



National Women's Shelter Network

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Washington, D.C. | January 2025

Shelters United for Women, Children & Families
Saving and Changing Lives

Conference Venue:

Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20009

Dates: **January 27th - 30th**

Sponsored by

Sponsored by the National Women's Shelter Network, Inc.

DAY 1

Monday, January 27th

Noon – 8pm

REGISTRATION & WELCOME

Meet and greet / Refreshments:

NWSN Team

2pm – 5:30pm



THE FORUM: Networking, Socializing and Resource Workshopping

The Forum is a welcoming place to meet and greet, build connections, discover new resources, consult with experts, sit and relax with each other in shared community and learning. Meet our curated group of invitees with special offerings for NWSN members, designed to help shelter leaders build their organizational infrastructure and capacity, improve efficiency and effectiveness, save time, and save money. Join us at the Forum!

Lead Organizer: Ciara Jones, NWSN Supportive Services Director

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

- Maya Angelou

6pm - 8pm

LITE DINNER RECEPTION

Welcome and Thank You's:

NWSN Officers
& Board of Directors



DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

8:30am – 9am

Welcome, Thank You's & Conference Launch Video

Speakers: Grettel Jiménez-Singer, NWSN Director | Shakoya Green Long, NWSN Board Vice President



9am – 9:30am

KEYNOTE BREAKFAST

WHO WE SERVE - A DEEP DIVE:

Understanding the Intersections of Gender-Based Violence, Trauma and Homelessness; Overwhelming Numbers of Children and Youth; Disproportionate Representation of Persons of Color; Rise in Seniors; LGBTQIA2S+; Youth; Trafficking Victims/Survivors; Mental Health, Medical Conditions, Disabilities and Other Special Needs; Chronicity. The women and children we serve are strong, resilient, survivors, so richly deserving of respect, dignity, safety, shelter in transition, a home and love. We empower with trauma-informed sanctuary, supportive services, education, tools, and resources to help women, children and families succeed, and build safer, happier, brighter futures.

Speaker: Constance Collins, NWSN Executive Director

9:30am – 5:30pm

THE FORUM: Networking, Socializing and Resource Workshopping

The Forum is a welcoming place to meet and greet, build connections, discover new resources, consult with experts, sit and relax with each other in shared community and learning. Meet our curated group of invitees with special offerings for NWSN members, designed to help shelter leaders build their organizational infrastructure and capacity, improve efficiency and effectiveness, save time, and save money. Join us at the Forum!

Lead Organizer: Ciara Jones, NWSN Supportive Services Director

DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

9:30am – 10:30am

FUNDAMENTALS OF TRAUMA-INFORMED SHELTER AND SAFE HAVEN PROGRAMS:

Welcoming In-Take; Person-Centered Services; Therapeutic Supports; Enriching Programming; and Successful Exits. Basic principles of creating trauma-informed environments, person-centered, responsive and empowering services, integrating health and mental health supports, enriched and healing programming, educational advancement, peer specialists and mentors, and keys to successful exits.

Panelists: Alexis Steel, President, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children | Kimberly Livsey, Chief Program Officer, Atlanta Rescue Mission | Leslie Ellis-Lang, Managing Director Child and Youth Services, CARF International | Dominique Alex, CEO, Mary's Place Family Shelter | Brenda Rosario, Provider Enrollment Processor, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Board of Trustees, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children, NWSN Advisory Board Member | Katie O'Brien, Executive Director, Rose Haven | Hannah Stohler, Executive Director, Marguerite's Place, Inc.

10:45am – 11:45am

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING (DEI&B):

What does it mean, why is it important, and the challenges, strategies and steps to achieving DEI&B in your organization, shelter environment, programs and supportive services. In addition to exploring the benefits of a culture rich in diversity, equity, inclusivity and belonging in shelters and safe haven programs, this panel will explain how and why DEI&B is the foundation for a truly trauma-informed environment, effective programming and supportive services, and successful outcomes for those we serve.

Panelists: Margaret Mitchell, Executive Director, YWCA USA | Emily Sepulveda Wheeland, Executive Director, The Delores Project

12pm – 12:45pm

ELEVATING THE VOICES OF THOSE WE SERVE & ENGAGING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND ALUMNI IN YOUR ORGANIZATION, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Program participants and alumni of your program offer the invaluable voices of persons served. Learn how to integrate alumni at all levels of your organization and develop pathways to full and meaningful engagement and participation. Discover the benefits of listening, investing in and empowering those we serve, and why this is probably your most important takeaway from this conference.

Moderator: Ciara Jones, NWSN Supportive Services Director

Panelists: NWSN Advisory Board: Sharonee Delevante, Director of Operations, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Brenda Rosario, Provider Enrollment Processor, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Board of Trustees, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children | Martha Figueroa, Operations Manager, Thomas House Family Shelter | Ronide Blanc, Director, Lotus House Thrift Chic Boutique | Runisha Johnson, Program Coordinator, Lotus House Women's Shelter



DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

12:45pm – 1:45pm

KEYNOTE LUNCHEON

EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT
COMING SOON!

2pm – 3pm

SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, TRAFFICKING AND TRAUMA FROM INTAKE TO SUCCESSFUL EXITS:

Trafficking and gender-based violence are on the rise and victims/survivors are too often invisible in shelters. Gender-based violence and crime victimization are a lead cause of homelessness, and complex trauma often underlies chronicity. This panel of experts will shed light on the importance of identifying and understanding the unique experiences of victims and survivors of gender-based violence, trafficking and trauma, how shelters can support their healing and empower them to safer, healthier lives for successful transitions to their new homes. It is vital that we recognize the importance of, and ways to provide person-centered health and mental health care, supportive services, enriched resources, programming and time to help women and children reclaim their lives and build the foundation for brighter futures as we aim to transform the trauma of homelessness into windows of opportunity.

