

Seeds of Hope

Actions Speak Louder Than Words A Word from our Executive Director, Terri Heckman

“NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States do hereby proclaim February 2011 as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to support efforts in their communities and schools, and in their own families, to empower young people to develop healthy relationships throughout their lives and to engage in activities that prevent and respond to teen dating violence.”

Dating violence awareness month? Are you kidding? What is happening in this world that the President of the United States needs to spend his time helping to spread the word that it's NOT OK TO BE VIOLENT WITH A DATING PARTNER? I thought everyone learned this lesson in kindergarten and first grade when we were taught basic boundaries and the no-hitting rules. It is a sad reality that we as a nation have to spend time and money on programs to teach our 6th, 7th and 8th graders that one should not hurt our friends.

National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month reflects our Nation's growing understanding that violence within relationships often begins during adolescence. Each year, about one in four teens report being the victim of verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual violence. Abusive relationships can impact adolescent development and teens who experience dating violence may suffer long-term negative behavioral and health consequences. Adolescents in controlling or violent relationships may

carry these dangerous and unhealthy patterns into future relationships. The time to break the cycle of teen dating violence is now.

The good part of all of this is that new programs are growing to help educate our young people about the various aspects of dating violence. We need to challenge the teens of today to think about (and talk about) dating violence with the social realities of adolescent life. Technologies such as cell phones, email, and social networking websites, play a major role in many teenagers' lives, but these tools are sometimes tragically used for control, stalking and victimization. Emotional abuse using digital technology, can be devastating to young teens.

Parents, Coaches, Relatives, Youth Group Leaders, Teachers, Bus Drivers and others need to think, learn and be prepared to talk about these difficult topics in a way that engages the young people of today. Aspects of dating violence & prevention must include examples of the ramifications of today's technology as well as the importance of positive teen support systems, peer pressure, the lack of experience that most teens have in their first relationships, the loss of verbal communication skills in the teen culture, the influence of the media, (TV, movies & music), and the lack of appropriate and positive role models. You do not teach kids about dating violence by showing them dating violence. WE MUST TEACH AND DEMONSTRATE THROUGH OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS THE ATTRIBUTES OF POSITIVE, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.



www.rccmsc.org

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Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Sexual Assault In a Social Situation



While you can never completely protect yourself from sexual assault, there are some things you can do to help reduce your risk of being assaulted in social situations.

When you go to a social gathering, go with a group of friends. Arrive together, check in with each other throughout the evening and leave together. Knowing where you are and who is around you may help you find a way out of a bad situation.

Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe in any situation, go with your gut. If you see something suspicious, contact law enforcement immediately (local authorities can be reached by calling 911 in most areas of the U.S.).

Don't leave your drink unattended while talking, dancing, using the restroom or making a phone call. If you've left your drink alone, just get a new one.

Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust. If you choose to accept a drink, go with the person to the bar to order it, watch it being poured, and carry it yourself. At parties, don't drink from the punch bowls or other large, common open containers.

Watch out for your friends, and vice versa. If a friend seems out of it, is way too intoxicated for the amount of alcohol they've had, or is acting out of character, get him or her to a safe place immediately.

If you suspect you or a friend has been drugged, contact law enforcement immediately. Be explicit with doctors so they can give you the correct tests (you will need a urine test and possibly others).

What should I do if I am sexually assaulted?

Sexual assault is a crime of motive and opportunity. Ultimately, there is no surefire way to prevent an attack. If you or someone you know has been affected by sexual violence, it's not your fault.

Find a safe environment.

Preserve evidence-Do not bathe, shower or brush your teeth.

Write down all details you can recall about what happened.

Seek medical treatment to ensure you are physically well and to preserve and collect evidence.

This must be done within 96 hours of the assault in case you choose to press charges.

The Rape Crisis Center advocates are available 24 hours a day to listen and provide support and assistance.

