

WE:advocate

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July 1, 2006

SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTER OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA, INC.



Healing Hearts

Healing Hearts is the Sexual Assault Center's largest annual fundraiser. In its first few years Healing Hearts took place in Watkinsville at Le Maison Bleu, but this year we decided to bring the fundraiser to Stan Mullin's Studio on Pulaski Street in Athens. The large metal barn that was turned into a painting studio was the perfect space to have an art auction. The thirty foot vaulted ceilings were complemented by equally grandiose canvases that were painted with vibrant colors and subjects. The bar was set up outside with beer and wine donated by Copper Creek and Northeast Sales Distributing, Inc. The wonderful heavy hors d'oeuvres and deserts that lavished the tables at Healing Hearts were provided by Lee Epting Catering.

Every year Healing Hearts involves an auction of items from the community that have been donated to the Sexual Assault Center. This year we had special items such as a four day stay at a beautiful cabin on Lake Hartwell, a five course wine paired dinner for six at Five and Ten, a wine seminar for ten people at Gosford Wine, season tickets to Town and Gown, a two night stay at Georgia's game-day center, a chiropractor visit and adjustment at Lawson Family Chiropractors, and tennis lessons from Red Racket Tennis and the Bishop Park Tennis Program. We also had almost one hundred pieces of artwork including pottery, paintings, etchings, jewelry, and handmade knit work donated by local artists in the seven counties that we serve.

Healing Hearts went wonderfully. We opened the doors to the studio on June 4th and began the auction at 7:00pm. We raised over ten thousand dollars for the Sexual Assault Center which was a great end to our event fundraising for the year. We hope that next year more of our donors will be able to come to this fantastic and fun event! And may I say that more than one person left that night with an amazing deal on some beautiful artwork, so come next year and with a little luck that could be you!

We would also like to thank everyone that made this event possible. Without all the hard work these people invested in Healing Hearts, it wouldn't have been possible to carry off such a successful fundraiser. In addition we thank all of the artists who donated their precious and personal works of art to be auctioned for such a great cause. It is the support of those like you that really make the Center a powerful community service. Thank you all for your overwhelming support and time.

Board Members

David Kurtz	Charlie Squires
Daniel Epting	Melissa Finerty
Susan Dougherty	Mike Healy
Nathan Horne	Michelle Cohen
Ben Rivers	

The Family Protection Center

The Family Protection Center evolved from the idea that victims of sexual or family violence should be able to come to one place and have all their needs met. Construction began on the old farm house next to the Lexington Road Athens-Clarke County Police Department in April 2005, and was made open to the public beginning June 2006. The money for the building renovation came from SPLOST, and individual organizations worked hard to obtain grant money to provide for staff to fill the offices. Housed inside are ACCPD sex and family crimes units, District Attorney and DFCS satellite offices, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and Project Safe (battered women's shelter) offices, as well as SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner).

The Sexual Assault Center will now provide accompaniments for forensic medical exams, provide family support, and perform forensic interviews at this site. The forensic interview rooms (where interviews with child and adult victims are recorded) have the latest technology and are conducive to providing these interviews. There are also pleasant rooms for adult and child counseling, and a professional and spacious conference room. The best part is that every service that a victim would need is conveniently located at one place.

Because of this new building, the Sexual Assault Center has been able to readjust its own building space, by turning the old SANE exam room into a conference room/library, as well as utilizing more office space. The Sexual Assault Center building now also maintains more anonymity in providing its confidential services. Survivors who may not want to report, or may not want to be known, will come into contact with fewer people while visiting our building. At the same time, our proximity to the FPC allows us a physical link to other officials when providing legal or medical advocacy for survivors who do wish to report. It is a win-win situation with the survivor's needs at the forefront.

While it has been a long time in coming, we are certainly glad the Family Protection Center is here and look forward to serving survivors in a new, holistic manner.

WWE:respond

Groups

The aftermath or secondary effects of surviving childhood sexual abuse differ in some ways from the residual effects experienced by an adult woman who has been violated by a sexual assault. Of course, the major common denominator between the two types of trauma is that one human being is choosing to significantly harm another person for their own gratification.

Our support groups for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and for survivors of date/acquaintance/stranger rape offer an antidote to these brave individuals. Human beings who've experienced similar trauma helping other people that have been in that same dark place is the most powerful way to stay on the path of healing. Sexually violating another person is illegal, indecent, and destructive. Our women's groups offer a corrective experience; people coming together to treat each other in a manner marked by compassion, understanding, and empathy. Led by our Program Director for Adult Services, these groups are targeted at a constructive process of recovery to mitigate the destructive power of sexual violation.

New Additions to our Team

In the last three months we have lost **Valarie Snell, Adina Milligan, and David Lipthrott**. We are fortunate to have found these four wonderful women to fill their positions as well as one more for a new outreach position we created.