Moderator: Laura Klinefelter, LMHC, CAP, Intake Director and Victims Services Specialist, Lotus House Women's Shelter

Panelists: Dr. JoNell Enfantis Potter, PhD, APRN, FAAN, Professor of Obstetrics-Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine | Dr. Cynthia Rivera, M.D., F.A.C.P., Program Director Infectious Diseases Fellowship, Mt. Sinai Medical Center, Medical Director, Midway Speciality Care Center | Jacqueline Collazo, LMHC, Senior Director Domestic Violence Services, Volunteers of America of Greater New York | Dr. Edie Zusman, MD, MBA, FAANS, Trauma Neurosurgeon, Neuroscience Partners | Honorable Katherine Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida (Miami-Dade)

DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

3:15pm – 4:15pm

SUPPORTING AN AGING GENERATION:

Elders in shelters and on the streets are on the rise! The boomer generation is aging, facing deep economic insecurity in the post-pandemic wave of rising costs and medical expenses, and struggling with loss of loved ones and their homes. Understanding and supporting their special needs is vitally important. They are experiencing untold grief and loss at a time in life when they are most vulnerable. There may be important medical and mental health concerns to address, in addition to the challenges of aging. Post-exit safety plans and services are vital. Learn how to help them heal, strengthen, build resilience and community connections, and thrive for successful transitions.

Moderator: Carly Grimm, JD, Director, Lotus Endowment Fund, Inc.

Panelists: Dr. Kelly Bruno-Nelson, DSW, Executive Director, Medical Cal AIM, CalOptima Health | Dr. Wendy Lichtenthal, PhD, FT, FAPOS, Director for the Center for Advancement of Bereavement Care, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine | Rosario Trejo, Deputy Housing Program Officer, Downtown Women's Center | Stephanie Padro, LMFT, Deputy Director Clinical Programs, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Kim Despres, DHA, RN, CEO, Circle the City



4:30pm – 5:30pm

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS MODELS FOR PARTNERSHIP:

Deeply resource constrained shelters and safe haven programs struggle daily with gaps and needs, barriers and challenges to accessing health and mental health care for those they serve. This panel of experts will explore collaborative solutions and real-world strategies for increasing access to health and mental health services in shelter and safe haven programs through deep engagement with community partners and providers. Learn how you can find willing collaborators and implement partnership solutions in your community to better serve sheltered women, children and families.

Moderator: Jennifer Hanlon Wigon, Chief Executive Director, Women's Lunch Place

Panelists: Dr. Jim O'Connell, MD, President, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) | Dr. Eileen Reilly, MD, Women's Lunch Place Founder and BHCHP Street Team | Dr. Paulo Graziano, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Department of Child Psychology, Florida International University | Dr. Shana Cox, LCSW, PsyD, Deputy Director of Children's Services, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Ariana Gordillo De Vivero, Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics | Beatrice Gonzalez, Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter

DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2pm - 5:30pm

2pm – 3pm

1) UNDERSTANDING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF SHELTERED CHILDREN, MOTHERS AND MOTHERS-TO-BE AND EFFECTIVE THERAPEUTIC SUPPORTS TO ADVANCE THEIR WELLBEING SESSION 1 OF 2:

Learn the latest lessons from groundbreaking research into the developmental status, social and emotional wellbeing and trauma histories of sheltered children, the parental stress and mental health of mothers and mothers-to-be, and the interaction between mothers and their children so that you can provide and connect them to interventions, supports and resources to meet their needs. Healing and strengthening children and families can help break cycles of violence, abuse, poverty and homelessness. We know the events leading up to and including homelessness are stressful for mothers and children. Understanding their needs is the first step. This is the first of a double session that dives deeply into the special needs of sheltered children and mothers and the evidence based assessments that were used to identify those needs, led by national experts in child psychology and maternal mental health experienced in providing evidence-based assessments and supportive services to sheltered women and children.

Moderator: Dr. Paulo Graziano, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Department of Child Psychology, Florida International University

Panelists: Dr. Shana Cox, LCSW, PsyD, Deputy Director of Children's Services, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Muriel Ayala, LCSW, Director of Children's Services, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Sharonee Delevante, Operations Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter, NWSN Advisory Board Member

DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

2pm – 3pm *continued*

2) BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND BRIDGING SYSTEMS

Too often homeless and domestic violence continuum of care have operated in silos, creating confusion and barriers for survivors of gender-based violence. Discover the Domestic Violence Homeless Services Coalition, a groundbreaking model co-designed with survivors of both housing instability and gender-based violence. This coalition model has shown proven results in integrating homeless and domestic violence systems, breaking down barriers, improving survivor access to housing, enhancing information sharing, expanding educational offerings, and deepening collaboration to better support survivors. Learn how to build and fund a similar model in your community. Together, we are stronger!

Presenters: Amy Turk, CEO, Downtown Women's Center | Debbie Chang, CEO and President, Blue Shield Foundation | Suzanne Marcus, Gender-Based Violence and Housing Subject Matter Expert, The Cloudburst Group

3) HARM REDUCTION, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SUPPORT SHELTER PROGRAMS

Explore the continuum of best and promising practices and programs for persons with substance use disorders. Learn new trauma-informed strategies for women seeking shelter that support their recovery, treatment and/or reduce harm, minimize loss of life, and help assure successful transitions. Join this insightful array of programs on the continuum of care, share and learn.

Moderator: Kimberly Roberts, LCSW, CEO, LA Familia Housing - The Arroyo House

Panelists: Sam Tucker, LCSW, Director of Interim Housing, LA Familia Housing - The Arroyo House | David Pretince, President and CEO, The Midnight Mission

4) SAFE PARKING PROGRAMS ARE SPRINGING UP ACROSS THE NATION

Learn about supportive safe parking programs that have developed in response to the rising numbers of people experiencing homelessness. Providers are working hard to create safe spaces for those with vehicles and layering their parking lots with supportive services to help women, children and families successfully transition. They say necessity is the mother of invention!

