

JUNE 2014
NEWSLETTER

The SAAFE Center Newsletter

WWW.VICTIMSSERVICES.ORG

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- 15th: Father's Day
- 21st: Cate's Birthday
- 22nd: R&R 1-2pm
3-4pm

ON-CAMPUS OFFICE

Our On-Campus Office in room 355 of the Psychology building at BGSU is not staffed by advocates during the summer, but the office is always open to pick up free materials. Check the August newsletter for our Fall 2014 schedule.

FALL ADVOCACY TRAINING

There will be no advocacy training during the summer months, but training of SAAFE advocates will return in the fall. Email victims@bc.wcnet.org for an application. Look for more information in our August newsletter, as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages.

A SAAFE
ADVOCATE IS
ALWAYS
AVAILABLE
24/7 BY
CONTACTING
THE LINK AT
(419) 352-1545.

#BringBackOurGirls: An Editorial by Cate

The SAAFE Center specializes in providing advocacy and support for victims of sexual assault and related crimes in the Wood County community. While we are an organization local to a small pocket of Northwest Ohio, we are also members of a larger global community. It is important that we not only be aware of issues affecting women and other marginalized groups in our local community, but those affecting women worldwide as well. As SAAFE advocates, we have taken a vow to help women of Wood County who have been victimized and I believe that this duty extends to helping women worldwide by giving voice to their struggles and showing our support for their empowerment.

The past month has seen the news and social media full of stories about the 276 young women of Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria who were abducted from the all-female Government Secondary School on the night of April 14, 2014. While the school had been closed due to security threats, the schoolgirls braved the dangerous conditions and stayed to take their Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations in science. Their pursuits in education were violently disrupted, however, when they were abducted by Nigerian terrorist organization Boko Haram, a group known for its beliefs that women should not be educated and should instead be kept in the home or sold into slavery. Since the kidnapping, Nigerians and other concerned citizens of the world have rallied to show their support for the missing women and to urge the Nigerian government to take action to bring them home. Members of the social media community have made a particularly strong effort to raise awareness of the issue and encourage action, creating online petitions and including the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls in several million posts.

The SAAFE Center stands united with the young women of Nigeria and individuals across the world who argue that education is a right that should be allotted to all human beings, regardless of their gender or any other status marker. Voicing the call to #BringBackOurGirls is voicing the call to gender equality and ultimately the eradication of violence against women and girls. Thus, I raise my own voice to join the call, and I encourage other SAAFE advocates and members of the community to do the same.

Advocates of the Month: Amber & Autumn

It is a pleasure to honor the twins in our program, Amber and Autumn, with the award of Advocates of the Month for May! Yes, these two are very unique individuals and we love their separate personalities, but they also do very twin-like things such as sign up for on-call shifts at the same time, volunteer for the same opportunities, and (try to) share the same stories at monthly Review and Renew meetings! ☺ Autumn and Amber are a volunteer supervisor's dream—they follow all the policies and procedures perfectly, never forgetting or neglecting to fulfill their duties, always are on-time, and model being great team players. When they first entered the program, we thought they'd only be with us till April and therefore are so pleased they will remain as advocates during the summer months when we really need the extra help in shift coverage. Thank you to the twins for being such reliable, flexible, caring, fun advocates! Congratulations on receiving this honor.

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT!

The SAAFE Center held several fundraisers during the months of April and May, and we are thrilled to announce that we received great support from the community to benefit our Victims Emergency Fund. Amounts received are as follows:

- ANARCHOHIO:
\$ 2 1 6 . 2 7
- Q DOBA:
\$ 2 0 4 . 0 0

Thank you to
everyone for your
support!

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SAAFE Center and BGSU Partner to Remove Sexist Signs

Anyone who has driven down Wooster Street during BGSU's move-in weekend is likely familiar with the large signs displayed by residents that present sexist and harassing messages, such as "We'll trade beers for girls," or "Freshman girl training center." A number of individuals and groups, including SAAFE Center advocate and staff member Lauren, have gathered together to tell university officials that these signs contribute to a hostile environment, particularly for female students. While a number of important steps have been taken to see that these signs are no longer displayed, such as the passing of a resolution by the BGSU Faculty Senate that the signs violate the Student Code of Conduct and that offenders should be sanctioned, as well as the formation of a subcommittee by the Not in Our Town initiative to address this issue, Lauren and others have decided to take a more direct and radical approach to voice their condemnation of the sexist environment to which these signs contribute. Thus, a protest has been planned for the BGSU move-in weekend (August 22nd-24th) that seeks to advocate for the removal of the signs, and, ultimately, to challenge the sexist culture of the BGSU campus and Bowling Green community. Look for more updates about this in upcoming newsletters and on our Facebook and Twitter pages!

Slut Walk BG

On May 2nd, SAAFE Advocates, BGSU students, and community members gathered together to take part in the Slut Walk, a march designed to challenge the victim blaming attitudes that exist in our society. Protestors involved in the Slut Walk successfully raised awareness to the fact that it is never permissible to blame a victim for harassment or assault based on what she or he was wearing or how much alcohol she or he consumed.

National Sexual Assault Prevention Efforts

SAAFE advocates are well aware of the alarming number of sexual assaults that occur on college campuses across the United States. Over the past year, we and others who advocate for the eradication of sexual violence have increasingly gained support in our efforts from government officials, including the Obama administration. The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault has issued a report called *Not Alone*, as well as a website, www.NotAlone.gov, that outlines plans for sexual assault prevention and survivor support efforts on college campuses. Additionally, they have released a PSA in which President Obama, Vice President Biden, and actors such as Daniel Craig and Steve Carell send the message that "I is 2 Many" and discuss prevention, bystander intervention, and victim blaming. Other government officials have also pushed for universities to be held accountable for sexual assault prevention, such as a group of members of Congress who sent a letter to the *U.S. News & World Report* urging the publisher to include sexual assault and prevention statistics among annual college rankings. It is important that SAAFE advocates be aware of systems-level advocacy work occurring at the national level, and use this knowledge to help inform the work we do with clients on an individual level.