Keisha M. Buynitzky began directing the Children's Services program on May 30th. Keisha joins us from her previous job as a Family Support Worker in the Healthy Families Program for the Athens Area Child Abuse Prevention Council. Keisha began as a dedicated volunteer with the center for approximately three years and is currently working on her Master's Degree in Professional Counseling. Keisha resides in Oglethorpe County with her husband and three-year-old twins.

Savannah Weaver is our new outreach coordinator. She is our first employee that is both fluent in Spanish and has extensive experience working with the Hispanic and Latino populations. She holds a Master of Social Work with concentrations in Program and Agency Administration as well as Maternal and Child Health. Savannah currently works at the Athens Area Child Abuse Prevention Council and will be joining us in mid July.

Prison Rape

With the passing of the Prison Rape Elimination Act in 2003, the issue of prison rape has become somewhat more widely recognized by state officials, legislators, law enforcement and the general public as well. For many, it is easy to sweep the topic under the rug and ignore it since the "victims" are criminals who have wronged society themselves; however, prison rape should be regarded as a public and social issue since 95% of those who are incarcerated are eventually released, taking with them the trauma and psychological effects of such experiences back into society.

Some have called prison rape another form of "punishment" that inmates must endure. There also tends to be a widespread issue of guards in prison turning their heads when a sexual assault occurs. It is not uncommon for a rape victim in prison to be told to "become a man" or "stand up for yourself" which the low numbers of prison. Many are protection or secuinmate and as must submit to sexual demands. psychological efhorrifying conse-rape is that of HIV ultimately a death of HIV tend to be 5 in prisons than the nation's general population. It is important to realize that prison rape does not make an individual a homosexual; rape in prison is still an issue of power, control, and dominance over another just like it is on the outside of prison.

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– 10 times higher

Rape itself is an underreported crime so accurate statistics on its prevalence behind prison walls are hard to come by. A conservative estimate puts the number of inmate victims of prison rape somewhere close to 200,000 of the total 1.5 million inmates in prison. This means that nearly 13% of inmates have been or will be victims of rape while incarcerated. Those with mental illnesses and young first time offenders are at an increased risk of falling victim to prison rape as those who are bigger in stature and more "street savvy" prey on these particular disadvantaged populations.

The purpose of the PREA of 2003 is to establish a zero tolerance policy for prison rape and to implement training programs for prison officials to receive adequate instruction on how to detect, treat and report inmate sexual assaults. The Bureau of Justice Statistics will conduct annual reviews to determine characteristics of victims and perpetrators as well as which prison systems have high rates of reported allegations of prison rape. From these reviews, officials will be able to identify who is at risk for becoming a victim of sexual assault while incarcerated and which prison facilities are having difficulty deterring prison rape.

In December of 2005, the Sexual Assault Center and the ACC-SANE signed an agreement with the ACC Jail to provide services to inmates who suffer from a sexual assault while in the custody of the Clarke County Jail. These types of agreements between Sexual Assault agencies and prison systems have also been implemented across the nation as part of various states' efforts to support the PREA of 2003. Other programs and services that are being implemented and tested across the nation are those such as installing a sexual assault hotline for prisoners to access and providing training to staff members on how to detect, protect and report sexual assault. Since the PREA was only passed three years ago, it might be too early to analyze prison rape statistics to compare numbers. Only time will tell if these measures are enough to help these inmates who have been victimized and ignored for so long.

Gina Defalco began directing the Adult Services program on June 12 and comes to our team bringing enthusiasm, caring, and professional experience. Gina holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Master of Social Work. She came to the Center from her last job as Women's Services Coordinator at the Family Relations Program (FRP) in Gainesville. Gina's life partner is completing a post-doctoral position here in Athens, and they are a welcome addition to the Clarke county human service collaborative.

WE: educate

Stewards of Children: Helping to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is a frightening concept to most individuals. There is a lot of misinformation and timidity about sexual abuse due its being a "morbid" topic. Keisha Buynitzky, Program Coordinator of Children's Services, attended the *Stewards of Children* facilitator training by Darkness to Light. Keisha is now an authorized facilitator of the *Stewards of Children* curriculum. The curriculum is uplifting and motivating, and it focuses on realistic steps that adults can take to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The curriculum promotes children's rights to a full, happy childhood.

Parents are considered the best critical agents of prevention; however, any organization that is responsible for children/adolescents should participate in the "Stewards of Children" training. The Sexual Assault Center wishes to target such organizations, as well as any other interested adults, for trainings. The training also offers certificates of attendance if individuals are required to attend by their workplaces.