Panelists: Kristine Schwarz, Executive Director, NBCC dba New Beginnings Counseling Center and Cassie Roach, Safe Parking Program Director, New Beginnings Counseling Center

5) ADVANCING ECONOMIC EQUITY FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

There is no safety for survivors of gender-based violence without economic security. And while anyone can experience gender-based violence, not everyone has access to the resources needed to get, be, and stay safe. Since 2007, the Center for Survivor Agency and Justice has advanced economic equity for survivors across the nation. This session will offer research and experience on the connection between economic security and domestic violence and share CSAJ's work to enhance individual advocacy, strengthen organizations and communities, and fuel systems and policy change that transforms the economic landscape facing survivors. Participants will have opportunities to apply these approaches to their own organizations and policy advocacy.

Presenters: Erika Sussman, Founder & Executive Director, and Mona Muro, Public Policy Manager, Center for Survivor Agency and Justice



DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

2pm – 3pm *continued*

6) THE POWER OF SECTION 8 PRIORITIZATION AND COLLABORATION TO END HOMELESSNESS

Imagine a housing authority choosing to prioritize sheltered individuals and families, working closely in concert with shelter teams, in turn working closely in concert with property owners, to help clients transition more swiftly from shelter to housing and remain stably housed. Brown County Housing Authority, Green Bay Wisconsin, did! The results are shorter shelter stays and successful outcomes - a model for communities large and small across the nation. Their innovative work together includes close collaboration with shelter teams for supportive services and solid relationships between those same shelters and landlords. Learn more about how government, nonprofits, and businesses can innovate and collaborate to end homelessness in your community. Together we are stronger!

Moderator: Shannon Wienandt, CEO, House of Hope

Panelists: Patrick Leifker, Executive Director, Brown County Housing Authority | Beth Hudak, Director of Community Engagement, House of Hope

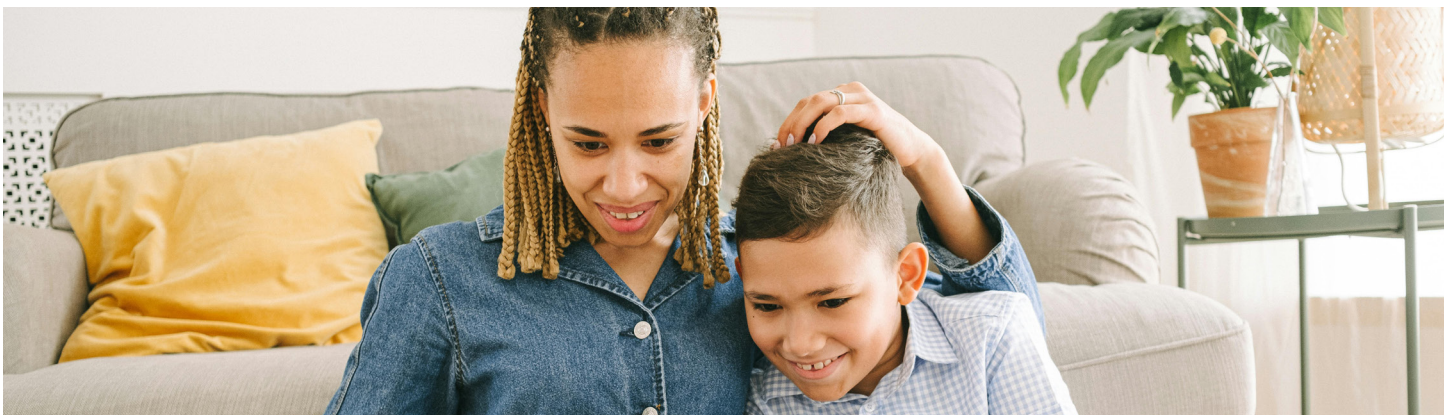
3:15pm – 4:15pm

1) EFFECTIVE THERAPEUTIC AND PROGRAM SUPPORTS TO ADVANCE THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF SHELTERED CHILDREN AND MOTHERS, AND MOTHERS-TO-BE

Learn about evidence-based, therapeutic interventions and supports to enhance the wellbeing, school readiness and success of sheltered children, improve parent-child relationships, reduce parenting stress and support the mental health of mothers and mothers-to-be, the majority of whom are victims of gender-based violence, trauma, and loss. Shelters offer a unique window of opportunity to help children and families heal, re-build bonds of attachment broken by trauma, strengthen, and thrive. This panel of experts will explore effective child and family therapies, parenting supports and programming, tips and strategies for engagement, how to reduce maternal stress, and how to advance the health, happiness and wellbeing of children and families in your shelter. This is the second of a double session that dives deeply into the special needs of sheltered children, mothers and mothers-to-be and how research has been used to identify and implement effective therapeutic and programming supports to advance their mental health and wellbeing.

Moderator: Dr. Shana Cox, LCSW, PsyD, Deputy Director of Children's Services, Lotus House Women's Shelter

Panelists: Dr. Paulo Graziano, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Department of Child Psychology, Florida International University | Muriel Ayala, LCSW, Director of Children's Services, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Sharonee Delevante, Operations Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter, NWSN Advisory Board Member



DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

3:15pm – 4:15pm *continued*

2) LEARN HOW TO IMPROVE SERVICES AND INCREASE REVENUES:

Medicaid/Medicare Demystified. Shelters have historically been under-resourced for the important work we do of saving and changing lives. We know every dollar raised allows us to enrich our services and advances our mission. Imagine being paid for what you do, without loads of paperwork and tedious reporting. All states have programs that can help, but California is leading the way. This informative session will help demystify Medicaid and Medicare as a resource and explain what your organization needs to do to build the capacity to get paid for your work and expand your services. Learn the fundamentals of how to garner these important financial resources to advance the health, wellbeing and successful outcomes of women, children and families in need. Are you ready to take the next steps? You decide!