You are not alone. Help is available 24/7
24 Hour Local Akron Hotline 330-434-RAPE(7273)
Toll Free Hotline 877-906-RAPE(7273)

Advocacy

Yesterday a sexual assault survivor got the justice she wanted. Her perpetrator was sentenced to 40 years to life; he will be 85 by the time he has his first parole hearing. This survivor had initially wanted to remain quiet about her assault out of fear. However, she found the strength through the unwavering support of friends, family and advocates to come forward. It's been almost six months since the first time she shared her story; yesterday she sat with her head held high while his sentence was read.

Working with this woman has truly been a gift. I wanted to share this with you because this is what we all work for: a survivor getting their desired outcome.



Denice Wilson, Advocate

Making A Difference

SUMMA Hospital Receives Recognition Among Health Care Organizations

Late last year, Executive Director, Terri Heckman, attended a meeting with the Magnet surveyors reviewing Summa Hospital. Summa recently received notification that they did indeed achieve “Magnet Status.” In the world of professional nursing, this is the highest recognition attainable for hospitals. Congratulations Summa Nursing! In the final report that Summa received from the Magnet surveyors, two programs were recognized as “exemplar” for success in establishing partnerships



to meet the healthcare needs of the community. DOVE was one of those programs recognized. Terri’s comments were specifically recognized: “The domestic violence shelter leader shared countless stories as to how the HCO (health care organization) nursing staff have volunteered on a daily basis for years in order to maintain the provision of services within the community.” Magnet’s spotlight on DOVE certainly emphasizes the value working together to both Summa and our community.

Turikumwe-We Are Together

by Denice Wilson, Rape Crisis Advocate



Rwanda: A tiny African nation rocked by genocide in 1994. A nation that lost almost 1 million men, women and children in 100 days. But that is not the whole story of Rwanda. While carrying the message “never again” in their hearts, the Rwandese are moving forward. They work daily to improve their nation and heal the wounds left by the genocide.

I recently had the privilege of spending three weeks in this amazing nation participating in a Learning and Action Community (LAC). The LAC was hosted by Global Youth Connect and AJPRODHO. The participants got the chance to attend workshops on human rights and development. During the workshops I had the honor of leading a discussion on sexual assault advocacy. We also visited genocide memorial sites-by far the most powerful portion of the workshop. We also participated in advocacy by interviewing detainees at a police station. Then, we reported to the mayor of the district what we saw and respectfully challenged him to act. Lastly, we volunteered for five days at local agencies. However, the most important part of the LAC was working diligently to create a safe space for everyone to talk about their experiences. We successfully bonded in a way that allowed for frank, cross-cultural dialogue on all we were seeing and doing.

At this point I feel it imperative to convey the message all of my Rwandan friends wanted told. Rwanda is not defined by the genocide. That was one terrible moment in a history rich in community and joy. In fact, when I asked how they could forgive and move on after such a horrific event, they replied, “How could we not? What other choice did we have?” The truth is, the Rwandans did have a choice. They could have chosen anger, bitterness, revenge and retaliation. Instead, they chose forgiveness and reconciliation. They chose to move forward instead of remaining stuck in the past. I feel truly honored to bear witness to their strength!

Taking Action

Rape Crisis Center Speaker's Bureau

The RCC Speaker's Bureau is always accepting requests from community organizations, churches, businesses and civic groups.

Is your organization in need of a speaker for your monthly meeting? We can inform your group about our services, help them understand sexual assault in addition to the 'ins and outs' of teen dating violence.

If you would like to schedule a presentation, please contact Brandon Landers at 330-860-5636.

Rape Crisis Center Volunteers

Rape Crisis Center volunteers are crucial to our efforts in providing high-quality services for sexual assault survivors, their loved ones & the community.

Our volunteers are highly valued and supported in their service to the agency. Benefits of volunteering include free training, convenient schedules and most of all, a rewarding experience.

If you would like more information, please visit our website and/or contact Brandon Landers at 330-860-5636.

National Awareness

National Crime Victims' Rights Week April 10-16, 2011



Since 1981, the Office on Crime Victims has helped communities observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This week promotes victims' rights, honors crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf.

Please take a moment during this week to acknowledge local victims and their loved ones. Educating others about local resources and preventative measures could save someone's life.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month April, 2011



According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, "It's time ...to get involved," incorporates a bystander approach to sexual violence prevention awareness.

