

# Coalition Commentary

Quarterly Newsletter of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

## We've got Moxie



### *Rape Crisis Centers honored for extraordinary work*

**Springfield** - For more than three decades Illinois rape crisis centers have done extraordinary work in supporting victims of sexual violence. And so it was with long-overdue need that the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault honored its 33 member rape crisis centers with the annual Moxie award during the Statewide Conference on Sexual Assault on May 28 in Springfield.

"Rape crisis center staff and

volunteers are an amazing group of people," ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin said. "It is a true honor to recognize their work on behalf of victims of sexual violence. They provide core services in our communities and fit the definition of Moxie."

The rape crisis centers provide services 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year. The centers provide specialized counseling and

legal and medical advocacy services to more than 20,000 victims of sexual violence last year. The centers also provided prevention education programming to more than 450,000 Illinois youth. The dedicated staff and volunteers at rape crisis centers are invaluable to survivors and Illinois communities.

For more information on the statewide sexual assault conference turn to page 3-5.

# Not every bridge is concrete

## Budget battle belittles value of agencies focused on victims

The Illinois budget is at its annual impasse – the end game that pits citizens against human services. We hear that legislative leaders want to protect us from the dreaded tax increase. And we hear that the Governor has no choice but to cut services because the legislature won't vote for a tax increase.



**Polly Poskin**

Sandwiched in the middle of this debate are human services. In every budget battle, what gets cut – or threatened – are human services, which too many people view as “handouts” or “welfare.” The truth about human services is that they are not something other people need; in reality, many of us use them and all of us benefit from them. Tax-supported government funding is our bridge to

those services. Taxes buy us concrete roads and bridges; they also build the bridges to essential services that save lives and make communities healthier and safer. Some of those services are:

- shelter for battered women and children.
- crisis response, advocacy and counseling for adults and children who are sexually assaulted.
- assistance to help older people

stay in their homes and stay healthy and safe.

- housing, job training and coaching, day treatment and other vital care for people with disabilities.

If you think you don't need those services, consider these facts about four groups of Illinois citizens who use the services that are under the knife.

100% of Illinois citizens know a victim of domestic violence and/or children who have witnessed domestic violence. One in every four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. You know them.

100% of Illinois citizens know a sexual assault victim. One in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before age 18 and 80% of high school girls experience sexual harassment. You know these women and children.

100% of Illinois citizens are elderly, know someone who is elderly and/or will one day be elderly.

100% of Illinois citizens have a disability or know someone with a disability, and/or will have a disability at some point in their lives. Twenty percent of citizens will experience a disability in their lifetime and 41% of citizens age 65 and over report some type of disability. Again, you know them. They are your relatives, neighbors and friends. They work with you, worship with you, nod to you as you walk through the park, grocery store, restaurant, life.

Even if we limit our discussion to these four groups, it is clear that we are all touched by the cuts being inflicted by the General Assembly and the Governor.

Agencies that serve people and communities cannot operate with a 50% budget. Nor can they remain viable with a “wait and see” or “stop and start” approach. They need to know that they can afford to continue a hotline, offer shelter to a victim, send a worker to the senior high rise

or secure a job for an adult with a developmental disability. They need to know they can employ their staff, pay the rent, keep the lights on. If they can't promise these basics, staff will leave, leases will lapse, phone lines will go dead and the lights will go out. It is a darkness we cannot afford.

Knowing this, every citizen must take 15 minutes to call their legislators and Governor Quinn. Tell them you expect a budget solution that works. Tell your elected officials you need them to step up and stand up for you. Tell legislative leaders to lead for you and your fellow and sister citizens. Tell them you will pay more taxes. Ask them to manage the money to serve all of us, rather than political interests.

One more thing. People in crisis need a hotline to call; battered and raped women need support at the emergency room; home-based seniors need meals and people in wheelchairs often need a ride to work. To our legislators and Governor we say don't sacrifice the health, welfare and safety of individuals, families and communities by cutting human services' budgets. Quit using human services as a pawn.

Lead. We need you to lead. We need you to break through the standoff. Use your skills, talents and influence to create a budget that works. You know what it costs to run a domestic violence shelter, a sexual assault crisis center, an elder care program, a disability services program and every other service in the state. Talk to citizens and your colleagues about what it costs to run a state that serves its citizens. Then raise the money and put it where it needs to be. Build all the bridges Illinois needs.