Moderator: Brateil Aghasi, CEO, Wise Place

Panelists: Dr. Kelly Bruno-Nelson, DSW, Executive Director, Medical Cal AIM, CalOptima Health | Christine Achre, Founder & CEO, Community Health Solutions Group, Inc. | Shakoya Green Long, CEO, Thomas House Family Shelter

3) TRAUMA-INFORMED DAY CENTERS AND DROP-IN SHELTERS:

Goals, Services and Strategies for Success in Low Barrier Environments. Learn new steps and strategies for promoting health and wellness, deepening engagement, overcoming barriers to health and mental health services, and helping unhoused persons make successful transitions. Explore ways to help persons with severe mental health issues re-connect, build shared community, embrace services and find safe housing. Key words: dignity, respect, resources, connection and love.

Moderator: Katie O'Brien, Executive Director, Rose Haven

Panelists: Nancy Armstrong, Senior Director of Operations & Programs, Women's Lunch Place | Isabelle Cetoute, Senior Director of Advocacy, Rosie's Place | Gina Murdock, LCSW, Deputy Program Officer, Downtown Women's Centre

4) SYBIL HEBB, ESQUIRE, DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ADVOCACY, OREGON LAW CENTER:

The Oregon Law Center was lead counsel for Gloria Johnson and other unhoused persons in the Supreme Court case, City of Grants Pass, Oregon vs. Gloria Johnson, et al., arguing against the criminalization of persons living on the street. The National Women's Shelter Network, joined by the National Organization for Women Foundation, was proud to support their efforts with an amicus brief highlighting the high special needs of women, youth and children experiencing homelessness. The Supreme Court's decision in favor of Grants Pass leaves us all wondering what are the limits now on cities and states that decide to criminalize persons living on the street and makes accessibility to safe shelter and safe have programs all the more important to assisting unhoused persons. Attorney Hebb will share their takeaways on the most important case in decades addressing the rights of persons experiencing homelessness and implications for the future.

Presenters: Sybil Hebb, Esquire, Director of Legislative and Policy Advocacy, Oregon Law Center

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it."

- Helen Keller

DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

3:15pm – 4:15pm *continued*

5) THRIFT STORES—POWERFUL SOCIAL ENTERPRISES TO ADVANCE YOUR MISSION:

Thrift stores can be powerhouses, serving as real-world job training programs, providing pathways for community outreach and engagement, and providing clothing, necessities, and furnishings for successful transitions. At their core, they are businesses with a purpose. Learn from shelters who have successfully implemented these social enterprises to advance their mission and impact.

Moderator: Isabella Dell'Oca, Executive Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter

Panelists: Pamela Kosteckii Executive Director, Crisis Center of South Suburbia | Ronide Blanc, Director, Lotus House Thrift Chic Boutique

4:30pm – 5:30pm

1) MATERNITY PROGRAMS AND GROUP HOMES:

Addressing the special needs of mothers-to-be and mothers as they face the dual challenges of new motherhood and homelessness at the same time. Learn about their special needs and how you can help these fragile families at one of the most vulnerable times in their lives. From helping new mothers with breast feeding, bathing and diapering to addressing post-partum depression and early childcare and education, trauma-informed shelter programs and group homes empower mothers and babies to stay together, keep babies safe, build loving attachments, and create the foundation for happier, healthier lives.

Moderator: Patricia Bosman, Executive Director, Haven of Grace

Panelists: Menginee Khasu, Director of Parenting Youth and Transitional Housing Programs, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children | Donna Frautten, Executive Director, Godparent Ministries, Maternity Program | Hannah Stohler, Executive Director, Marguerite's Place | Shellena Eskridge, Executive Director, Homeless Prenatal Program



DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

4:30pm – 5:30pm *continued*

2) THE ELEMENTS OF SANCTUARY; STRATEGIES AND ENVIRONMENTS TO ADVANCE HEALTH AND WELLBEING, UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY, AND EMPOWER:

This expert panel will discuss the ways in which our environment impacts our sense of safety and belonging, and how to transform shelters into sanctuaries for those we serve. Panelists will explore both the physical elements of sanctuary and core operational strategies that offer dignity and respect and promote healing and wellbeing.

Moderator: Emily Sepulveda Wheeland, CEO, The Delores Project

Panelists: Laura Rossbert, COO & Supporting Housing Specialist, Shopworks Architects | Katy Roth, EIT, LEED AP:BD+C, Deputy Director Operations and Compliance, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Belinda James, Director of Counseling, Our Lady's Inn | Dietra Clayton, CEO, The Sophia Way

3) ROUND TABLE BREAKOUT:

A Deeper Dive into the Special Health and Mental Health Needs of Victims and Survivors of Gender-Based Violence, Trafficking and Trauma. A follow-on to the plenary session, our powerhouse panel of medical and social services experts will take a deeper dive into the health and mental health needs of survivors of GBV, trafficking and other serious trauma. It is vital that shelters and safe haven programs recognize the importance of and ways to provide person-centered health and mental health care, supportive services, enriched resources, programming and time to help women and children heal, reclaim their lives, and look forward to healthier, safer, happier futures.

