

THE BINDING PROJECT

THE ISSUE: IN 30 SECONDS

What does “empowerment” mean to you? Sexual abuse is an issue which is all too prevalent, especially on college campuses – it is up to us to support and respect each other in order to create a welcoming and safe campus community. Contribute to an art installation that celebrates empowerment while “shattering the silence” of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

THE ISSUE: AN OVERVIEW

At least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused during her lifetime. Every 2 minutes, someone in the US is sexually assaulted. One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually assaulted before age 18. On college campuses, one in six college women have been raped or have been the victim of an attempted rape during the past year. Just 5% of these undergraduate women reported their sexual assault to the police. (www.hopesdoorny.org & www.pavingtheway.net)

These statistics speak volumes about a widespread problem which often remains unspoken. Domestic violence and sexual abuse can happen to anyone – male or female, young or old – at any time, day or night. Education about this issue can help empower victims to speak out against those who have hurt them, as well as to spread the word to prevent future harm.

PAVE (Promoting Awareness/Victim Empowerment) is a non-profit organization that uses education and action to shatter the silence of sexual violence through targeted social, educational, and legislative tactics (www.pavingtheway.net). Executive Director Angela Rose, angered by how the authorities dealt with her own abduction and assault, founded PAVE in 2001 to help promote activism on the issue of sexual violence and give a strong voice to its victims. She encourages individuals, groups, and college campuses to get involved in taking action against domestic violence and sexual abuse through art projects and lobbying for legislative change – especially regarding the treatment of rape survivors.

The Binding Project is an ongoing art installation which seeks to empower those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault – whether victim, friend, family member, or advocate. In the binding project, participants write a word of empowerment on two zip ties (the same device used by Angela Rose’s kidnapper to tie her hands together) – one is worn by the participant for two days (the amount of time Angela was held captive), and the other is sent to PAVE to be included in the Binding Project installation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are men victims of sexual assault, or only women?

Everyone is a potential victim of sexual assault – including one in every ten men. Males are socialized to not be vulnerable or identify themselves as victims (www.pavingtheway.net)

Is it possible to “spot” a potential rapist in a crowd?

No. While some sexual assaults are committed by strangers, 60-80% are committed by someone the victim is familiar with (relative, friend, acquaintance). A potential rapist can be of any race or socio-economic status (www.pavingtheway.net)

How can I get involved/volunteer to help victims of domestic violence and sexual assault?

There are many fantastic community partners who focus on this issue and have volunteer opportunities available for students, including Hope’s Door & My Sister’s Place (Westchester) and Sarah Burke House & Safe Horizon (NYC).

THE NEED

Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault often suffer in silence, whether physically or psychologically. As advocates, we can help shatter the silence by empowering victims and educating others to prevent future attacks. The cultural conversation about rape is getting louder – proving that more voices can lead to a safer and more just society on both the personal and legislative levels.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

PAVE: www.pavingtheway.net

The Binding Project: <http://angelarosepave.wordpress.com/2010/12/17/the-binding-project/>

Hope's Door (Pleasantville): www.hopesdoorny.org

My Sister's Place (White Plains): <http://mspany.org/>

Sanctuary for Families/Sarah Burke House (NYC): www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org

Safe Horizon (NYC): www.safehorizon.net

CONNECTIONS TO JUSTICE

A Voice for the Voiceless: Victims suffer in silence, often afraid to seek justice against the individual who has hurt them, fearing retaliation or rejection from their family and friends. As an advocate for protection of victims and prosecution of perpetrators of rape, you can speak out in support of those who cannot, and help to prevent future incidences of sexual assault.

Campus Conversations: Start a conversation about justice and respect on your campus. Help to create a community where everyone feels safe to learn and grow. No one has the right to abuse you or make you feel coerced into doing something you do not feel comfortable with.

Anti-Rape Legislation: Educate yourself about bills and laws which are being presented to aid or block services and protections for rape victims. Partisan politics and the "redefinitions of rape" should not get in the way of helping a victim on in their recovery of their physical and mental health.