

Highland Students Kick Off NO MORE Campaign

Responding to the growing awareness nationwide of sexual assault and violence, Student Leaders at Highland Community College started a NO MORE campaign to address instances of concern on the Highland campus. The Student Leaders began working on the campaign in the Fall semester with guidance from Dr. Cheryl Rasmussen, Vice President for Student Services, and others on the Highland campus. That initial work culminated in the premiere of the Student Engagement Team's video ads at the half-time of the women's basketball game on February 18. One ad featured members of the Highland campus stating No More; another made the point to walk in another's shoes and be aware of the violence being committed around us daily. The game program included an insert that made readers aware of sexual violence statistics and who to contact on the Highland campus for help.

In March, members of the campus community can sign up for Bystander Training to learn more about what the average person can do to assist with the fight against violence in our communities. Many times, crimes of violence, especially domestic and sexual violence, go unreported. The group's goal is to stop all forms of sexual violence at the College and then spread the sphere of influence into the community.

National statistics show that nearly one in five women in the United States has been raped in her lifetime; approximately one in 71 men also reported being raped. Nearly one in two women and one in five men experienced sexual violence victimization other than rape at some point. On college campuses, one in five women are targets of attempted or completed sexual assault, compared to about one in 16 college men. In Kansas, nearly one in 10 adult women have experienced rape, and the majority of the perpetrators are intimate partners or are otherwise known to the victim. In only about 20 percent of reported incidents of rape is the offender arrested.

So, sexual violence is not just a college campus problem. About one in 13 high school students in Kansas reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to. Put in different way, that number translates into 10,450 Kansas high school students, enough to fill more than 186 school buses. It means seven percent of all Kansas youth have experienced sexual assault.

Bringing it home, the College did a survey of its students in January to gain an understanding of the campus climate. Results from that survey show that there were at least five victims of sexual assault or attempted assault in the Fall. Two of those responded about an attempted assault and three responded that an assault did occur. Of those five respondents, all the victims knew their offender. None of the five reported the assault or attempted assault to a College official or the police. In addition, one in 10 respondents to the survey said they witnessed an incident of potential sexual assault, and only half responded that they took some kind of corrective action. The Highland students also reported that they feel comfortable on the campus, think

College officials are concerned about their welfare, they feel close to people on the campus, are happy to be there, they feel safe, and there is a good support system. That leads to the importance of the Bystander Training that will occur in March and April.