Moderator: Laura Klinefelter, LMHC, CAP, Intake Director and Victims Services Specialist, Lotus House Women's Shelter

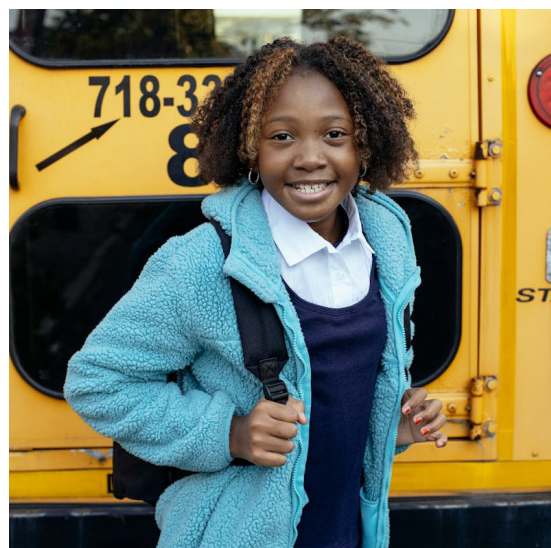
Panelists: Dr. JoNell Entantis Potter, PhD, APRN, FAAN, Professor of Obstetrics-Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine | Dr. Cynthia Rivera, M.D., F.A.C.P., Program Director Infectious Diseases Fellowship, Mt. Sinai Medical Center, Medical Director, Midway Speciality Care Center | Jacqueline Collazo, LMHC, Senior Director Domestic Violence Services, Volunteers of America of Greater New York | Dr. Edie Zusman, M.D., MBA, FAANS, Trauma Neurosurgeon, Neuroscience Partners | Honorable Katherine Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida (Miami-Dade)

4) STRATEGIES TO HELP SHELTERED SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL:

Across the nation, children are absent from the classroom in record numbers. Sheltered children face even greater risks for absenteeism and a widening education gap. Explore creative ways to keep your sheltered children on track and in school, preserve and strengthen important school ties, support their school readiness and success, and advance their education.

Moderator: Isabella Dell'Oca, Executive Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter

Panelists: Linda Bazerjian, Managing Director of Communication, Homes for the Homeless | Shakoya Green Long, CEO, Thomas House Family Shelter | Martha Figueroa, Operations Manager, Thomas House Family Shelter, NWSN Advisory Board Member | Cynthia Perez, Director of Education, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Runisha Johnson, Program Coordinator, Lotus House Women's Shelter, NWSN Advisory Board Member



DAY 2

Tuesday, January 28th

4:30pm – 5:30pm *continued*

5) SINGLE YOUTH (18-24) PROGRAMS: ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT:

Youth in shelters have high special needs and have already experienced high levels of trauma in their young lives. This panel of experts will discuss proven strategies for engagement, specialized services, therapeutic and educational supports, and resources needed to empower single youth to successfully transition from the streets to safe, stable homes. This work changes and saves lives!

Moderator: Stephanie Padro, LMFT, Deputy Director of Clinical Programs, Lotus House Women's Shelter

Panelists: Hanna Getachew-Kreusser, MA, Executive Director, Face To Face Health & Counseling, Inc. | Ronide Blanc, Program Director, Lotus House Thrift Chic Boutique, NWSN Advisory Board Member

6) ANTI-TRAFFICKING YOUTH PROGRAM:

Youth who have been trafficked, or are at risk, have high special needs that require shelters to provide specialized support and services designed to heal, empower and uplift. Learn about the special trauma-informed environment created by House of Hope, designed by youth for youth, and the deeply supportive, compassionate services they provide for youth, both single and parenting, to safety and successfully transition.

Presenters: Shannon Wienandt, CEO, Beth Hudak, Director of Community Engagement, and Karrie Harmon, Director of Programming, House of Hope of Green Bay, Inc.

5:30pm – 5:45pm

HEALTH CARE SHEROS NWSN AWARD

6pm – 8pm

LITE DINNER RECEPTION

EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT
COMING SOON!



DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

9:30am – 5:30pm

THE FORUM:

Networking, Socializing and Resource Workshopping.

The Forum is a welcoming place to meet and greet, build connections, discover new resources, consult with experts, sit and relax with each other in shared community and learning. Meet our curated group of invitees with special offerings for NWSN members, designed to help shelter leaders build their organizational infrastructure and capacity, improve efficiency and effectiveness, save time, and save money. Join us at the Forum!

Lead Organizer: Ciara Jones, NWSN Supportive Services Director



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead

8:15am – 8:45am

KEYNOTE BREAKFAST

NWSN GAPS AND NEEDS REPORT:

We will highlight the latest results of the NWSN's Annual National Gaps and Needs Report. Shelter and safe haven programs are the first responders in a nationwide epidemic of homelessness. Hear what shelters leaders have to say about their most pressing barriers, challenges, gaps and needs and the resources, programs and services they want to advance the status of women, children and families.

Presenter: Gabriela Saenz, NWSN Director of Research, Education and Policy



DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

9am – 9:30am

SURVIVORS SPEAK:

The Healing Power of StoryTelling. Christina Love is a proud Alaskan Native (Alutiiq/Sugpiaq) mother of two who brings her authentic voice and transformative spirit to the forefront as an internationally acclaimed speaker, award winning advocate and broadcaster, writer, educator and consultant. She offers her story for our healing, for hers, for all women and children who have experienced gender-based violence, trafficking and homelessness, for those who survive and those who do not. An activist and advocate, we are proud to have Christina share her story of resilience, hope and call to action.

Presenter: Christina Love, Indigenous (Alutiiq/Sugpiaq) Storyteller, Survivor, Multi-Level Advocate



9:30am – 10:30am

NWSN NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AND ADVOCACY TO SUPPORT SHELTERS AND THOSE WE SERVE TO END AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS:

We are your voice in Washington. Learn more about the NWSN's strategic initiatives to address the challenges, gaps and needs faced by shelters and safe haven programs across the country and how you can support those efforts. We will explore steps and strategies to becoming effective advocates for our programs, how to educate our national, state and local governmental leaders, and advance our mission and impact with added resources. Together, we will improve access to funding and additional resources to advance our work on the ground in shelters and safe haven programs all across our nation to save and change lives.

