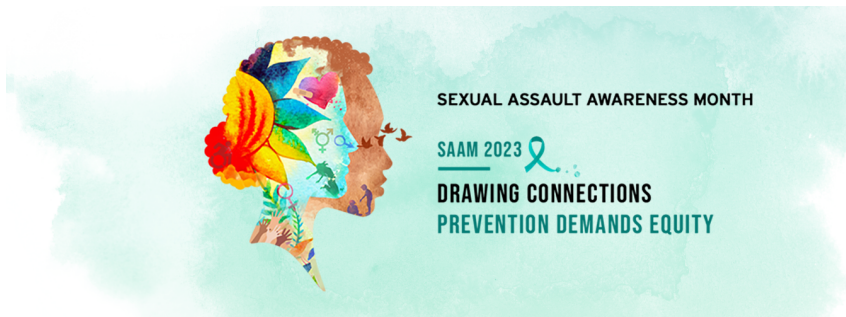




TOWNHALLER

2023 is the 22nd Anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness Month



This year's theme is Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center picked this to be the theme this year to single out that when discussing sexual assault, we must also be mindful that multiple systems of oppression are at play.

Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity calls on every individual, organization, and community to change ourselves and the harmful systems surrounding us to build racial equity and form that much needed respect.

Systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism) contribute to higher rates of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse. When addressing prevention, we must also take steps to undo systemic racism against the Black community and persons of color.

"I don't believe in failure. It's not failure if you enjoy the process."

Oprah



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PORTAGE PARK DISTRICT

This year, Portage Park District (PPD) welcomes a new education coordinator, Holly Stoneberg! Holly comes to PPD from a career as a science teacher and is already sharing her talents through the education and citizen science programs. This year you'll be able to participate in your favorite programs of past years and experience new ways to explore Portage Parks. PPD is thrilled to share our natural world with you through parks and trails, education programs for all ages and self-guided opportunities. As always, they will offer in-person and virtual programming to ensure all attendees are able to enjoy learning about our environment.

Register for one of these great programs coming up in April:

- 4.3 Sounds of Spring @ Towner's Woods (6:00 PM) Come learn about all the sounds we hear starting to emerge this time of year.
- 4.6 Search for Seneca Sam @ Seneca Ponds (6:30 PM) Join us as we look for signs and maybe even spot our resident beaver, Seneca Sam!
- 4.11 Spring Ephemeral Wildflower Hike @ Headwaters Trail Route 700 (5:30 PM) Spring wildflowers don't last forever so let's go spot some while we can!
- 4.19 Portage Park District Birding Club @ Towner's Woods (8:00 AM) All levels of birders welcome!
- 4.20 Vernal Pool Exploration @ Dix Park (6:00 PM) Come see what's brewing just below the water's surface as temperatures start to rise.

They also offer senior hikes every other Thursday at noon. This month they will be on the 13th and 27th. Please check the website here for locations.



KUDOS KORNER

Kudos to Joe Follen! Joe does an amazing job, always willing to problem solve and work together as a team. Joe's dedication to his clients and co-workers is truly appreciated and does not go unnoticed. Thank you so much, Joe, for your positive attitude and going above and beyond every day!

Kudos to Bill Newberry! Bill is our Problem Gambling Counselor who just received his International Certification. Bill is an expectational counselor and we are so proud that he is part of our team.



HAPPENINGS OF THE MONTH

April 4th



SAAM Day of Action or Teal Day

One easy way to show solidarity with survivors is to wear teal, which is the color of sexual violence prevention. Anyone can then post a selfie of themselves in a teal outfit using #SAAM2023.

April 20th *Advocacy Day*

OAESV's Annual Advocacy Day to End Sexual Violence has provided advocates, survivors, and interested members of the public with the opportunity to express the importance of sexual violence advocacy and prevention to members of the Ohio Legislature. After the main event, the one-on-one meetings with lawmakers provide invaluable opportunities for rape crisis professionals to share insight on pending legislation and make informed requests for funding increases. It is simply the best opportunity to have our voices heard in the place where laws are made.

April 26th *Denim Day*

This day of action and awareness is an event in which people are encouraged to wear denim to combat victim blaming and educate others about sexual violence.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Start Date: July 1st, 2021

Current Title: Crisis Intervention Specialist

Background into the field: She graduated with a BA in psychology from The University of Akron in 2022 and knew since she was a teenager that she was interested in the field of psychology. She loves being able to help people and to be a listening ear when someone needs it the most. She started volunteering with the Helpline in the fall of 2020 and she was not sure what to expect or if she would be a good fit. However, she quickly found a home here and has stuck around ever since!

Fun fact about Rebekah: She has played the flute for almost 13 years and minored in music in college.

Rebekah's favorite quote: "Just because you carry it so well does not mean it's not heavy."



Rebekah Swango

NEW STAFF

Taryn Vespoint

Substance Abuse Prevention
Specialist

Sarah Denison

Substance Abuse Prevention
Specialist



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