves.

In the face of this increased need, your support allowed the Center to retain the financial stability necessary to provide critical services to victims of domestic violence. Private donations helped us to provide emergency shelter and support to 137 women and their 202 children fleeing their abusers. Nearly 70% of the adult women who requested housing assistance while in shelter successfully transitioned to safe, independent housing upon leaving shelter.

Additionally in 2008 the Milwaukee Women's Center:

- Fielded 10,872 calls through the 24-hour crisis line. Each caller was assisted with safety planning, crisis intervention, and referral and access to appropriate community resources.
- Provided services and support to 58 women age 50 and older — including crisis counseling, case management and weekly support groups — through the Older Abused Women's Program.
- Supplied rent and utility assistance to 67 low-income, homeless families seeking safe, stable housing away from their abusers.
- Counseled 64 men who had a history of being abusive toward their intimate partners and other family members. 79% of these men completed all of the program requirements and had not re-offended six months after completing the program.

Thank you for supporting our mission to provide holistic care to empower women and families who are experiencing abuse to live safe, independent and healthy lives. Your involvement saves lives.



**MILWAUKEE WOMEN'S CENTER**  
*A Division of Community Advocates*  
Where Abuse Ends and Hope Begins





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# Public Policy Institute



“Addiction is a disease. Let’s treat it that way.”

## MILWAUKEE ADDICTION TREATMENT INITIATIVE

Roughly 82,000 Milwaukee County residents need — but do not receive — treatment for alcohol or drug addiction. The vast majority of these individuals lack health insurance, adequate coverage, or accessible treatment facilities.

In 2008, Community Advocates received one of eight competitive grants from the Open Society Institute of the George Soros Foundation to fund the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI). In partnership with ten local governmental and advocacy groups, the initiative was established to expand affordable, accessible addiction treatment for all who need it.

MATI’s proactive approach is to advocate for parity coverage and treatment for addiction like any other chronic health condition.

Under the leadership of CA’s Public Policy Institute Director, David Riemer, MATI has grown to include participation by more than 100 local and state organizations and public health professionals.

Matching funds for the initiative have been provided by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, the Helen Bader Foundation and the Zilber Family Foundation.

## MENTAL HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

Paula John, a respected and long-time advocate for the rights of persons suffering from mental illness, announced a \$300,000 gift from Wildflower Communities to Community Advocates to fund the Mental Health Policy Project.

This project is a multiyear collaboration among local mental health advocates, public health organizations and policymakers to ensure the availability of mental health services in Milwaukee County and to increase coordination between agencies that serve persons suffering from mental illness.

The stigma attached to those suffering from mental illness has long been a barrier to providing appropriate treatment and services. People suffering from mental illness comprise the most vulnerable members of society, the poorest of the poor. Yet we treat them as criminals, jail them without treatment or resign them to homelessness.

Wildflower Communities’ gift underscores CA’s commitment to Milwaukee’s mentally ill and homeless populations because we know that with policies supporting medication, appropriate supervision and compassion, people suffering from mental illness can lead stable lives and be fully functioning and contributing members of society.



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# Health Care Advocacy



*Bobbie Coria and Irma Gomez*

## MedLine: The call for help, the call for hope.

Community Advocates' Health Care Services Department is the frontline responder to individuals and families needing assistance with benefits enrollment and advocacy for affordable insurance and hospitalization issues. CA also operates MedLine, the only existing health care advocacy hotline in Milwaukee.

Clients call for a variety of reasons. They may be unable to access supportive health care services for lack of insurance; are unaware of or ineligible for public health care programs; have been denied coverage or services; have overwhelming medical bills; or, are simply confused by the rules and regulations.

CA staff responds to approximately 90 calls each month resulting in 1,000 cases annually. Approximately 75% of all callers referred to CA's Health Care Advocacy programs become clients who receive case management and services. More than 80% report a successful outcome to their health care access needs.

One of those MedLine callers was Irma Gomez who spoke and understood very little English.

*"Irma taught me about perseverance and courage. She got lost in a complicated and confusing system and thought she had nowhere else to turn. I'm proud that every day I can help people like Irma."*

*-Bobbie Coria, Health Care Advocate*

Irma had no income, was homebound, suffered from diabetes, arthritis and had spinal problems that did not allow her to work. Her application for SSI benefits was denied — just like the more than 70% of all those who apply.

CA's Barbara "Bobbie" Coria became Irma's health care advocate. She translated documents and information while helping her apply for the General Assistance Medical Program and then for Milwaukee County's Interim Disability Assistance Program.

