



Victim Services

Helping Victims Become Survivors

Spring, 2009 Vol. 13

The Power to End Abuse is in Your Hands



Sexual assault is an act of violence. It is non-consensual sexual contact perpetrated on women and men of all ages, in addition to children. A rapist may be an acquaintance, a relative or a stranger, although most sexual assaults are committed by acquaintances. In fact, amazingly enough, 80-90% of women who have been sexually assaulted say that they knew their rapists. This often results in the victim experiencing shame, humiliation, self-blame and fear of reporting the assault to the police.

According to the Crime Victims National Study, there were 248,300 individuals raped and/or sexually assaulted in 2007. This number is up 25% from the assaults reported in 2005. In Illinois alone, one out of every seven women has been the victim of forcible rape sometime during her life. In addition, one in three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into having sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime and the abuser is usually a family member. The numbers are staggering!

It is time for us to become involved. Everyone has the responsibility to take action against sexual assault and abuse. Advocacy, education, and awareness are three methods of trying to end the preponderance of these crimes.

Educate the community, speak to children, and be informed about the signs, effects, and legalities of sexual assault. Do not be reluctant to speak about sexual assault to children and make sure that they know they have a safe place to talk about it if it happens to them. Be aware of efforts within your community to fight rape.

Advocate for victims of sexual assault. Volunteer at the local rape crisis center. Speak to law enforcement, states attorneys, and legislators about the laws and prosecution of sexual assault. Make it known that you will not stand by with ambivalence and let rape happen.

Raise awareness of sexual assault within your community. Remind people to be aware of their surroundings at all times. Walk a friend to their car or house and stay in groups whenever possible. Let your community know how prominent sexual assault is within the community and be proactive in the fight against it. Help make a difference in the fight against sexual assault. The power to end abuse is in your hands.

Rebecca Chockley, Sexual Assault Advocate

Sexual Assault Awareness Month Activities in Your Area

- April 8 Day to End Sexual Violence**
- April 14 Clothesline Project**
Spoon River College, Macomb
9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- April 15 Clothesline Project**
Western Illinois University, north side of University Union, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- April 15 Tree Planting for Child Abuse Prevention Month**
Glenwood Park, Macomb
12:15 pm/Rain date April 17
- April 16 Hands Around the Courthouse**
Warren County Courthouse
Monmouth, 12:15 pm
- April 18 Walk a Mile in Her Shoes**
Citizens National Bank Park (Corner of Randolph and Washington Sts.)
Registration begins at 9:00 am. Fee is \$5. Call (309) 836-2148 to register or for more information.
- April 23 Hands Around the Courthouse**
Hancock County Courthouse
Carthage, 12:15 pm
- April 24 Hands Around the Courthouse**
McDonough County Courthouse
Macomb, 12:15 pm
- April TBA Clothesline Project**
Carl Sandburg College, Galesburg
9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- May 15 4th Annual Rock Against Rape**
The Forum, Macomb, 8:00 pm
- June 13 Victim Services Yard Sale Fundraiser**
Elks Lodge, Deere Road, Macomb
7:00 am to 1:00 pm

WIRC-CAA VICTIM SERVICES IS NOW ON
FACEBOOK
CHECK US OUT AND BECOME A FAN!

The Power to Prevent Abuse is in Your Hands



Human hands are capable of many things. They can build the magnificent structures seen around the world. They can make delicious food. They can bring us to new heights in the sky or take us below the surface of the sea. They can heal the sick or offer comfort in the form of a hug or a pat on the back.

Unfortunately, human hands are also capable of doing harm. According to Childhelp, a leading national non-profit organization dedicated to helping victims of child abuse and neglect, child abuse in the United States has reached epidemic proportions. While three million reports of child abuse are made each year, experts estimate that the actual number of incidents of abuse and neglect are three times higher.