A bystander, or witness, is anyone who sees a situation but may or may not know what to do, may think others will act or may be afraid to do something. If you see a crime occurring, please do not be a bystander, call your local police.

V-Day



On February 13th and 18th, 2011 Akron University presented the Vagina Monologues. We are happy to announce both showings sold out! A Special thank you to Women's Studies Program Director, Dr. Rosa Githioria for donating 90% of the proceeds (\$4,360.00) from the Vagina Monologues to RCC of Medina and Summit Counties. We want to thank Ashley Farrish from Women's Studies program for doing such a phenomenal job of coordinating the event!

From my experience being a male attending this event for the first time it was very interesting to say the least! The varieties of monologues in the play are incredible. The woman's body and spirit are so complex and the monologues do an amazing job of illustrating this. The Vagina Monologues offered me the opportunity to understand (in some small way) what it means to be a woman. I felt like a fly on the wall at an exciting meeting for a secret club. I was honored to see the monologues preformed and look forward to next year! Thank you again to the Women's Studies Program at the University of Akron for presenting this to the Akron community.

~Brandon Landers, RCC Outreach Coordinator

Walk A Mile In Her Shoes



Walk-A-Mile-In-Her-Shoes Akron Ohio®

The International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault and Gender Violence

April 29th, 2011 Registration is from 5-6 PM

LOCK 3- DOWNTOWN 200 South Main Street Akron, OH 44308

Kickoff starts at 6 PM

Walk A Mile In Her Shoes® asks men to literally walk one mile in women's shoes to raise awareness about sexual assault and to raise funds for the Rape Crisis Center of Medina and Summit Counties. Walk A Mile® is a unique opportunity for men to educate the community about a very serious subject, to rally the whole community to take action to prevent sexual violence and to have a great time while doing it.

Everyone is welcome to walk – women, kids, babies and men who don't choose to wear heels! So, challenge your buddies, church members, co-workers, friends and family to join us! Together we can help our communities and increase awareness about sexual assault. So, walk for **YOUR DAUGHTER, YOUR SON, YOUR MOTHER, YOUR WIFE, YOUR FRIENDS, OR FOR YOURSELF**

How To Register

Choose the method that work best for you or your team! We request a minimum entry fee of \$20 per walker. Additional donations are encouraged! Obtain a registration form by one of the below methods and bring the completed form, your heels and your friends to Lock 3 on April 29th!

- Request a form via email from BrandonL@scmcbws.org
- Request a form via mail. Call Brandon at 330-860-5636 to provide your mailing address.
- Print the registration form from our website: <http://www.rccmsc.org/events/walk-a-mile-in-her-shoes-akron.aspx>

Entertainment

After the walk please join us for prizes, food and LIVE music! "A BAND NAMED ASHES", an Acoustic Folk/Rock Band and 'UNTIL NEXT YEAR' will be jamming all night!

Impact

Funds raised from Walk A Mile in Her Shoes will directly impact survivors of sexual assault in our community.

- \$25-Will Buy a sweat suit for a survivor to wear home from a sexual assault exam
- \$40-Will cover expenses for one support group session for survivors.
- \$100-Will pay for the cost of 14 hotline calls from survivors seeking support.



SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 29th



Rape Crisis Center
www.rccmsc.org
759 W. Market Street
Akron, OH 44303

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S Postage
PAID
Akron, OH
Permit No. 564

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healing. hope. empowerment



www.rccmsc.org



Seeds of Hope: Last Edition

The Rape Crisis Center is **going green** with the help of a recent grant award from Emma Marketing Services. Future Rape Crisis Center newsletters will be distributed via e-mail and will not be mailed out.

Please visit our website and sign up to receive E-news to stay current on Rape Crisis Center events, news and activities!



Walk A Mile In Her Shoes®

No more classes, work day is done... where are you going to be **Friday, April 29th**? We expect 500 participants, including men who will be strutting down Main Street in high heels to raise awareness and funds for the Rape Crisis Center.

Join us as we rally to spread awareness about sexual assault in the downtown Akron Area! Turn to page 4 for details and visit our website to plan for the best Friday night out you have ever had!

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