*Viewpoint is a regular column in Coalition Commentary.*

*Polly Poskin is Executive Director of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Vickie Smith is Executive Director Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence.*

*This article originally appeared as an opinion piece in the Springfield State Journal-Register.*

## WHAT IS ICASA?

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a not-for-profit corporation of 34 community-based sexual assault crisis centers working together to end sexual violence. Each center provides 24-hour crisis services, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual assault and conducts educational programs in Illinois communities.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) is to end sexual violence and to alleviate the suffering of sexual assault victims. This work is inseparable from ICASA's commitment to eliminate oppression in all its forms. To accomplish these goals, ICASA advocates for public policy that prevents sexual violence, guarantees sensitivity to victims, and promotes social justice. ICASA uses the power of public education to change beliefs and attitudes about the causes and consequences of sexual violence and the devastation of oppression. Through community programs that provide advocacy, counseling and education, ICASA works for a safe, free and just society.

## SUBMISSIONS

ICASA welcomes submissions and reserves the right to edit all submissions. The Coalition Commentary is published quarterly.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## STAFF

**Executive Director:** Polly Poskin  
**Editor:** Sean Black  
**ICASA est. 1977**

# Statewide 2009



## LEARNING TO SERVE THE UNDERSERVED

Above: Vednita Carter of Breaking Free in St. Paul, MN presented the workshop "Responding to the Service Needs of Prostituted Women." The informal, interactive workshop was designed for managers and staff in rape crisis centers wanting to expand their services to be more responsive to the needs of victims of prostitution and/or trafficking. Below: Workshop participants engage in a group activity during the presentation.

# Statewide — 2009



*The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault held its annual Statewide Conference against Sexual Assault on May 27-29 in Springfield.*



## THE VIEW

Above: ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin, State Representative Julie Hamos and ICASA General Counsel Lyn Schollett did a parody of "The View" television show to discuss the workings of the Illinois legislature during the conference's opening plenary.



## SELF-CARE

Amy Steinhauer of Womenscare Counseling Center in Evanston presented the workshop "Sexual Healing: Integrating Sex Therapy in Work with Trauma Survivors."

## LEARNING ABOUT STALKING

Participants take part in "Train the Trainer: The Intersection of Stalking and Sexual Assault" workshop facilitated by ICASA staff member Jesse Pierce. The workshop provided rape crisis center staff with the knowledge and tools to design a community awareness presentation specific to the intersections of stalking and sexual assault.



# Statewide — 2009



## A ROOM FULL OF MOXIE

ICASA handed out its annual Moxie Awards at its Statewide Sexual Assault Conference on May 28, 2009. This year's award winners were the 33 rape crisis centers in Illinois. They're the best. Left: Amber Carmer of Urbana reacts after being handed the award. The list of centers is below.

**NORTHWEST CENTER AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS; MUTUAL GROUND, INC., AURORA; Call for Help, Inc., Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit, Belleville; Stepping Stones Sexual Assault Services, YWCA McLean County, Bloomington; Rape Crisis Services of the Women's Center, Inc., Carbondale; Sexual Assault Counseling and Information Service, Charleston/Mattoon; Community Counseling Centers of Chicago, Quetzal Center, Chicago; YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Sexual Violence and Support Services, Chicago; Mujeres Latinas En Accion, Chicago; Rape Victim Advocates, Chicago; YWCA Metropolitan Chicago South Suburban Center Sexual Violence and Support Services, Chicago Heights; Vermillion County Rape Crisis Center, Danville; Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center, Decatur; Safe Passage, Inc., DeKalb; Community Crisis Center, Elgin; Riverview Center Inc., Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention Services, Galena; YWCA Metropolitan Chicago West Suburban Center Sexual Violence and Support Services, Glen Ellyn; Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center, Gurnee; The Pillars Community Services, Hickory Hills; Sexual Assault Service Center Guardian Angel Community Services, Joliet; Kankakee County Center Against Sexual Assault, Kankakee; Western Illinois Regional Council/Community Action Agency Victim Services, Macomb; Voice Sexual Assault Program, McHenry; The Center for Prevention of Abuse - Sexual Assault Services Peoria; Freedom House, Inc., Princeton; Rape/Sexual Assault Program, Family Resources, Inc., Quad Cities; Quanada Sexual Assault Program, Quincy; Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling, Inc., Rockford; Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault, Springfield; YWCA of the Sauk Valley, Sterling; ADV&SAS, Streator; Rape Crisis Services, Urbana/Champaign; Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies, Vandalia**



# Top 10 things to tell

What I'd like to tell Rape Crisis Centers about prevention of sexual violence of people with developmental disabilities

By Shirley Pacey  
Macon County Resources, Inc.

