



NO NEWS

Eighth Annual Celebrity Gala and Silent Auction

“The Difference You Make” was the theme at SASSMM’s Eighth Annual Celebrity Gala and Silent Auction in March. Thanks to everyone involved, we raised more than \$15,000 which *will* help to make a difference for survivors of sexual violence. (See page 7 of this newsletter for a complete list of corporate sponsors, item donors and celebrities.)

We were pleased to have **DJs Mike Halmo and Bill Audette (a.k.a. Rhythm and Blues)** back for another year to get everyone up on the dance floor, while **Ethan Minton from 98.9 WCLZ** emceed. Thanks to **Tony Roy** for designing our invitations and poster, and to the Thorne Dining Hall Staff at Bowdoin College for serving up delicious hors d'oeuvres throughout the evening. Many thanks to **Sue Willard-Kiess** for her time and film-editing talent.

We broke our record for raffle ticket sales thanks to the gorgeous White Gold, Aquamarine and Diamond Slide designed and donated by **Day’s Jewelers** in Brunswick.

Thank you to all who attended this year’s Gala. We look forward to next year and hope to see you in 2012!

Tenth Annual Ladies’ Open Golf Tournament

June is on its way, which means that planning is well underway for our Ladies’ Golf Open at Brunswick Golf Club. The tournament will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2011 (rain date is June 9th). Our registration form is available on our website at www.sassmm.org. For further details, please contact Barbara Rondeau at 833-6161 or barb3@zwi.net; or Hannah Stevens at 725-2181 or administration@sassmm.org.



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Mission Statement

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine is an agency of professionals and trained volunteers dedicated to providing advocacy and support for survivors, families and concerned others affected by sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. SASSMM offers services to improve awareness and response by providing prevention, education and risk reduction programs throughout Eastern Cumberland, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Knox, and Waldo Counties.

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 Website: www.sassmm.org

Sexual Assault Response Team Update

Spring brings training opportunities! The Midcoast Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) presents: *A First Responders Guide to Sexual Assault Investigations*. Two trainings will be held in May; one in Lincoln County and one in Sagadahoc County. The training is free and will be presented by a panel of local law enforcement, a representative from the district attorneys office, and a SASSMM advocate. Our spring quarterly meeting took place as well; all members of the SART – including medical providers, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and advocates – were invited to attend. Our guest speaker was Polly Campbell, Registered Nurse and Director of the Maine Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program. Individuals must RSVP for the trainings and the workgroup.

If you would like more information about the Midcoast SART, or for survivor support for any type of sexual violence throughout the criminal or civil legal process, please contact Heidi at 725-2181 or email sart@sassmm.org.

Heidi Hanley
 SART Advocate

Please Note!

As of April 1st, 2011, SASSMM's service area has expanded. We now serve Eastern Cumberland, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Knox, and Waldo Counties.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

This speech was given last year at the Hall of Flags at the Maine State House by then Bowdoin student and SASSMM peer educator, Brian Fry.

As you all probably already know, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and this year the main focus is the topic of college campus sexual assault. The reason we are all here today is to pay tribute to Sexual Assault Awareness Month through observing the unveiling of Maine's very own College Campus Clothesline Project. I'm proud to say that fourteen different college campuses state-wide are represented in the project, which is a true testament to the fact that college students all around Maine are actively engaged in the fight to end sexual violence. This is not something that would have happened ten years ago, yet here we are today, a true symbol of progress, evidence that efforts to educate and raise awareness about sexual violence are indeed working.

I want to first talk briefly about sexual assault at Bowdoin and the efforts our students are making to combat it. I'll then follow with a few key points I've learned during my involvement in the fight to end sexual violence and then finish with some general thoughts, as well as why I think events like the Clothesline Project are so important.

Before I say anything else, I'd like to define a couple of the acronyms that I'll be using quite frequently throughout this speech. The first is SASSMM, which stands for Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine. SASSMM is an organization that provides advocacy services to sexual assault survivors and anyone else affected by sexual assault, and also provides educational and risk reduction programs in local Maine schools. I work with SASSMM as a Peer Educator and go into local elementary, junior

high, and high schools to talk about issues like personal safety, sexual assault, consent, and being an active bystander.