Speaker: Constance Collins, NWSN Executive Director | Guide Consulting/NWSN Team, Board and Advisory Board

10:45am – 11:45am

FROM SHELTER TO STABILITY; DREAMS REALLY DO COME TRUE:

Innovative, trauma-informed shelters addressing the gender specific needs of women, children and gender expansive persons in the US, highlighting state of the art models with enriched supportive services across the country.

Moderator: John Greenwood, Executive Director, Homes for the Homeless

Panelists: Kimberly Livsey, Chief Program Officer, Atlanta Rescue Mission | Dominique Alex, CEO, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children | Katy Roth, EIT, LEED AP:BD+C, Deputy Director Operations and Compliance, Lotus House Women's Shelter

DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

12pm – 12:45pm

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS, JOB READINESS TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE:

Enriched educational resources, training programs, life skills, financial literacy and other employment assists, from resume prep and work outfits to job readiness training programs and in-house job fairs, help empower women and youth to launch careers and attain greater financial self sufficiency and long term success. All build self-esteem and the confidence it takes to succeed in the work world and life. Leverage your community's financial and business resources in your programs and learn how innovative programs across the country are making a difference. Best of all, hear from those they serve.

Moderator: Lisa Michaelson, Vice President Women's and Children's Programs, Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities

Panelists: Jennifer Watkins, Vice President Emergency Shelter and Housing Problem Solving, Crossroads Rhode Island | Leora Braden Ibraheem, Chief Program Officer, N Street Village | Cynthia Perez, Director of Education and Employment, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Amy Turk, CEO, Downtown Women's Center

12:45pm – 12:50pm

PRESENTATION OF COLLABORATION TO END HOMELESSNESS AWARD

Brown County and House of Hope

12:50pm – 1:45pm KEYNOTE LUNCHEON

SPECIAL GUEST TO BE
ANNOUNCED SOON!

DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th



2pm – 3pm

TRAUMA-INFORMED, ENRICHED AND EMPOWERING PROGRAMMING FOR WOMEN:

Enliven your program and enrich the experiences of those you serve with diverse and empowering programming for women. Arts and activities offer alternative pathways to healing, build self-esteem and confidence, remind us of our creative source and strength, and build shared community. See examples of creative programs across the country. All spell success!

Moderator: Emily Sepulveda Wheeland, Executive Director, The Delores Project

Panelists: Kimberly Livsey, Chief Program Officer, Atlanta Rescue Mission | Soma Snakeoil, Executive Director, The Sidewalk Project | Runisha Johnson, Program Coordinator, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Antonia Wright, Artist | Katie O'Brien, Executive Director, Rose Haven

3:15pm – 4:15pm

POST-EXIT FOLLOW UP, SERVICES, SUPPORTS AND PROGRAMS TO SECURE LONG TERM SUCCESS:

Every end is a beginning. Explore the many ways you can empower women, children and families exiting your program to their new homes to achieve long term stability and success.

Moderator: Shakoya Green Long, CEO, Thomas House Family Shelter

Panelists: Rosario Trejo, Deputy Housing Program Officer, Downtown Women's Center | Anddy Perdomo, MPA, Assistant Vice President of Veterans and Economic Empowerment Initiatives, Volunteers of America of Greater New York | Gwendolyn Johnson, MHS, Manager Alumnae Services, Deborah's Place

4:30pm – 5:30pm

TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPPORT FOR SHELTER TEAMS:

Every shelter leader knows their team is their most valuable resource. Secondary trauma, burnout, turnover, and harm to self and others are all risks. Explore innovative ways to truly support and inspire your team. Make sure you are providing core trainings to equip your team to handle "crisis normalized," heal, empower and uplift, improve quality and standards of care, increase efficiency and effectiveness, build team spirit and collaboration, and increase retention. Help them provide compassionate, contemplative care and enliven their commitment to service.

Moderator: Jennifer Hanlon Wigon, Executive Director, Women's Lunch Place

Panelists: Joanne James, Director, Yawkey House, Pine Street Inn | Dr. Cynthia Rivera, M.D., F.A.C.P., Program Director Infectious Diseases Fellowship, Mt. Sinai Medical Center, Medical Director, Midway Speciality Care Center | Erin Wederbrook Yuskaitis, MA, CMS, Principal, Yellow Room Consulting, LLC | Angela Verseane, Human Resources Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter

DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

The background of the central section is a soft-focus photograph of pink cherry blossoms against a light blue sky. The text is overlaid on this image.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2pm - 5:30pm

2pm – 3pm

1) ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING (1ST OF DOUBLE SESSION):

Organizational Capacity To Advance Mission and Impact. Learn the strategies and steps to ensuring your nonprofit is ready for success. It begins with a strong foundation and organizational infrastructure. This panel of experts will explore best practices to fortify your organizational capacity, including strategic planning; financial transparency, systems and controls; data management, quality control, accountability and reporting; "living policies and procedures;" risk mitigation in a high risk environment; investing in and supporting your leadership and team; and the importance of a deep commitment to continuous improvement. This inter-related series of topics is so important for shelter leaders and administrators we have created a three-part series. A primer on best practices and checklist for a solid foundation for the future, make sure you have the building blocks in place for success.

Moderator: Alexis Steel, President, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children

Panelists: Chasity Chamberlin, Managing Director Employment and Community Services, CARF International | Abbie R. Teague, CLCS, Vice President, Brown & Brown of Florida, Inc. | Tara Davis, Senior Manager, PwC Bookkeeping Connect | Meredith Damboise, Chief Quality and Compliance Officer, New Reach, Inc.

DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

2pm – 3pm *continued*

2) RECUPERATIVE CARE FOR PEOPLE FACING HOMELESSNESS:

Hospitals are discharging unhoused persons to the street with acute care needs. Many persons living on the street and in shelters are suffering from severe medical and mental health issues and an aging generation is becoming homeless in record numbers. Learn how one organization, Circle the City, recently featured in the New York Times, now provides recuperative care, and has expanded its services in both recuperative facilities and on the street, to address the high special needs of those we serve. Be inspired to take the next step in your shelter and learn how!