When I was asked to write this article about prevention of sexual violence of people with developmental disabilities, many ideas came to mind. I could summarize the data on prevalence and review the many risk factors for sexual violence. I could talk about successful collaborative models or the three-year prevention project that I led in Illinois. Or perhaps I could outline specific skills to teach and effective teaching strategies. As I reflected on the possibilities, the answer came clearly as many faces and voices appeared in my memories. What would the people I have supported in prevention of and response to sexual violence want me to share? The answer was a bit too much, so I limited it to the top ten. I hope you find it inspiring, motivating and challenging. Most importantly, I hope it leads you to action.

## **We need you.**

People with disabilities experience sexual violence more often than people without disabilities. From a prevention perspective, people with developmental disabilities have many more risk factors, mostly due to social and environmental factors. We are sometimes isolated, often taught to be very compliant, not given critical information, overprotected, marginalized, segregated, and sexually assaulted at alarming rates. We may be denied basic human rights. We need your help. But first,

## **We want you to know the truth**

There are many myths about us...or more correctly called lies. Some people think because we are different, we aren't equal and that we can't make contributions to others and our

**Don't worry about LEARNING EVERYTHING there is to learn about people with disabilities before you work with me. A label DOESN'T TELL YOU who I am.**

communities. Some people think we have less value, that we don't feel pain, and that we can't learn. Those are lies. We have feelings like everyone else. Each of us has talents and abilities and preferences. We are more like you than we are different. Get to know us and you will learn the truth. However,

## **You may have to look for us.**

If you are teaching bullying classes or relationship classes or any type of violence prevention classes in the schools, we may not get to learn from you. Many times we are segregated from the other students in different classrooms or even different buildings. In our world, special means separate so you may have to ask for the Special Education classes. Please ask. Don't let them tell you we can't learn, because we can. For those of us out of school, you can contact disability service organizations. Some professionals may focus on our deficits but...

## **We are not our labels.**

Don't worry about learning everything there is to learn about people with disabilities before you work with me. A label doesn't tell you who I am. I want to be defined by my likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, accomplishments, and unique personality. While my label might help you understand something about how I learn, I am a person first. Remember this, I am a person first! Some labels are very hurtful and I prefer not to be labeled anymore. Just ask me if you want to know something about

me. I am the expert on myself. Please remember,

## **Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will break my heart**

A woman once told me, "Being called retarded is a pain I will take to my grave." Don't tell us to ignore those who call us names and treat us bad. Words hurt. Words leave lasting scars. Work with us to change those attitudes. Use respectful, people first language. Speak out when you hear cruel words spoken about us. Help others to see our abilities. When we need an advocate or a counselor, encourage your colleagues to support us. Healing begins with relationships, and relationships begin with communication so...

## **Listen carefully because everyone communicates.**

We may not communicate the same way that you do so you might think you can't understand us. This isn't true. You can understand us. But don't just listen with your ears; listen with your eyes as our bodies have a lot to say. And most importantly, listen with your heart. When you do, you will most likely understand what I am trying to say. Together, we can figure out lots of things. Please give me time and I will help the best I can. If you don't understand something,

*Ten continued on page 7*

# CALENDAR ...

## **NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT CONFERENCE**

**What:** Conference sponsored by the National Sexual Violence Research Center and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. Features variety of workshops and plenaries.

**When:** Sept. 9-11, 2009

**Where:** Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, Alexandria, VA.

**Information:** [www.pcar.org/nsac](http://www.pcar.org/nsac)

## **ADDRESSING ABUSE AS AMERICA AGES: ENHANCING THE SAFETY OF ELDER ABUSE SURVIVORS**

**What:** The purpose of the conference is to strengthen the capacity of domestic violence and sexual assault programs, the justice system, adult protective services, the aging network and other organizations to respond effectively to older victims, hold elder abuse offenders accountable; and work collaboratively.

**When:** Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2009

**Where:** Minneapolis Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, MN

**Information:** [www.ndaa.org](http://www.ndaa.org)

## **Ten**

*continued from page 6*

### **Ask lots of questions.**

When you enter our classrooms, workshops and residences, you may have questions about how things are set up. You might notice some rules that don't make sense. You might be told to ignore someone or to not talk to someone. If something makes you uncomfortable, please ask about it. It could make a huge difference in our lives. If you follow the golden rule, then we know you see us as equal citizens. It is good to burst the bubble of implied agreement. We are counting on you to do the right thing and to...

### **Teach our families and support staff about the effects of trauma**

When I am having a hard time, people say I am having a 'behavior', or that I just want attention. I don't understand why people without

disabilities can have difficult times but I am not allowed to. Can you help them understand that I still remember my abuse and it hurts my heart? No medicine or behavior plan will make the memories go away. Teach them to believe and support me. I need to feel safe to express what has happened to me. I need help in finding my strength and moving forward. I don't want to be managed; I want to feel able to manage myself. Please also...