The second acronym I'll be referring to is BMASV, or Bowdoin Men Against Sexual Violence, of which I am one of the current co-leaders. BMASV is an all-male group of Bowdoin students committed to spreading awareness about sexual violence and to providing a male voice on the issue of sexual assault. We hold facilitations for the male athletic teams and male social house members on campus with the goal of fostering a safer and healthier sexual environment at Bowdoin.

OK, now that you know what SASSMM and BMASV are, I'd like to tell you a little about sexual assault at Bowdoin. First, and frankly put, it *does* happen. At a place where everyone can seem so nice, so worldly, so educated, it still happens. When I showed up at Bowdoin in the fall of 2006, I had no idea that sexual assault was an issue on college campuses at all, much less at Bowdoin. But then I learned that 1 in 4 college aged women will experience completed or attempted sexual assault within her lifetime, and that 1 in 6 men will be sexually assaulted within his lifetime. And then I read and listened to stories from sexual assault survivors, all Bowdoin students. That's when it hit me that sexual assault was a very real issue not only at Bowdoin, but at college campuses nationwide.

Now here's where the past leaders of Bowdoin come into play. Groups like Safe Space, an advocacy group for sexual assault survivors or anyone else affected by sexual assault, and V-Day, a group committed to ending violence against women, have played monumental roles in starting the campus movement to end sexual violence. Then, back in 2004, two strapping young Bowdoin men decided to start an all-male group to fight against sexual violence. One of the originators had found out that his girlfriend

had been raped during her time at Bowdoin; amidst his anger and confusion that sexual assault actually happened at the college, he and his friend decided to do something about it, and BMASV was born. Both of those guys were leaders of BMASV during my first year at Bowdoin, and the thing that struck me the most was that both were prominent athletes on campus—one a soccer and lacrosse player, and the other a football player. I didn't start out thinking that joining an all-male sexual assault awareness group was the "cool" thing to do when I came to college, but because those guys were athletes and I looked up to them, it became the "cool" thing to do. This is what I want to stress has happened to Bowdoin's campus over my four years so far: talking about sex, and issues like sexual assault is no longer taboo, and in many instances, encouraged. More and more people are getting involved in efforts to end sexual violence (both male and female), and the campus attitudes towards sex seem to be much safer and much healthier.

Now I in no way mean to suggest that BMASV has played the central role in advancing the movement to end sexual violence. The group is simply one piece to the puzzle, and other groups like Safe Space and V-Day are integral pieces as well. In addition to these groups, one of the things I'll talk about in the next section is the introduction this year of a program called Speak About It, which was presented for the first time this past fall as a part of Bowdoin's freshmen orientation. The production (as I'll talk about in a bit) was a huge hit and has visibly changed the culture on Bowdoin's campus surrounding sex. So without further adieu, I will now give you three very important points that I've learned through my experiences as a BMASV member, as a SASSMM Peer Educator, and as a member of the Bowdoin community. Here we go.

First point: listen, listen, and then listen some more. The power of listening is probably already known to everyone here, but I find that reminders never hurt. Listening is one of the most crucial and important things one can do to help a sexual assault survivor. Listening to someone's opinion or story without making snap judgments will help you understand where a person is coming from, even if you don't completely agree with what he or she said or did. Listening allows us to learn, empowers others to heal, and shows respect. When I first started as a Peer Educator, listening to a student say something highly controversial or downright disrespectful was very hard to deal with—but how else was that student going to learn? That student's opinion is just as valuable, if not more valuable than the kid who already knows all the right answers—after all, chances are, someone else in the room was thinking the same thing, but was too afraid to say it out loud. Listening to any and all opinions, especially the ones we disagree with, helps us understand why those opinions exist in the first place, and from there we can address the issue at hand and move forward. In short, always remember the incredible power of listening.

Second point: passion, authenticity, and humor go a long way. The best illustration of this is Speak About It, the performance I mentioned a minute ago that was given for the first time at Bowdoin during this year's freshmen orientation. The production was written by two recent Bowdoin grads, both previous leaders of sexual assault awareness groups and of the school's comedic improvisation group. They used their passion to make Bowdoin a safer and healthier place to create an incredibly successful freshman orientation program. To make the program really hit home, they used true stories written by real Bowdoin students,

covering numerous sexual experiences, from the good to the bad to the just plain ugly. It just doesn't get more authentic than that. Finally, they used humor to lighten the mood after particularly serious and emotionally powerful sections, and to help keep the attention of a bunch of first-years in the midst of a brutally taxing and tiring orientation.

