Forging Aviators for the Fleet

Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Milton, Fla.

Vol. 75 No. 4 April 25, 2019
SAPR: Giving Back Their Voice

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Trey Hutcheson, USS George Washington Public Affairs:

According to Vice Adm. Mary Jackson, commander, Navy Installations Command, every Sailor, civilian and family member plays a part in reducing and eliminating sexual assault. Understanding how to recognize opportunities for intervention is vital to stopping unsafe behavior, to include retaliation.

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) representatives aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73) provide a safe avenue for Sailors to report incidents while also informing Sailors of ways to prevent these types of incidents.

“There are two sides of it, you have the sexual assault prevention and the response piece,” said Lt. Shineka Haskins, from Rockford, Florida, a SAPR point of contact (POC). “The prevention is about how a Sailor can work their way out of a difficult situation, and the response piece is when sexual assault has actually occurred.”

Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Handling) 1st Class Magdalena Serrano, from Richgrove, California, a SAPR POC, knows what the examples of prevention can be.

“Some of the prevention methods are paying attention to your surroundings and if something doesn’t feel right, just walk away and go somewhere else,” said Serrano. “If you go out with some friends, and something doesn’t look right, go ahead and try to intervene in some type of way. This is a type of bystander intervention.”

Unfortunately, sexual assault prevention does not always work and SAPR victim advocates (VA) engage to take action.

“The response is who the victim will talk to after the sexual assault,” said Haskins. “It is about trying to get them the best care that they need because it is all about giving that victim their choice back. We are trying to give them their choice back or their voice back, if you will.”

Even though April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, Sailors are shipmates 24/7, and shipmates watch each other’s back.
Every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted. 321,500 Americans 12 and older were sexually assaulted or raped last year. Educate yourself about sexual assault and start a conversation with a friend or family member today. Wearing a teal ribbon is a great conversation starter. Talking about these issues openly will help end the shame and stigma that sexual assault survivors are burdened with.

If someone discloses that they have or are being abused, let them know that the abuse is not their fault. Reassure them that they are not alone and that there is help and support out there. It may be difficult for them to talk about the abuse. Let them know that you are available to help whenever they may need it. What they need most is someone who will believe and listen. Help them find local resources to support their needs and safety, and provide them with the appropriate hotline info. The hotlines are confidential and available 24/7.

NASWF SAPR Team supported the “Cosplay is NOT Consent” Campaign by attending the 2019 Pensacon: The Cosplay is not consent campaign is promoting healthy relationships while enjoying the con. Always ask permission before you touch anyone or their costume. Get consent before you take any photos. NASWF SARC got photographed (with consent) with Tahmoh Penikett (Battlestar Galatica, Dollhouse, Supernatural, Strange Empire, Man of Steel, Altered Carbon and Taken) who was showing his support of the campaign. (Photo courtesy of Pensacon.)
Creating Cultural Awareness Through Proactive Training

By Jamie Link, NAS Whiting Field Public Affairs

Pure Praxis performance group visited Naval Air Station Whiting Field Apr 4 to perform two separate shows, bringing a message about how to handle harassment in the workplace. This year’s theme was “Just Joking” as part of interactive experience for all base personnel.

Pure Praxis is a social theater group that uses performance education workshops to train and empower service members at military installations worldwide. Contracted by the Department of Navy Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (DON-SAPRO) in 2015, Pure Praxis has reached over 240,000 military personnel to date.

Pure Praxis’ mission is to promote social change by using live, improvisational theater to re-create difficult real world situations so audiences can rehearse proactive responses. “Praxis” is the act of applying, engaging and practicing ideas, which is precisely what makes Pure Praxis different from any other training program on the market. Using a team of skilled and diverse performance facilitators and actor-advocates, they explore topics that are both complex and sensitive in order to empower audiences to become active bystanders in their own lives. The entirety of every performance is guided by the audience participation, thereby making every show unique.

For more information on the program please visit www.purepraxis.com.

For more information or help in regard to sexual assault, contact the Safe Helpline at 877-995-5247 (safe-helpline.org).

