



# Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center announces retirement of longtime Director and Promotion of Staff**

Wichita, Kan. – Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center (WASAC) is honored to announce that Kathy Williams, longtime Executive Director who began as an advocate at WASAC, is retiring from the role effective January 31, 2024.

“This work has been extremely important to me, and it has evolved into an opportunity to support not just victims/survivors but to help mentor advocates and build our program so that we could be a true beacon of hope and healing in our communities,” said Kathy Williams. “We have seen so much change since I first started. We have so much to be hopeful for, and I am grateful for the chance to have been a part of that and know that the work will continue with new leadership.”

The Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center works with individuals and communities through comprehensive services and education to create a culture of intolerance for sexual violence and an atmosphere of healing for those impacted by it. We strive towards a community free of the occurrence and threat of sexual violence.

Williams joined WASAC in 1988 as an advocate, supporting various programs for the next five years before she moved on to other opportunities in 1993. In December of 1999, Williams rejoined WASAC as Executive Director. In her role as executive director, Williams worked with Wichita area domestic violence organizations and advocates to build the Coordinated Community Response working group – fostering cooperation and enabling advocates to better serve survivors and build community partners.

“At the time when I came back as Executive Director, I had a teenage daughter, said Williams. “Knowing the challenges and the dangers still out there, I knew that I could do something that would be a contribution towards everyone being able to feel safe in their lives and their relationships.”

Williams said her daughter, and later her grandson and granddaughter, were a way to ground her work in advocacy in the real-life moments people face.

“Everyone should recognize that violence doesn’t discriminate based on gender, age, or background. We all need to look out for each other and not think, ‘Oh, it can’t happen to them because they don’t look like victims.’ We serve everyone because everyone deserves to be seen and supported.”

Williams thanked the WASAC Board for their support and dedication to the programs and advocates that have led to so much progress and made it possible for WASAC to continue their work. Their sustained commitment to advocacy made it possible for WASAC to develop a relationship with law enforcement,



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prosecutors, and the healthcare community, which has led to survivors being able to get justice and have their cases treated with compassion.

“We have had an amazing team of dedicated advocates and volunteers who have been a part of WASAC and made a difference in the lives of survivors and their families,” said Williams. “I have been humbled by the survivors who have come to us at WASAC for help. They have shared some of their toughest moments with us, and their strength and resolve to have the courage to move forward kept me going.”

WASAC is honored to announce that Mary Stolz, currently the Director of Advocacy, will be the Executive Director following Williams’ retirement. Stolz worked as an advocate at WASAC immediately following graduation from K-State in 2006. In 2010, she left to work as a Program Manager at the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center in Hutchinson, providing training and technical assistance on sexual and domestic violence. At that time, Stolz earned her Master’s Degree in Social Work from Wichita State and focused her graduate research on interventions for survivors of sexual violence that increase self-compassion. Fortunately, she returned in 2012 to a leadership role at WASAC, which she has done for the past 11 years. Her experience, compassion, and insights into sexual violence make her an excellent choice for Executive Director of WASAC.

Free and confidential help is available 24/7 for individuals experiencing sexual violence. Those seeking help may contact WASAC at 316-263-0185 or the Kansas State Hotline at 888-363-2287 to find their local sexual and domestic violence advocacy program at [www.kcsdv.org/find-help](http://www.kcsdv.org/find-help).