



Tricia Swartling

Building Safety, Strength, and Community from the Inside Out

When **Tricia Swartling** moved to the Wood River Valley more than three decades ago, she didn't just find a place to live, she found a purpose that would define her life's work.

At the time, The Advocates was a small volunteer program offering crisis support for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Tricia saw a need for something more—a safe place where survivors could rebuild their lives. With vision and determination, she helped rally the community to open the area's first shelter in 1999.

"It was a huge effort and had a huge impact," she recalled. "We wanted to make sure people here had the same access to safety and support that they would in a larger city."

Under Tricia's leadership, The Advocates expanded again and again, creating transitional housing, educational programs for youth, and a thriving community thrift store that helps sustain their mission. Her next project is a new building designed to serve as a "hub of community support," offering space, dignity, and hope to anyone who needs it.

But Tricia's leadership reaches far beyond her organization's walls. She helped launch a coordinated community response team linking nonprofits, law enforcement, healthcare, and social services to better support families in crisis. She's taught grant writing courses to emerging nonprofit leaders, served on several boards including the Idaho Nonprofit Center, and mentored nonprofit executives statewide.

"Collaboration builds trust," she said. "And when nonprofits work together, our whole community gets stronger."

Her philosophy of philanthropy is simple: generosity is not reserved for the wealthy. "Philanthropy is being generous with whatever resources you have—time, talent, or treasure—and giving to the things that make our communities and world better," she said.

Tricia's influence is woven through the fabric of the Wood River Valley, where art, education, housing, environmental stewardship, and human services organizations thrive alongside one another. She sees it as proof that the region "runs on nonprofits"—and on the people who support them.



For her unwavering leadership, compassion, and commitment to Idaho's people, **Tricia Swartling** has been named the 2025 **Nonprofit Leader of the Year**. Her legacy reminds us that true leadership doesn't just manage programs—it builds the kind of community where everyone has a place to belong.