

About WATCH

Background of WATCH

WATCH was created in 1992 in the aftermath of the sexual assault and murder of a young Minneapolis woman by a recently paroled sex offender with an extensive criminal history. A group of community women came together to address what they saw as a lax, revolving-door justice system that consistently failed to respond seriously to crimes of violence against women and children.

WATCH trains members of the community to be volunteer court observers. We believe that monitors should be visible, and their mere presence has an effect on courtroom atmosphere and demeanor. WATCH volunteer monitors carry red clipboards to identify themselves and have been a daily presence in Hennepin County Minnesota courts since 1993. Contact us for more information.

What WATCH Monitors

WATCH observes misdemeanor and felony cases of violence against women and children. We also monitor civil court hearings involving orders for protection. We share the data we collect with advocacy groups and members of the justice system and work with them to make improvements that will benefit women and children.

We do this in several ways:

Direct Responses

WATCH makes follow-up phone calls, sets up meetings, and sends letters and emails to court personnel regarding our observations.

Reports and Newsletters

WATCH issues research reports, such as the 2006 Domestic Violence Court Report, and also publishes our quarterly newsletter the *WATCH Post*. We work with local media to keep the public up-to-date on how the courts operate.

Offender Chronologies

WATCH publishes Chronic Offender Chronologies to highlight problems with the justice system's handling of offenders who exhibit escalating violent behavior.

Judicial Forums

During judicial election years, WATCH cosponsors a public forum for candidates up for election.

Community Education

We speak to community and student groups about violence against women and the court's response. To schedule a speaker for your group, contact watch@watchmn.org.

WATCH Recognition and Accomplishments

Recipient of a 2004 Community Leadership award from the Hennepin County Attorney's Office.

Recognized in 2004 by the Minnesota Women's Consortium as an exemplary organization working for justice.

Featured in *50 Strategies to Prevent Violent Domestic Crimes*, from the National Crime Prevention Council, 2002.

Instrumental in the initial funding, formation, and direction of the Hennepin County Domestic Fatality Review Project.

Recipient of the 1999 *Gloria Steinem Women of Vision Award* from the Ms. Foundation for Women.

Advocates, prosecutors, and judges tell us that our presence makes a difference.