- ✘ Four children die every day as a result of child abuse and three out of four of these victims are under the age of four.
- ✘ A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds.
- ✘ Of the reported rapes of children under 12 years old, 90% of those victims knew the perpetrator.
- ✘ Child abuse occurs at every socio-economic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.
- ✘ 36.7% of all women in prison and 14.4% of all men in United States prisons were abused as children.
- ✘ Children who have been sexually abused are 2.5 times more likely to abuse alcohol and 3.8 times more likely to be addicted to drugs.
- ✘ One-third of abused and neglected children will later abuse their own children, continuing the horrible cycle of abuse.

Yes, the human hands are capable of many things. And your own hands can help prevent this destructive trend in our society. Your hands can help nurture a child. They can help reach out to a frustrated parent and offer assistance. You can try your hands at developing services to meet the needs of children and families in your local schools, churches, libraries, etc. You can use your hands to volunteer at a local child abuse prevention program. Most importantly, you can use your hands to pick up the phone and report abuse when you see or suspect it happening.

During the month of April, I would ask you to remember the children around the world, across the country, and in your community who are depending on you and your hands.

Becky Cox, Legal Advocate

Proactive Steps to Help Ensure Child Safety



Child sexual abuse is defined as any sexual act between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one exerts power over the other. This includes physical acts of forcing, coercing, or persuading a child to engage in a sexual act, and also non-contact acts of exposure to pornography, exhibitionism, and communication in a sexual manner by phone or internet. By focusing on a few simple, proactive steps as a community we can help keep our children safe.

STEP ONE: Learn the Facts

- One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthday.
- One in five children are sexually solicited on the internet.
- Almost 70% of all reported sexual assaults (including those reported by adults) happen to children under the age of 18.
- Thirty to forty percent of children are abused by family members.

STEP TWO: Minimize Opportunity

- Over 80% of sexual abuse occurs in one-adult/one-child situations.
- Although one-on-one time with a trusted adult is healthy and valuable for children, it is important to remember safety. Choose group situations when possible.
- Make sure one-on-one situations are observable by others.
- Monitor internet use.

STEP THREE: Talk about it

- Abusers use shame, fear, guilt and confusion to keep children from reporting sexual abuse.
- Know how to communicate with children and do not respond in a negative or emotional way.
- Teach children about their bodies, what abuse is, and what parts of their bodies others should not touch.
- Teach your child self-confidence and that they have the right to say "no."

STEP FOUR: Stay alert

- Emotional or behavioral signs of sexual abuse are much more common than physical signs.
- These signs can range from "too perfect" behavior to withdrawal, depression, and unexplained anger, to sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate.

STEP FIVE: Make a plan

- Do not overreact if a child discloses sexual abuse to you. Believe the child and make sure the child knows it. Praise the child for his/her courage in telling you.
- Seek help from a professional who is trained to deal with child sexual abuse.
- Do not panic. Sexually abused children who receive support and psychological help can and do heal.

STEP SIX: Act on suspicions

- Abusers often have multiple victims. By acting on suspicions of sexual abuse, you will not only help one child, but potentially countless others.

Call: - Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-4-A-CHILD

- Victim Services 24-Hour Hotline 1-309-837-5555

- Illinois Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-25-ABUSE or
1-217-524-2606

STEP SEVEN: Get involved

Participate in April's Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities:

- Hands Around the Courthouse
- Victim Services' Tree Planting
- Walk a Mile in Her Shoes
- WIU's Take Back the Campus
- Wear a blue or teal ribbon to support the cause.

Amy Radosh Crosby, Children's/Legal Advocate

Material excerpted from the organization Darkness to Light's "Seven Steps to Protecting Our Children from Sexual Abuse".
www.darkness2light.org/7steps/7steps.asp

Sexual Assault Resource Team Program

Victim Services' Sexual Assault Program, in cooperation with McDonough District Hospital Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, has developed a Sexual Assault Resource Team Program (SART). The program began in 2008 and it includes representatives from local law enforcement, the State's Attorneys Office, and the community agencies within McDonough County. The goal of the SART Program is to create a multi-disciplinary team bringing together key agencies

That's Not Cool Website

A safe space for teens to learn ways to handle dating partners, unwanted text messages and more...

