

## **HAVEN OFFERS BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS For Women and Men**

PONTIAC, Michigan, August 24, 2011...The recent sexual assaults in Ann Arbor are a fitting reminder that the prep work for college is more than buying the furnishings for a dorm room. Coeds need to be made aware of the risks of campus sexual assault and learn ways to reduce them.

In a 2000 study by the Bureau of Justice it is estimated that the percentage of completed or attempted rape victimization among women in higher educational institutions may be between 20% and 25% over the course of a college career. Among college women, 9 in 10 victims of rape and sexual assault knew their offender. Many were in fact assaulted on a date. A 2007 study by the National Institute of Justice found that most rapes occurred in September, October and November and freshman and sophomore women are most at risk.

HAVEN CEO Beth Morrison states, "The best way to prevent violence of any sort is to stop it before it happens." HAVEN aims to eliminate root causes of abuse through continued education of both women and men and that starts with parents. Morrison encourages parents to discuss the following with their coeds as they prepare for campus life.

### **Parents of Young Women**

Talk about the difference between "risk reduction" and "prevention." As women, we hear constantly about how we can "prevent" being raped, but the reality is that these tools are only ways in which we *might* be able to reduce the risk of an assault. True prevention of a rape lies in the behavior of the potential rapist, NOT in the victim. Saying we can "prevent" being raped is setting up a victim of rape to feel blame and to be blamed when an assault occurs.

Incorporate ways to reduce risk in your routine. Walk in groups. Let others know your whereabouts/plans for the day or evening. Monitor alcohol/drug consumption. Have a plan for yourself and friends who might become intoxicated and create a safety plan for yourself and your roommates/friends.

Become aware of campus safety features. Many colleges have programs that provide escort service from campus buildings, parking lots, etc.

Talk about equality in dating relationships.

Let your daughter know that no matter what, you are there for her. If she has been drinking, at a party, etc and she is victimized, let her know that you are still there for her and won't judge her on her choices. She needs to know that she will be supported, believed and cared for *if* an assault occurs.

### **Parents of Young Men**

Talk about men's responsibility in ending sexual assault. Talk about the role of a bystander, what to do when you believe a woman is in danger of being assaulted by a peer.

Discuss consent – what is the legal definition, what is the practical definition – only yes means yes.

Discuss equality within a dating relationship.

Discuss the role that alcohol can play – someone who is drunk is not able to give consent – ever!

HAVEN is Oakland County's center for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence and sexual assault. The nationally recognized non-profit organization is a leader in preventing and treating the trauma of domestic violence and sexual assault, through community education and empowerment of survivors. HAVEN believes that everyone deserve to live without fear.

For more information about HAVEN and its programs and services, visit [www.haven-oakland.org](http://www.haven-oakland.org) or call (248) 334-1284.