Bobbie referred Irma to CA's Disabilities Advocate, Fred Burg, for help with her SSI appeal. Her appeal was successful and she is receiving treatment for her diabetes and other health problems.

Irma's life has improved enormously with the added joy of a recent marriage.

Congratulations, Irma.



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# What We Do

## Services that inspire hope.

### BASIC NEEDS ADVOCACY

Community Advocates' programs and services focus on meeting the basic needs of individuals and families in Milwaukee. What are basic needs? They are defined as "the absolute minimum resources necessary for long-term physical well-being." These include sustainable housing and adequate health care; affordable heat and utilities; essential daily nutrition; the assurance of personal safety; and the means to maintain them.

Our clients work in partnership with CA staff to help meet identified needs. Advocates further encourage and assist clients to access the resources and skills training that will enable them to improve their lives through greater self-sufficiency.

### PROGRAM AND SERVICE AREAS

Within the **Housing Department**, more than ten programs assist clients in solving a wide-range of housing issues. Services include homelessness prevention activities, home needs loans, rent abatement, tenant-landlord counseling, rent and security deposit assistance, relocation from substandard housing and housing-related crisis intervention.

The **Health Care Department** staff assists hospital patients with applications for SSI, T-19, FoodShare and childcare benefits, enrollment for clients in BadgerCare programs and Medicaid, and provides information, referrals, resources and advocacy for health care needs through the emergency hotline (MedLine) and through extensive community outreach services.

Community Advocates' **Disabilities Department** provides legal and lay representation for SSI appeals, assessment of disability claims and SSI application assistance and advocacy.

The **Behavioral Health Department** offers case management and protective payment services for chronically homeless single adults with disabilities. The Autumn West Safe Haven provides a 27-bed housing program for homeless, mentally ill adults. The Homeless Outreach Nursing Center

provides mental health-related services to the homeless and outreach services to people on the streets, at meal sites and in emergency shelters.

The **Utilities Department** provides energy education workshops, mediation to resolve utility disputes and past due bills, and assistance in developing affordable utility and telephone payment plans to avoid service interruption and disconnection.

The **Milwaukee Women's Center Division** provides emergency shelter and intervention, prevention and treatment services for battered women and their children, a 24-hour crisis line, specialized services and support for older abused women, batterers' treatment, case management to meet housing and other basic needs, and counseling to address domestic violence and substance abuse issues.

Community Advocates' **Public Policy Institute** identifies and focuses on issues that affect low-income individuals and families and develops effective strategies and actions to bring about social policy change.

### COLLABORATIONS

Community Advocates serves as the lead agency or founder of the following:

**Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative** is Milwaukee's largest coalition of child, youth and family-serving agencies working together to prevent child abuse, early non-marital pregnancy, violence and alcohol/drug abuse.

**Milwaukee Continuum of Care** is the 100 member planning body for all homeless services in Milwaukee.

**HealthWatch** is an 80-member coalition of health service providers and advocates that provide strategy and oversight to address the health care needs of Milwaukee's low-income and underserved populations.



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# Accomplishments



In 2008, Community Advocates provided services, information, referrals and advocacy to more than 50,000 people in Milwaukee.

- Housing Services received more than 10,000 calls to assist in tenant landlord issues and provided intervention, trainings and negotiation leading to successful resolutions.
- 4,000 households were provided with secure and affordable permanent housing or received assistance to maintain existing housing after facing eviction.
- Disabilities Services staff represented clients in 148 successful SSI appeals; representing an 84% success rate.
- Health Care Services staff trained over 180 MPS nurses and school social workers to complete BadgerCare+ online applications for Milwaukee's uninsured/underinsured children.
- Utilities staff helped maintain uninterrupted services or were able to re-establish services after disconnection for more than 3,000 households.

# Partners



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# Financials

## Consolidated Statements of Financial Position Year End December 31, 2008

### ASSETS

#### *Current assets:*

Cash and equivalents	\$	740,005
Certificates of deposit		478,065
Receivables		
Grants		551,473
Pledges – Current Portion		225,000
Other		7,809
Prepaid expenses and deposits		6,649
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2,009,001</b>

#### *Restricted assets:*

Restricted cash		190,390
Restricted Colortyme		
Cash and cash equivalents		34,315
Certificates of deposit		122,502
<b>Total restricted assets</b>		<b>347,207</b>

#### *Property and equipment:*

Land, buildings and improvements		805,316
Furniture and equipment		199,542
Vehicle		17,143
Total property and equipment		1,022,001
Less accumulated depreciation		325,316