Presenter: Kim Despres, DHA, RN, CEO, Circle the City

3) CREATING IN-HOUSE CULINARY, HOSPITALITY AND RETAIL TRAINING PROGRAMS (A CASE STUDY AND REAL WORLD MODEL):

Creating Pathways to Financial Independence, Enriching Your Program, and Empowering Persons Served. This session will explore how shelter and safe haven programs and their thrift stores mirror the hospitality, culinary and retail industries and provide rich learning environments to prepare program participants to succeed in the work world. At the same time, real world job readiness training programs provide pathways to elevate and advance the voices and experiences of your program participants and alumni. Learn how you can create a job readiness training program in your shelter to enrich your leadership and program and professionally manage core operations and programs in your shelter. Key trainings, paid internships, certificates of completion, and empowering those we serve with the education, tools and resources to succeed allows them and your shelter to blossom with the knowledge, experience and expertise of persons served.

Moderator: Katy Roth, EIT, LEED AP:BD+C, Deputy Director Operations and Compliance, Lotus House Women's Shelter

Panelists: Julie Grimes, Managing Partner, DoubleTree Hilton Grand | Angela Verseane, Human Resources Director, Sharonnee Delevante, Operations Director, Cynthia Perez, Employment and Education Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Ronide Blanc, Director, Lotus House Thrift Chic Boutique

4) SPECIAL NEEDS OF NEWLY IMMIGRATED SHELTERED WOMEN AND CHILDREN:

Shelters are experiencing a rise in newly arrived women and children. Many are suffering from nearly unimaginable gender-based violence, trauma, loss and grief, even as they face the daunting challenges of barriers in language, education, employment, legal issues, and homelessness. Learn about strategies and programs to help them navigate a new country, build the foundation for safer, happier lives, and successfully transition to their new homes.

Moderator: Alyssa Sanchez, LMHC, Asst. Vice President Transitional Housing, Samaritan Daytop Village

Panelists: Marcus Foxx, Program Administrator Transitional Housing, Samaritan Daytop Village | Kristin Miller, Executive Director, Homeless Services United | Laura Klinefelter, LMHC, CAP, Intake Director and Victims Services Specialist, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Radhika Sharma, Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, Apna Ghar, Inc.



DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

2pm – 3pm *continued*

5) CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH GRIEF, BEREAVEMENT AND HOMELESSNESS:

Many children and youth experience homelessness as a consequence of the death or loss of a parent, guardian, family member, friend or other loved one. Others experience loss of a loved one during homelessness. Learn how shelters, school systems and bereavement centers around the country can work together to support the healing process of already vulnerable children and youth in the face of the compound challenges of death, grief and homelessness.

Presenters: Debra Albo-Steiger, LCSW, CEO, and Julissa Reynoso, LMHC, Director of Programming, Children's Bereavement Center



3:15pm – 4:15pm

1) ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING (2ND OF DOUBLE SESSION):

Organizational Capacity to Advance Mission and Impact. Learn the strategies and steps to ensuring your nonprofit is ready for success. It begins with a strong foundation and organizational infrastructure. This panel of experts will explore best practices to fortify your organizational capacity, including strategic planning; financial transparency, systems and controls; data management, quality control, accountability and reporting; "living policies and procedures;" risk mitigation in a high risk environment; investing in and supporting your leadership and team; and the importance of a deep commitment to continuous improvement. This inter-related series of topics is so important for shelter leaders and administrators we have created a two-part series. A primer on best practices and checklist for a solid foundation for the future, make sure you have the building blocks in place for success.

Moderator: Alexis Steel, President, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children

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DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

3:15pm – 4:15pm *continued*

2) EMBEDDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, CARE CENTERS AND PRE-SCHOOLS IN SHELTERS AND SAFE HAVEN PROGRAMS:

Learn how shelter programs can support the learning and wellbeing of sheltered infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. Explore these beautiful model childcare centers in operation in shelters and learn the benefits, challenges, and some real world solutions. Discover how doing so supports and advances childhood health and wellbeing, parent-child relationships, school readiness, and the success of sheltered families.

Moderator: Gladys Montes, Early Childhood Education and Care Expert

Panelists: Renee Da Silva, LMHC, Director of Supportive Services and Behavioral Health, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children | Muriel Ayala, LCSW, Director of Children's Services, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Hannah Stohler, Executive Director, Marguerite's Place | Sandra Jackson, CEO, House of Ruth

3) SUCCESSFUL CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS AND ENDOWMENTS ADVANCE YOUR IMPACT:

Learn the basics for a successful capital campaign, including board engagement, strategic planning, developing your community outreach and marketing plan, design and development of collateral materials, marketing naming opportunities, finding your hidden donors, branding and media communications, and tips for a successful campaign. Capital campaigns, endowments and legacy giving go hand in hand. Learn the benefits of endowments for achieving your strategic goals, how they can be structured, and enhance your capital campaign and legacy giving to help ensure your shelter and safe haven programs are financially sound, sustainable and a resource for generations to come.

Moderator: Carly Grimm, JD, Director, Lotus Endowment Fund, Inc.

Panelists: Amy Turk, CEO, Downtown Women's Center | Lisa Michaelson, Vice President Women's and Children's Programs, Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities | Alexis Steel, President, St. Mary's Center for Women and Children | Sandra Jackson, CEO, House of Ruth

4) THE INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND AMERICA'S HISTORICAL LEGACY OF COLONIZATION AND VIOLENCE:

Why are women abused more than men? Why are Indigenous people, and our LGBTQ2S+ relatives physically and sexually assaulted at much higher rates than any other demographic? What is the connection between gender-based violence and climate change? This training explores the roots of violence that have led to a (non-native) culture of abuse and violence. It will examine the history of genocide, colonization, assimilation, the anti-violence movement, and climate change. Learn how gender-based and race-based oppression and violence intersect leading to higher rates of victimization, lethality, land theft and environmental degradation. This training offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted relationship between trauma, gender-based violence, climate change, and societal disparities. Armed with this knowledge, attendees will be better equipped to address these challenges within their communities and organizations, promoting healing, equity, and systemic change.