Speak About It isn't just your average orientation program about sex—it single-handedly started a cultural change surrounding sex on Bowdoin's campus. Students left the show aware of the expectations placed upon them by the college, knew about campus resources such as Safe Space and the counseling center, and most importantly, that they controlled their own relationship with sex at Bowdoin. One of the goals of Speak About It was to get people more comfortable talking about sex and sexuality, and get them more familiar with concepts such as consent and being an active bystander. From what I've seen, the show has done just that. It is my belief that in three years, when every Bowdoin student will have seen Speak About It during his or her orientation, the culture surrounding sex at Bowdoin will be much healthier and much safer, and sexual assault may even cease to be an issue on campus.

This leads me to my third and final point, which is comprised of two parts: first, everyone has the power to make a difference, and second, it's sometimes the smallest of things that can make that difference. Jeremy Bernfield, a previous BMASV leader, once received an incredible email when he was abroad during his junior year. The email was from a female Bowdoin student, and she vehemently thanked BMASV because one of its members saved her from a dangerous situation. She was at a party and went outside to talk with a guy...one thing led to another, and she became really uncomfortable

with what was going on. He tried to go in for a kiss but she resisted, and was visibly in distress. Enter her personal savior, a guy who claimed to be a BMASV member. He said he saw what was going on and wanted to make sure that everything was ok; in short, he broke up the situation, and the girl was incredibly relieved.

Now I tell this story not because I want to build up BMASV and make its members seem like the sex police, because it's actually quite the contrary. As it turns out, the young man who intervened wasn't even a member of BMASV; he just claimed he was. He was just a guy standing outside a party who saw something going on, and all he did was check in to see if everything was ok. For that girl, it made all the difference, and even though she mistakenly thanked BMASV, her story stresses that anyone can make a difference in the fight against sexual violence. It doesn't take a trained Safe Space advocate, a SASSMM Peer Educator, or even a guy wearing a BMASV shirt to affect change—it just takes the right attitude, and the courage to stand up for what you think is right.

This brings me to the second part of this point, that little things can make a world of a difference. If you see a potentially unsafe situation at a party, or an interaction between two people that makes you uncomfortable, all it takes is a simple check-in. You could just go up and say "hey do either of you want to go to supersnacks?" or "hey, you wanna dance?" and it could make a huge difference. Getting rejected to go get food or not getting that dance isn't really a big deal at all, and at the very least you'd have the peace of mind that you checked in and gave both people a chance to figure out where they stood, and what they wanted to do. And sometimes that's all it takes to make a difference.

It is my hope that this speech has shown that real change has already taken place.

Organizations like SASSMM are changing the culture of Maine's school system, and campus organizations like Safe Space, V-Day, and BMASV are changing the culture at Bowdoin. Events like the Clothesline project help remind people how prevalent sexual assault really is and just how much it affects each and every one of us. We all have the power to affect change as long as we're determined, and as I've said before, it doesn't take a monumental effort or a position of authority to do so. Speaking from personal experience, I've seen a revolution at Bowdoin; it's no longer taboo to talk about sex or join a sexual assault awareness group, and freshmen are already years ahead of where I was when I first came to Bowdoin. The campus is slowly changing for the better, and we owe much of this change to the past leaders of campus groups, teams, and dormitories. However, with that change comes even more responsibility, as well as new challenges, so I urge the current and future leaders of SASSMM, Bowdoin, and the 13 other colleges represented here today to continue the fight against sexual violence and to never become complacent. Ellen Glasgow once said, "All change is not growth, as all movement is not forward." It is my firm belief that the previous leaders have pointed us in the right direction; now it's now up to the current and future leaders to ensure that we keep moving forward, keep growing, and keep fighting to end sexual violence. Thank you for your time.