The *Stewards of Children* curriculum is based on the premise that because children ultimately cannot protect themselves, adults are responsible for the child's protection. When 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused, it is essential to create time to understand the issues of child sexual abuse. The response a child receives when they are experiencing sexual abuse is crucial to the child's ability to heal and cope throughout the rest of their lives. Most children keep their sexual abuse a secret from everyone. When this happens, the child's ability to heal is hindered, and the child may experience numerous negative feelings and thoughts. The child is also more likely to engage in riskier acts throughout her/his life when she/he has not been given the opportunity to heal appropriately.

The number of children affected by this terrible epidemic continues to grow every day, but it is possible to decrease child sexual abuse. This is why the Sexual Assault Center wishes to encourage all interested adults to request the "Stewards of Children" training to show the simple yet effective ways to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. The times and formats of the trainings are flexible according to need.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Sexual Assault Center began as a group of concerned and dedicated volunteers, and continues to thrive today because of our strong volunteer base. Volunteers are the driving force behind our ability to respond to crisis 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To each of them, who give so freely of their time to be an empathetic ear for a survivor during their moment of need, we give our sincere and most hearty appreciation; we truly couldn't do this without you!

That said, the Center also faces a tough reality with our volunteers; no one can stay forever. Volunteers move, graduate, go on to do other great and meaningful things in their lives, and we are presented with the challenge of constantly recruiting and training new volunteers. It seems like an easy enough task, being that the only requirements are that the prospective volunteer is at least 18 years old and has the ability to empathize. However, just as we face the challenge of reaching the community to let them know we are here, we face the same challenge in reaching the community and letting them know we are in need.

The Sexual Assault Center is always searching for new volunteers, and we hold periodic trainings to prepare them for the tasks and responsibilities that lie ahead. If you are interested in volunteering for our 24 hour crisis hotline, or to spread the word about sexual violence awareness in our community, please contact the volunteer coordinator. Our next training will be in early September, 2006.

"Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Outreach in our Community

The sexual assault movement has always strived to be inclusive as it provides services to its communities. All too often we assume that anyone who needs a service knows where to find it, and knows that they are welcome. Every time we make such an assumption, we have excluded many who would seek us out. Simply having a sign out does not inform or make us accessible. If you are one of the 1,033,793 people in Georgia living in poverty, one of the many adults (elderly, hearing/sight impaired, cognitive disabilities, etc.) dependent on others for care, or one for which English is a second language, then everyday is a challenge.

To be effective, we must become more deliberate about meeting the needs of those marginalized in our communities; we must involve experts (trusted community leaders, agency representatives, etc.) who can share with us the specific needs and barriers of the communities they represent and assist us in overcoming those barriers.

At SACNEGA, we are committed to making inclusion a moniker of the agency. We have increased capacity to target Hispanic, African-American, elderly, disabled, and lesbians/gays. By partnering with faith-based, aging and eldercare, and other community organizations, everyone wins. Communities are better informed, services are more frequently utilized, and everyone knows they are welcome. Being inclusive does not require a magic remedy. It does, however, require commitment, empathy, and a willingness to be the student, rather than the teacher. Watch what happens.



If there is anything incorrect in the address listed below, or if you have received multiple copies of this newsletter, please write to atho@sacnega.org or call the center at 706-546-1133 and ask our Development Assistant. Thank you for your assistance in keeping our database current and accurate.

Phone: 706-546-1133
Crisis Hotline: 706-353-1912
Toll Free Hotline: 877-363-1912
www.sacnega.org

The Sexual Assault Center of
Northeast Georgia, Inc.
3019 Lexington Road
Athens, GA 30605

Non profit organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Athens, GA
Permit # 414

we:need you

We are always looking for committed, mature volunteers for our 24-hour hotline. If you are interested in working to end sexual violence please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at (706) 546-1133.

We would like to thank some of the businesses that assisted us with Healing Hearts. Thank you all so very much. Your generous support makes our work here possible.



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| Athens Art Group | Granite City Glassworks |
| Athens Veterinary Clinic | Harmony Essentials |
| Aurum Studios Ltd. | Ice Cream Club |
| Bendzuna's Glass | In the Mix Pottery |
| Bishop Park Tennis Program | Jennings Mill Country Club |
| Blue Bell Gallery | Jingles |
| Cecilia Villaveces | Lawson Family Chiropractic |
| Chapelle Gallery | Lee Epting Catering |
| City Salon and Spa | Northeast Sales Dist. Inc. |
| Confetti | Red Racket Tennis |
| Creative Cookies and Creamery | Spencer's Jewelers |
| Five and Ten | Stan Mullins Studio |
| Flat Penny Folk Art | The Classic Center |
| Gosford Wine | |

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SAVE THE DATE

**Volunteer Training: September 5,6,7,12,13,14 5:30pm to 8:30pm
and September 10th and 17th 12:00pm to 6:00pm**