

Students speak out about dating violence

A representative of the Crime Victims Assistance Center, a member organization of United Way of Broome County, made a Youth Assault Prevention presentation about dating violence to a class at a Broome County middle school earlier this year. She was intrigued by two 12 or 13 year-old girls, especially their questions and reactions to the information presented. When the discussion turned to what it looks like when a friend is in an abusive relationship, the girls burst out together, "That's our friend!"

Crime Victims Assistance Center helps young teens recognize abusive relationships

The presenter asked the girls not to reveal the name of their friend to the class, but proceeded to explain to them how they could assist their friend who was in a troubling relationship. After the class was over, the presenter told the girls that she would be back the next day and would be able to talk with them in more detail at that time.

But before the presenter had packed up all of her materials to leave, there were three girls standing in front of her--the two from the class plus the friend they were concerned about. The presenter introduced herself to the new girl, giving her a business card and some information on dating violence. Included was a new flier that explained dating violence by comparing three types of relationships: red, yellow, and green zones, just like a traffic light. The presenter told the girl to please call if she needed any help or just wanted to talk.

The next day, when the presenter returned to the school to discuss sexual assault, the two girls from the previous day's class ran up to her and told her that their friend was "in the red zone and

was breaking up with her boyfriend that night!" The presenter pulled the girls aside and reiterated the importance of a safety plan for their friend and how important it was for the girl's parents to know what was going on. The two girls agreed to assist their friend through this very difficult time.

When the presenter returned to the same school a few months later, one of the girls from the class told her that their friend had successfully cut the relationship with her old boyfriend and was doing fine now.



Crime Victims Assistance Center offers many local programs

Many services to victims are available through the Crime Victims Assistance Center.

These include a victim advocacy program, a 24-hour crisis line, a Child Advocacy Center, and counseling and support.

In addition, CVAC offers educational programs to help keep people safe. These include information about the areas of rape, date rape drugs, domestic and dating violence, bullying, Internet safety, child lures, child abuse, hazing, sexual harassment, stalking, and other areas.

The Child Assault Prevention Project reaches elementary school children, their teachers and parents. The Youth Assault Prevention Program focuses on middle school and high school students.

When you donated to United Way's Community Care Fund you support the educational programs of Crime Victims Assistance Center and more than 100 other programs in Broome County that respond to the needs of area residents from infants to senior citizens.

Crime Victims Assistance Center, Inc., is a not-for-profit agency that offers crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, emergency accompaniment, and prevention education to people who have experienced or are at risk of violent crime. To learn more about the CVAC, call 723-3200 during office hours, or visit its website anytime at www.cvac.us. Crime Victims Assistance Center also has a 24-hour crisis line: 722-4256. It is looking for volunteers to help staff it. For more information, call 723-3200.

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what matters is published monthly by United Way of Broome County to highlight the positive results of your contributions to United Way on the people in our community.

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