



FEELING THE WARMTH - Dawn Sikkink (right), executive director of the Beacon Center, gives Jan DeBerg, Watertown Community Foundation executive director, a tour of the new facility. Though many things are new, most of the beds in the rooms are from the center's early years. The donated quilts on each bed are given to residents as they leave. Foundation support was evident in much of the center. The Beacon Center appreciates any and all donations. For those interested, a current wish list is located on their [website](#).

Beacon Center & WCF Have Long Relationship

There is one light that shines day or night in southeast Watertown. The Beacon Center gives a light of hope to victims of domestic violence 24-7.

Formerly known as the Watertown Resource Center, the Beacon Center has found a new home, as well as a new name, as the center supports victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Clark, Codington, Deuel, Grant and Hamlin counties.

The center hosted an open house and candlelight vigil this month - Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The month's focus brings public awareness to the Beacon Center and its mission. The new facility makes the center's mission easier to accomplish and the community's support continues to help make it possible, said Dawn Sikkink, executive director.

Whether that support has come in the form of a church group or organization that furnished and decorated a resident room, the United Way's ongoing support, food and staples for the pantry or the warmth of a handmade quilt, all donations are appreciated.

Sikkink thanks the Watertown Community Foundation for its continuing support, which began shortly after the center did nearly 30 years ago. In total, the Foundation has awarded the center approximately \$70,000 in grants over the years. Earlier grants resulted in items ranging from floor covering for the former visitation center to books that help clients.

Recent grants have provided for several positives in the new center. They have included a Giving Back 365 grant for office computers; Women & Giving grants for televisions in each of the six resident rooms and a commercial-size refrigerator. The WCF Christmas Tree Fundraiser and a recent WCF Thanks for Giving essay contest winner have helped the center with unrestricted grants in the last couple of years.

The new center offers a lot of obvious improvements over the former building that was more than 100 years old. Currently, we are at nearly 12,000 square feet in a relatively new facility. "We use every corner of this place," Sikkink explained. And every corner is safe and comfortable. Even outside, it is easy for officers to patrol around the entire building and cameras do their part inside and out.

We have an inspection every year by the SD Housing Development Authority. "At our former location, our list was so long of things we needed to fix, we could only tackle a little at a time," Sikkink said. When the inspector came through at the new facility, we were congratulated on a wonderful facility, she beamed.

It all boils down to helping victims in the safest, most efficient, effective and as timely a manner as possible. Some of those victims stay a couple nights while others stay for a full month. In 2013, the center provided more than 12,000 services, ranging from counseling to crisis calls to family visitations and shelter. This year, it looks like there will be more, Sikkink said; but the Beacon Center's staff is ready and light is always on.

