

## **First County Bank Foundation Donates to Support Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling, Advocacy, and Prevention Education Programs**

***The Center supports the communities of Weston, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Westport, and Wilton.***

Written by Ann McCarthy

The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling & Education (The Center) announced Tuesday that the First County Bank Foundation has granted The Center \$5000 to fuel its crisis counseling, advocacy, and prevention education programs. Over the last year alone, The Center served over 14,000 people in Lower Fairfield County.

“The First County Bank Foundation has partnered with The Center for over a decade,” shared Ivonne Zucco, The Center’s Executive Director. “We are honored by this long-standing relationship and are grateful for their support.”

The Center’s counseling, advocacy, and prevention education programs work together to create a safety net for Lower Fairfield County. The funding from the First County Bank Foundation will help ensure that the following programs of The Center remain available:

- Free 24/7 Hotline Services, in both English and Spanish
- Free individual crisis counseling and support groups for survivors and their families
- Sexual violence prevention education to youth in kindergarten through college, and the community at large
- The Center’s participation on two teams that provide integrated, cross-disciplinary response to allegations of child sexual abuse.

The statistics around sexual assault are harrowing, and speak to the significant need for The Center's crisis counseling, advocacy and prevention education services. One in three girls and one in six boys will become a victim of sexual assault before the age of 18 (as reported by The National Center for Victims of Crime). Additionally, the risk of sexual assault is four times higher for women ages 16-24 than for any other age group, and both teenagers and young adults are the age group at greatest risk. Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services shares that nearly one in five Connecticut residents have experienced a sexual assault in their lifetime and that 14% experienced childhood sexual assault.

Zucco commented: "In the 35 years of The Center's existence, progress has been made around the issue of sexual violence. There is still so much work to do, and the partnership of organizations like the First County Bank Foundation makes our continued efforts possible.

**About The Center:** Serving Lower Fairfield County since 1979, The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling and Education provides free, 24-hour confidential help to men, women and children who have experienced any form of sexual assault. Additionally, it provides age-appropriate personal safety classes for youth ages 5 – 21 to reduce their risk of becoming a victim, and education/awareness programs for the community at large. The Center supports the communities of Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.

**About First County Bank Foundation:** The First County Bank Foundation, which was established in 2001 to honor the bank's 150th anniversary, contributes generously to non-profit organizations that support community and economic development; increase the availability of affordable housing and programs that support quality of life and educational enrichment for families and children. As a mutual community bank with no shareholders, First County Bank considers contributions made by the Foundation a means of paying dividends back to the local communities it serves. Since 2001, the First County Bank Foundation has awarded

over 1,000 individual grants, worth \$6.4 million. The Foundation awarded over 100 grants totaling almost \$600,000 in 2014.

**Read More:** <http://patch.com/connecticut/weston-ct/first-county-bank-foundation-donates-support-sexual-assault-crisis-counseling-advocacy-prevention>