Challenge yourself and others not to use language or expressions that denigrate women and girls and/or tease or harass men and boys for not being “manly” enough. Let your friends know that their comments are limiting and offensive and that they have no place at work, on the playing field, in the classroom or in our homes. Speak up against comments that blame the victim for what has happened to them. Let your friends know that blaming the victim is inappropriate and offensive. Encourage them to consider why our society questions the victim’s behavior instead of the perpetrator’s violent and abusive behavior. Learn how all of us can get off the sidelines and help prevent violence before it happens.
NAS Whiting Field supports Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month on and off base through SAPR initiatives that included tug-of-war, proclamation signings, and a segway race with command and Training Air Wing Five leadership. (Photos by NASWF Public Affairs Staff).
To the community that I have come to admire, respect, and love:

Those are strong words, I know, but they are written with absolute sincerity. For the last couple of years, a special edition of the Whiting Tower has been published to cover events that take place during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). The last two editions included a heartfelt open letter to sexual assault survivors who came forward to make a report in FY15. I am not against it being published another year. The words are as true today as they were three years ago but the “awareness tree” it mentions is gone. It is hard to understand the letter without a little backstory on the hundreds of teal ribbons that adorned the trees in April 2017. So here it goes:

It is always a challenge to plan SAAPM events because you hope to increase public awareness and engagement while also being respectful of survivors’ experiences. That was our challenge as we tied 138 teal ribbons to create our awareness trees in the courtyard between building 1401 and the Atrium two years ago. We needed the visual appeal because we wanted people to look but we wanted them to see everything each ribbon stood for. If one looked hard enough, they might have seen the ribbons transform into pain, anger, sadness, loneliness, bravery, courage, strength, healing or any number of emotions survivors experience. Each ribbon telling their stories of survival.

It took several hours as we thoughtfully spaced and tied each ribbon throughout the trees. In FY15 the Navy had 1,376 reports of sexual assault. We didn’t have the resources to hang 1,376 ribbons from the trees so each ribbon had to represent 10 survivors and there was both a sense of satisfaction and guilt when we had finished.

I believe in our community and our Navy. I know we are all making our personal commitments to end sexual violence and I am confident the numbers next year will reflect our efforts. Regardless of the number of reports we will receive during FY19, we plan on bringing back the awareness trees next April but this time, every story will stand on its own. This is how we can be respectful of their experience; we can see them – all of them. We can look past the pretty teal ribbons that blow in the wind and honor the people they represent, have the courage to admit that sexual violence is a threat to all of us, and commit yourself to do something about it.

With lots of love,

Your citizen
Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month Proclamation

By the assembled dignitaries present from the Military, Municipality, and Law Enforcement Agencies

Whereas, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is intended to draw attention to the fact that sexual violence remains an intolerable violent crime which impacts the safety and security for our civilian and military populace; and

Whereas, sexual assault is an affront to the values we support as defenders and leaders within our communities; and

Whereas, we must work together to educate our citizenry about what can be done to prevent sexual assault and support survivors and victims to ensure they are provided the help needed to survive sexual violence; and

Whereas, dedicated leadership and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response staff encourage every person to speak out when witnessing acts of sexual violence; and

Whereas, with leadership, dedication and encouragement, there is compelling evidence that we can be successful in reducing sexual violence through prevention education, increased awareness, and holding offenders who commit acts of violence responsible for their actions; and

Whereas, The City of Milton, Law Enforcement and Military Commands join together today to strongly support the dedicated efforts of national, state and local partners to include citizens actively engaged in the prevention, awareness and response efforts surrounding sexual violence whose goals are to eradicate sexual violence.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, Mayor Heather Lindsay, City of Milton CAPT Paul D. Bowdich, Commanding Officer, NAS Whiting Field, CAPT Douglas W. Rosa, Commodore Training Air Wing FIVE Sheriff Bob Johnson, Santa Rosa County Sheriff Tony Tindell, Milton Chief of Police

DO HEREBY PROCLAIM APRIL 2019 as SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH and call upon all citizens to increase their participation in our efforts to prevent sexual assault, thereby strengthening our community.

GIVEN UNDER OUR HANDS, At Milton, FL, on this, the 2nd Day of April Two Thousand and Nineteen.