Brian Fry
Bowdoin Class of 2010

Education Corner

In the 2010 Fiscal Year, SASSMM educators provided peer- and sexual violence awareness

and prevention programs to 6,858 students, faculty and staff in many of the elementary, middle and high schools in the Midcoast area. In an ongoing effort to assess the efficacy of our school based educational programs, as well as to report program outcomes for federal, state and community funding sources, SASSMM asks each participant to complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of each presentation. Students and staff respond:

"The puppets were engaging; the language simple; + the message was clear, but not scary. The presenters were skillful and friendly. Very professional." Grade K teacher, Dike Newell School

"I liked it because it might help other kids if this is happening to them."
3rd grader, Nobleboro Central School

"I loved what you did with us. I think that you should go to some other schools because the kids that are feeling down will feel much better..." 5th grader. Georgetown Central School

"[I learned that] most people who sexually abuse kids are not strangers but someone you trust." 6th grader, Bath Middle School

"[I learned that] sexual assault doesn't have anything to do with what you're wearing."
8th grader, Medomak Middle School

"Everything I have to say is positive. Continue what you are doing.."
11th-12th grader, Lincoln Academy

For more information about SASSMM's school education programs, or to schedule a presentation for your class or school, please contact Bethany Hunter, School Education Coordinator, at 725-2181 or education@sassmm.org

Bethany Hunter
School Education Coordinator

Thank you to our sponsors!

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The following businesses and local artists donated items for the auction. Please support those who support SASSMM!

- 21st Century Family Fitness
- AAA
- Alfiero Beadworks
- Anne George
- Anne Olivo
- Ashley H Designs
- Atlantic Lawncare
- Barn Star Candle
- Bart & Greg's DVD Explosion
- Bath Area YMCA
- Bayview Gallery
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- Discovery Toys
- Edgecomb Potters
- Eveningstar Cinema
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- Mainly Health
- Mazie's Girl
- Metcalf's
- Midcoast Symphony Orchestra
- Mommy Made
- Moody's Diner
- Morning Glory Natural Foods Nest
- New England Touchless Car Wash
- Nina Sommer
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
- Now You're Cooking
- Ornament
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- Spare Time Family Fun Center
- Stan Parlin
- Starbucks Coffee Company
- Stephanie George-Roy
- Summer Island Studio
- Sweet Water Day Spa
- Tabitha's Jewelry Designs
- The Barn Door Café and Bakery
- The Great Impasta
- The Public Theatre
- The Theater Project
- Well Tempered Kitchen
- Wild Oats Bakery & Café
- Wildflours
- Women's Fitness Studio & Spa
- Women's Wellness Comprehensive Care

Thank you to our wonderful celebrities!

Holly Stover, Director of Economic Justice, DHHS

Geoff Rushlau, District Attorney: Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Knox and Waldo Counties

Sheldon Tepler, SASSMM Supporter

Polly Campbell, Director SAFE Program Office of the Attorney General

Sheriff Todd Brackett, Lincoln County

Sheriff Joel Merry, Sagadahoc County

Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Cumberland County

Pauline Mcluer, SAFE, Midcoast Hospital

John Hodge, Director, Brunswick Housing Authority

SASSMM Support Groups

&

Additional Advocacy Services For Survivors, Parents and Concerned Others

Support Groups: A Piece of the Healing Process.

Survivors of sexual violence are often left with deep feelings of shame, guilt and embarrassment. Many feel they have no one to turn to for support and assistance.

SASSMM provides a casual and non-judgmental environment for individuals to connect with others who have been through similar life events. Participants share personal experiences, discuss information and exchange resources.

Groups focus on healing and moving forward. A variety of survivor-centered groups are offered.

Call 1-207-725-2181 to schedule a pre-group appointment.

SASSMM also offers the following services:

- **One-To-One Support**

- For individuals waiting for a group to begin, or simply looking for information and support, SASSMM offers meetings on a scheduled basis.

- **24-Hour Crisis and Support Line**

- 1-800-822-5999, from a cell phone call 1-207-725-1500
- TTY dial 1-888-458-5599

- **Specific advocacy and assistance around law enforcement and legal proceedings.**

- **Informed advocacy services for people with disabilities and older individuals.**

All of SASSMM's advocacy services are confidential* and free of charge. Services are available to survivors of sexual violence and the people who care about survivors, no matter when the assault or abuse occurred. We look forward to speaking with you.

*SASSMM advocates are mandated reporters and in some cases information shared may not be able to remain confidential.



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