Moderator: Christina Love, Indigenous (Alutiiq/Sugpiaq) Storyteller, Survivor, Multi-Level Advocate

"When women stand together, we can change the world."

- Malala Yousafzai

DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

3:15pm – 4:15pm *continued*

5) RENT READY?

This unique emergency shelter program offers its sheltered guests a step by step action plan with tools and resources to help them prepare for the next step - finding housing in a challenging rental housing market. When clients complete the program, they will have a housing portfolio, rental resume, letter of explanation, proof of ability to pay, reference letters, key information, and a rent ready certificate. In today's housing market, being Rent Ready is more critical than ever to successful transitions to end homelessness. Learn from these experts key strategies, tips and resources for your program.

Presenters: Beatriz De La Rosa Perez, Program Director, Anacortes Family Center and Ella Nacht, MC, Staff and Client Support Counselor, Anacortes Family Center

4:30pm – 5:30pm

1) CARF INTERNATIONAL:

An international, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services programs has just issued new standards for shelters and safe haven programs serving persons experiencing homelessness. The NWSN contributed to the work group that helped formulate the new standards, which have undergone extensive field review and comment. Learn what the new standards require, whether or not your organization is interested in accreditation. They are a checklist for basic standards of care and best practices!

Moderator: Chasity Chamberlin, Managing Director, CARF International

2) TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SHELTERED CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Shelter staff understand that the children and youth they serve are highly traumatized, but they often don't feel equipped to support them or intervene with challenging behaviors. Serving a vulnerable population in crisis can also take an emotional toll on shelter personnel who experience both primary and secondary trauma while doing their jobs. This breakout session presented by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) will help attendees recognize the signs of child traumatic stress, understand the impact of trauma on children's development and on parenting, and learn strategies for effectively engaging with children who have experienced trauma while managing their own stress reactions. We will introduce a wide range of free training and resources available through the NCTSN, as well as ways to connect with the NCTSN at a national and local level.

Presenter: Jennifer Maze, PhD, Clinical Psychologist and Co-Director, UCLA - Duke University



DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

4:30pm – 5:30pm *continued*

3) FINANCING YOUR DREAM SHELTER, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY FACILITY:

Explore development and financing resources for renovations, expansions and new shelter, transitional housing and community facilities. Learn about Low Income Tax Credit, New Market Tax Credit and other financing, programs and resources available to make your dream facilities a reality. This valuable session with preeminent financial, business and legal experts is designed to help you identify and access resources to finance the facilities you need and want. Dream big!

Moderator: Debbie Kleeban, Esq., Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen

Panelists: Tony Smith, Partner, SB Friedman Development Advisors, LLC | Jennifer Westerbeck, Vice President, New Markets and Historic Tax Credit Investments, US Bancorp | Andrew Rubin, Partner, Nixon Peabody | Jennifer Alberding, Senior Manger - Structured Finance, Enterprise Community Investment, Inc.



4) SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE YOUR MISSION:

Advance your program mission and impact with a kaleidoscope of private and public sources, fundraising and friend-raising. Learn new strategies to take your fundraising to the next level. What works, what doesn't, and how to leverage your lean teams to the greatest impact. This expert panel has decades of combined experience worth its weight in gold!

Moderator: Liz Starke, Director of Development, Rose Haven

Panelists: Sammie Rayner, Chief Impact Officer, Community Forward SF | Beatrice Gonzalez, Director, Lotus House Women's Shelter | Beth Hudak, Director of Community Engagement, House of Hope of Green Bay, Inc.

DAY 3

Wednesday, January 29th

4:30pm – 5:30pm *continued*

5) SHELTERS AS COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTERS:

So often shelters are confronted with “not in my backyard” opposition, and yet, shelters can be significant positive contributors to our neighborhoods, bringing new resources, programming and supportive services. Learn how one shelter, Breakthrough, has become not only “value add” but an integral *force for good* in their neighborhood. Not only can shelters end homelessness, but we can prevent it by supporting those in need and uplifting our communities. Learn more about Breakthrough’s important work and be inspired!

Presenters: Yolanda Fields, Executive Director and Cheron Massonburg, BSN, RN, Chief Program Officer of Housing, Health and Wellness, Breakthrough

5:30pm – 5:45pm

YES IN MY BACK YARD NWSN AWARD PRESENTATION

Breakthrough

6pm – 8pm

LITE DINNER RECEPTION

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MARGARET MITCHELL
CEO, YWCA USA

Margaret Mitchell leads YWCA USA, which has been at the forefront nationwide of the most critical social movement for over 160 years – from women’s empowerment and civil rights, to affordable housing and pay equity, to violence prevention and health care.



National Women's Shelter Network Conference



DAY 4

Thursday, January 30th

9am

NATIONAL PRESS CONFERENCE

NWSN on Capitol Hill
NWSN Team | NWSN Board

Everyone is invited!



9:30am – 12pm

JOIN US FOR A FUN AND EXCITING DAY ON CAPITOL HILL!

We will meet with legislators to educate them on the importance of safe, supportive shelter for women, children and families experiencing homelessness and the need for more federal resources to support their successful transitions. This promises to be an unforgettable experience! The NWSN team and volunteers will help by pre-scheduling appointments with your state's legislators and policy staff and help guide you to meetings. Photo ops and souvenir shopping in the Senate and House gift shops a must! We are stronger together!

NWSN Team | NWSN Board

