

OCTOBER 2014
NEWSLETTER

The SAAFE Center Newsletter

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- **Oct 1st**
SAAFE 25th Anniversary
- **Oct 3rd**
Danielle's Birthday
- **Oct 15th**
Jamie's Birthday
- **Oct 19th**
First Sistas' of
Nia Meeting
- **Oct 21st**
Cat's Birthday
- **Oct 26th**
R&R: 1pm-2pm
3pm-4pm
- **Oct 27th**
Heather's Birthday
- **Oct 29th**
R&R: 7pm-8pm
- **Oct 31st**
Halloween!

McDonald's Fundraiser

Thank you so much
to all those who came
or volunteered! We
were able to raise
\$185.44 for the
SAAFE Center's vic-
tims emergency fund.

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

Happy 25th Anniversary SAAFE Center!

On Oct. 1, 1989, the SAAFE Center started receiving Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant monies. This is a competitive grant which needs to be applied for each year. To celebrate 25 years of providing free and confidential services to the Wood County community, the SAAFE Center will be hosting a "Congratulations!" event on Oct. 1 at Grounds for Thought, 174 S. Main St., Bowling Green from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. Grounds for Thought was selected as the event site, according to Julie Broadwell, SAAFE Center director, for several reasons: 1) this is also the 25th anniversary of GFT opening its doors so it's very fitting to celebrate together; 2) SAAFE advocates often meet their clients there as GFT exudes a warm and welcoming environment and is suitable for quiet conversations; and 3) GFT is a socially-conscious business while SAAFE is a program dedicated to serving the Wood County community.

During the Congratulations event, staff and volunteers will be present throughout the day to share information about SAAFE, hand out small tokens of appreciation, and enable participants to sign up for prizes.

The VOCA grant, administered through the Ohio Attorney General's Office, has paid for SAAFE Center staff salaries, and helped with the cost of rent and utilities, printing, mileage reimbursement, and phone costs. This enables all services to clients to be absolutely free. The SAAFE Center staff and volunteers provide crisis intervention on-call coverage 24/7 hours a day, enabling a victim of sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment or sex trafficking to reach an advocate at any time of day or night. The advocates outreach to any safe, neutral setting, such as the hospital, police station, The Link, and even Grounds for Thought when working with on-going clients.

The SAAFE Center staff want to thank Kelly and Laura Wicks, owners of Grounds for Thought for hosting the 25th Anniversary celebration of the SAAFE Center. Please stop by for a cup of coffee and to chat!

Advocate of the Month: Dan

It's an honor to give the September Advocate of the Month award to a brand-new Advocate, Dan. He only completed training in July 2014 but has exemplified himself as an advocate before and during his training and certainly since that time. He thinks about the work of being an advocate—supporting survivors and holding perpetrators accountable—all the time, not just at work. He speaks with his family (his mom now tells him of things she has read), his significant other (Ed comes and volunteers at our events), his fraternity (for pledge education), his classmates and—while in Hiroshima, Japan this summer for studies—with Japanese women asking them about sexual assault services in their country. He wrote a response to an editorial in the BG News, he shares articles on FB to increase awareness about emerging issues, and enjoys discussing relevant topics any chance he gets. He doesn't just 'talk the talk,' he definitely 'walks the walk.' It is a pleasure to have him with us as an advocate. Congratulations, Dan, on this award.

—Julie

ON CAMPUS OFFICE

Our On-Campus Office is located in 355 BGSU Psychology Building. It is always open with free written materials. During the school year it has staffed office hours where anyone wanting to speak with an advocate can stop by

Staffed Hours:

Monday 1:30pm - 2:20pm
Tuesday 10:00am - 11:00am
Wednesday 1pm - 2pm
Thursday 3pm - 4pm
Friday 1:30p - 2:20p

CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

On Oct. 22nd the SAAFE Center along with BGSU students will be displaying shirts from the Clothesline Project on the BGSU campus. For more information on the Clothesline Project [click here.](#)

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Victim Blaming: Sometimes Those Who Help Can Also Hurt

In April 2014, I was hired as the SAAFE Center's Expansion Specialist. I work with five different counties near Wood County to develop comprehensive sexual assault services. To do so, I collaborate with community leaders such as lawyers, law enforcement, and Victim Witness directors, to see what services are currently provided in each county, and where there are gaps. Once the gaps are identified, then the SAAFE Center will work with these counties to fill the gaps in the services. I wish that I could say that my efforts have led to smooth sailing. Unfortunately, I have encountered many road blocks along the way. After a while, I started to notice a pattern in a lot of the language being used in regards to victims.

