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women's support network
of york region

WSN's 2010 "Walk for Safe and Healthy Communities...Ending Sexual Violence, One Step at a Time"

Dear respected members of the York Region community,

Women's Support Network of York Region is the sexual assault/rape crisis centre serving all of York Region. WSN is a non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Services are offered by professionally trained staff as well as a core group of approximately sixty-five trained volunteers. All services are free. Programs and services include:

- 24-hour, toll-free, anonymous and confidential crisis line (1-800-263-6734)
- Individual crisis counseling, as well as longer-term counseling.
- Public Education and Outreach Program, including presentations to high schools, community groups and organizations covering issues such as, sexual assault, acquaintance sexual assault, drug-facilitated sexual assault, sexual harassment, healthy relationships and empowerment.
- Balanced Beginnings Program, delivered in elementary schools to grades 7 and 8 boys and girls, combining physical activities with educational/preventative content. Participating students learn how to be effective communicators, inclusive leaders, understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy dating relationships and the meaning of "no, means no".

May is "Sexual Assault Prevention Month" in Ontario. To acknowledge this important designation, the Women's Support Network of York Region is organizing our 3rd annual, region-wide initiative to provide public education and raise awareness of the issues of sexual violence in our communities, throughout the month of May.

With support and participation from various partners and individual community members, Women's Support Network of York Region will be ending the campaign with a walk across York Region, the first weekend of June 2010 (coinciding with "Sexual Harassment Awareness Week"). This Year's Walk is themed "Walk for Safe and Healthy Communities...Ending Sexual Violence, One Step at a Time". Participants are encouraged to take part in as much or as little of the walk as they can and are asked to collect pledges from sponsors for their efforts. For those who are unable to participate in the June weekend walk, there is the option of documenting 60km of walking either individually or amongst team members, throughout the month of May. A walker's information/registration package is available with further details, for those interested in participating.

Once again, we are hoping to involve as much of the York Region community in our awareness raising efforts as possible. We also welcome support of our outreach efforts by publicizing the

event among your colleagues, friends and family. Please feel free to contact us for outreach material and registration packages.

We are walking for lives free from violence. This walk continues to be about bringing awareness in positive, inclusive and encouraging ways. We are walking for positive change. We are once again, 'walking our talk'.

Please see information attached, to learn more about how you, you organization and/or your business can play a part in building safe and healthy communities for everyone.

Thank you,

Women's Support Network of York Region

***Bill 168** received Royal Assent on December 15, 2009. The amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* will, therefore, come into force on June 15, 2010. At that time, workplaces in Ontario where more than 5 workers are regularly employed will be required to have the necessary policies, programs, measures and procedures in place.

As the Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre serving all of York Region, Women's Support Network of York Region will work with your business to develop a strategy to keep your staff and employees informed of their, rights, responsibilities and options, regarding various forms of sexual violence that may occur.

Please contact us to book a training session or consultation to discuss these matters further. We look forward to working with you to best ensure the health, safety and wellness of everyone at your workplace.