Property and equipment – Net 696,685

#### *Other assets:*

Goodwill		118,402
Pledges receivable, less current portion		249,617
<b>Total other assets</b>		<b>368,019</b>

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$ 3,420,912

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

#### *Current liabilities:*

Current portion of notes payable	\$	47,284
Accounts payable		87,743
Subcontracts payable		203,663
Accrued payroll and related liabilities		206,872
Accrued pension		50,083
Deferred revenue		24,294
Other accrued expenses		6,393
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>623,332</b>

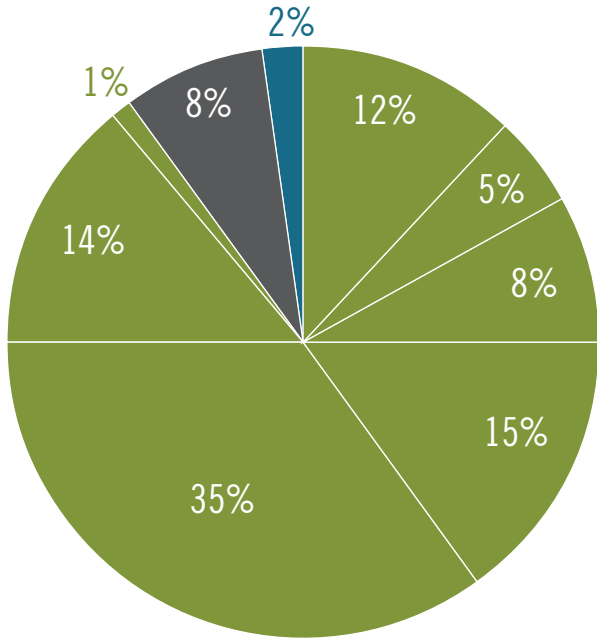
Client trust payable		190,390
Notes payable, less current portion		552,175
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>1,365,897</b>

#### *Net assets:*

Unrestricted		1,042,045
Temporarily restricted		1,012,970
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>2,055,015</b>

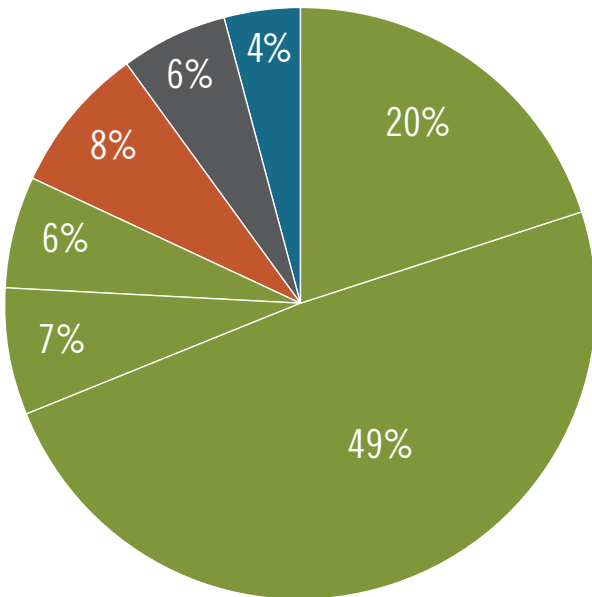
**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** \$ 3,420,912





## EXPENSES

<b>PROGRAM SERVICES</b>	<b>90%</b>
Housing	12%
Utilities	5%
Health Care/Disabilities	8%
Case Management	15%
Community Coalitions	35%
Milwaukee Women's Center	14%
Public Policy Institute	1%
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>FUNDRAISING/OTHER</b>	<b>2%</b>



## INCOME

<b>GOVERNMENT GRANTS</b>	<b>82%</b>
Federal	20%
State	49%
County	7%
City	6%
<b>CONTRACTS</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>FOUNDATIONS/CORPORATIONS</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS/OTHER</b>	<b>4%</b>

Total Agency Revenue	\$ 8,110,768
Total Agency Expenses	\$ 7,523,662
Fund Balance Increase	\$ 587,106

# Donors

Special thanks to the following corporations, foundations, individuals, and civic and religious organizations for supporting our mission. Your generosity creates a world of hope for those we serve.

## \$100,000+

Greater Milwaukee Foundation  
Open Society Institute of the  
George Soros Foundation  
Wildflower Communities

## \$50,000+

Helen Bader Foundation

## \$25,000+

Faye McBeath Foundation  
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## \$10,000+

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*Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We apologize if any errors have occurred. For more information, please contact the Development Office at Community Advocates at (414) 270-2942 or the Milwaukee Women's Center at (414) 270-2956. Thank you.*



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