One of the most prevalent complaints I've heard is how frustrated these leaders are when the victim doesn't do something. In other words, there is an expectation that a victim will: get a rape kit done, file a police report, and press charges against their perpetrator. The victim is expected to do all of these things within a time frame, and at a time that is convenient to those leaders helping them.

In short, victim blaming is alive and well within the very structures that are put in place to protect and help the victim recover and heal from an incredibly difficult trauma.

When we think of victim blaming, we like to imagine it being perpetrated by someone completely detached from the sexual assault. We like to imagine that victim blaming is no more than just saying that the victim "had it coming to them" because they wore a specific choice of outfit, or that they were intoxicated or under the influence. However, victim blaming is broader than that—it is a failure to empathize and think beyond oneself. And as much as we would hope, even those dedicated to help sometimes hurt because of their lack of understanding of the victim.

So what can we do? We have to be on the lookout for not only the obvious signs of victim blaming, but also the implicit attitudes and prejudices that impact the ability to help victims. And more importantly, we need to keep an eye out to make sure that we ourselves don't begin to adopt these attitudes so that we can continue to be caring and effective advocates.

— Heather

Sistas of Nia

We are sistas' with a purpose and destined for greatness! On a continual journey of healing and empowering each other.

Sistas' of Nia is a support group for African-American adult women survivors of childhood sexual abuse. This group is organized by the SAAFE Center and will meet once a week in the BGSU Women's Center, 107 Hanna Hall, for four weeks, on Sundays from 2:00 pm- 3:00 pm on Oct. 19 & 26 and Nov. 2 & 9. The group is closed meaning that participants can only join the first week. This group is available to community members and students. African-American women are less likely than any race of women to report rape or sexual abuse and being a survivor of sexual abuse living in silence is a huge burden to carry. The group is to bring awareness in the African-American community of women to let them know that there is healing and they are not alone.

Uncovering the Colors

Media was set abuzz by a new nail polish that promises to "empower" women to prevent rape from happening to them. This nail polish called Undercover Colors was conceptualized by four North Carolina State University Students. Undercover Colors is not the answer to preventing rape because there are multiple ways a perpetrator can rape a woman such as through physical restraint or creating an environment of fear. Even if every woman was using Undercover Colors men would find a way to adapt to the situation and work around it. Alcohol by itself has been used as a way to rape woman and often perpetrators will use alcohol to take advantage of the victim.

Rather than shifting the problem of preventing sexual assault on women, prevention should be focused more on engaging men as the solution. Men rape women not just because of power or control, but because they choose to. Power and control are what leads to the choice and it is important to not forget that it is a choice that men make. Undercover Colors' Facebook page states "we want to shift fear from the victim to the perpetrator" and their personal website states "choice matters." As ideal as these may sound, there is a flawed rationale. The use of nail polish would probably put the fear back on the women because if the test was positive, it would make that person scared for their safety. It provides no answers to what women will do after the test is positive. Undercover Colors provides no choice, except for another way to blame the victim. Since this product cannot guarantee safety there is nothing this product truly offers. There is no way to get refunded if this product does not work. The students who created this product will profit financially from it even when the product does not work. While their intent is good, the impact of this product is minimal and confusing. Using fear as a deterrent seems archaic and not a productive way to changing behaviors especially if what creates the behavior is still there. Instead of supporting products that put the burden on victims, perhaps a shift for teaching men not to rape women would work better. Looking at similar past products such as rape whistles and blue lights, we know that they have done little to stop rape from occurring. Men should be engaging in sexual assault prevention by altering behaviors that support the current rape culture.

There are many men out there who do not want to listen. The criticism Undercover Color's product signals is there are still voices that these men who created the nail polish have not considered. This product will not prevent rape because it does nothing to stop men's actions.

—Dan