A new website for teens has been a topic of discussion lately for more adults than teens. www.thatnotcool.com provides a safe space for teens to learn about ways to handle dating partners that cross the line, specifically with today's technology. It has videos that discuss texting, nude picture requests and social networks. Teens can comment on each as well as have a space for getting and giving advice, and read about other dating and friend issues. And, it's not put out there by people who do not know anything about partner violence. It is a project sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women and the Ad Council.

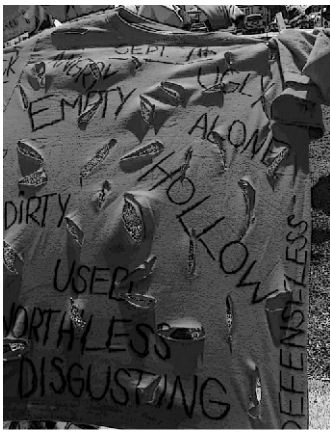
The issue for adults seems to be the "call out cards" available to put on cell phones and instant messaging. They have several for the topics of texting harassment, privacy problems, nude picture requests, constant messaging, rumors and more. Many of the cards use sarcasm such as "Congrats. With that last message, you've achieved stalker status."

For the adults who in prevention programs are trying to get teens to be less abusive both verbally as well as physically, the concern regarding sarcasm and its potential abuse is viable. However, we also must look at how the teens are responding. In talking to teens who have seen the website, more often than not, we have found they are positive about what they see and what they can use in helping to get across the message that it's not okay to use technology to control and abuse their partners. Many teens and young adults have found this a way to be proactive in getting their partners to understand how the constant keeping tabs on them has affected their relationships. If the sarcasm has done anything, it's been able to get teens' attention.

We need to meet the youth where they are, not where we want them to be. If we can get the message across that it's not cool to harass and stalk someone, and then that becomes the social norm, we've helped the next generations to become that much safer.

Teens are involved in violent relationships at approximately the same rate as adults. One in four teen dating couples experience violence. Physical and sexual violence are the most often talked about part of dating violence. Check out the website: www.loveisrespect.org for more facts and information.

that respond to sexual assault victims. Each agency will function together to provide the best services possible for those who have suffered from violent acts of sexual assault. The team meets quarterly to discuss policy and procedure for responding to sexual assault victims and barriers faced by victims reporting sexual assault. The team also brainstorms about ways to raise community awareness and collaborative methods of advocating for survivors of sexual assault.



THE CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

Check cover for exhibit locations.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness & Child Abuse Prevention Month



The Victim Services Program serves Hancock, Henderson, McDonough and Warren counties.
P. O. Box 157 - Macomb, Illinois 61455 - DV (309) 837-6622 - SA (309) 836-2148
24-Hour Crisis Line (309) 837-5555 fax: (309) 836-3640 email: victimservices@wirpc.org

ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH TO WALK IN HER SHOES? VS Welcomes New Interns

Victim Services' first "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event will take place on Saturday, April 18, 2009, beginning at Citizens National Bank Park at the corner of Randolph and Washington Streets.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. with the walk beginning at 10 a.m. Entry fee is \$5.00, with an additional charge for rental of high heels to the first 30 men wanting to wear them. T-shirts and other items will be available for sale on the day of the event. Call (309) 836-2148 to register today.

Men, women and children are welcomed. High heels preferred for men, though not required. Check www.walkamileinhershoes.org to see what fun you can have and how to raise awareness to end violence against women.



Intern

Alison "Ali" Chruscinski started her internship at Victim Services in January. She enrolled in the Victim Services Crisis Intervention class in spring of 2006, and has been volunteering for the program ever since.

Ali will graduate from Western Illinois University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work. She is passionate about social justice issues including ending sexual and domestic violence, women's rights, and promoting equality for individuals with disabilities. Her future plans are to attend graduate school and receive a Masters in Social Work.

Intern

Kriston Kurelic is currently interning with Victim Services and will graduate from Western Illinois University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work in May. She has been contributing her time to the program for the last year and is enjoying the learning experiences she's had while volunteering and interning.

Her plans for the future include attending Aurora University this summer to begin earning a Masters in Social Work and to eventually become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.