



3/18/2025

Dear Committee Members,

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*Hannah-Ruth Patterson, LGSW
Executive Director
Rivers of Hope, Monticello*

Rivers of Hope is the domestic violence center serving Wright and Sherburne Counties, providing support to individuals of all ages, including youth. For over 30 years, our robust youth program has been a vital part of the community, offering 1:1 advocacy to students experiencing family or teen dating violence directly in their schools. Our Youth Advocates provide a safe, trusted presence, offering support and guidance. In addition to advocacy, we educate young people through classroom presentations on healthy relationships, aiming to prevent future violence. Over the past year, we have supported more than 200 youth through direct advocacy, while since October 2024, over 2600 elementary students have learned about healthy friendships, and more than 2500 middle and high school students have seen a presentation on healthy relationships and teen dating violence.

We have two Youth Advocates in middle and high school and one in elementary school. Funds from YIP support the salaries of these staff. All three of them are active with presentations and maintain full caseloads. If we were unable to have three full-time youth advocates we would likely have to cut back on our prevention presentations and even some direct services to ensure our staff were able to manage their caseloads.

Rivers of Hope is in support of fully funding the YIP program. YIP is a reason our program has the impact it has on our community and youth throughout the state deserve access to support and services aimed at empowering them to thrive.

Respectfully,

HRPatterson

Hannah-Ruth Patterson
Executive Director
Rivers of Hope