### **Encourage others to empower us**

If you teach us to be assertive and tell us we can say no to unwanted touch, we may be confused. Some of us are NEVER allowed to say no. If we can't say no to food or an activity, how can we possibly say no to someone who wants to hurt us? Keep teaching us how to be safe, but encourage and teach our families and staff also. If the people we trust the most give us permission to say no, then we will be

free to say no to others. And lastly,

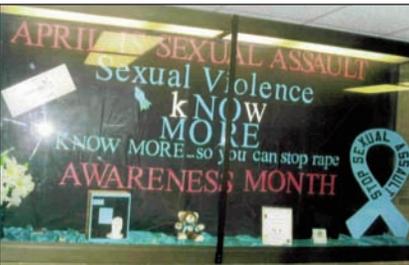
### **Thank you**

Thank you for understanding about oppression and privilege. Thank you for understanding about power and control and for believing in empowerment. Thank you for being patient as I learn to trust you. Thanks for knowing the truth and for finding me. Thanks for believing in me. Thanks for caring enough to help me find my inner strength. Thanks for honoring me as your equal. Thank you for knowing that my safety is important...that my life is important. Thanks for helping me to find my voice and speak up.

For more information, go to [www.bluetowertraining.com](http://www.bluetowertraining.com) or check out the newly release article below. Pacey, Shirley and Laesch, Sandra (2009). "Sexual Abuse Prevention for People with Developmental Disabilities" in Sexual Assault Report, Vol. 12, No. 4, 53-54, 56, 58-59.

# SNAPshots

from around the State



## ELGIN

Above: Kane County State's Attorney Pam Monaco speaks at the Know More Rally held April 16 at Elgin Community College

Above lower: During April, Community Crisis Center in Elgin had a display window with information on sexual violence located inside Sherman Hospital



## WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES - CHICAGO

The Community Counseling Center of Chicago Quetzal Center held a Walk a Mile In Her Shoes event April 25 in Chicago. Above: Quetzal Center prevention coordinator Jae Jin Pak, C4 board member Keith Scott; C4 Regional Director Bruce Seitzer; C4 Chief Administrative Officer John Troy, and C4 President & CEO Tony Kopera pose before beginning the walk. Bottom Left: C4 board member Keith Scott poses with Quetzal Center director Courtney Avery. Bottom Right: Dennis Peterson poses with his daughter Lauren.



# SNAPshots from around the State



## WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES - JOLIET

About 150 people participated in a Walk a Mile In Her Shoes event sponsored by Guardian Angel Community Services in Joliet. ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin and Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow spoke at the event. Above left: Prevention educator Samantha Moser and her son Andrew participated in the walk. Above right: Sexual Assault Service Center Manager Donna Plier, ICASA Executive Director Polly Poskin and Guardian Angel Chief Operating Officer, Ines Kutlesa pose following the walk. Below: Walkers move down Rt. 30 in Joliet.



## LEARNING EXPERIENCE - ROCKFORD

Students, faculty, friends and family members met at Rockford College for an inspirational evening of remembrance and education. Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling and Rockford Wave agencies provided informational presentations on prevention, treatment, statistics and services about sexual assault and domestic violence.



**ARLINGTON HEIGHTS**

**Northwest CASA**

Hotline: 888-802-8890 Business: 847-806-6526

**AURORA**

**Mutual Ground, Inc.**

Hotline: 630-897-8383 Business: 630-897-8989

**BELLEVILLE**

**Call for Help/Sexual Assault Victim's Care Unit (SAV-U)**

Hotline: 618-397-0975 Business: 618-397-0975

**BLOOMINGTON**

**Stepping Stones Sexual Assault Services  
YWCA McLean County**

Hotline: 309-827-4005 Business: 309-622-0461

**CARBONDALE**

**Rape Crisis Services of the Women's Center, Inc.**

Hotline: 618-529-2324 Business: 618-549-4807

**CHARLESTON/MATTOON**

**Sexual Assault Counseling and Information Service (SACIS)**

Hotline: 888-345-2846 Business: 217-348-5033

**CHICAGO**

Chicago Hotline: 888-293-2080

**Community Counseling Centers of  
Chicago/Quetzal Center**

Business: 773-765-0612

**Mujeres Latinas En Accion**

Business: 773-890-7676

**YWCA Metropolitan Chicago,  
Sexual Violence and Support Services**

Business: 312-762-2789

**Rape Victim Advocates**

Business: 312-443-9603

**CHICAGO HEIGHTS**

**YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, South Suburban  
Center, Sexual Violence and Support Services**

Hotline: 708-748-5672 Business: 708-754-0486

**DANVILLE**

**Vermilion County Rape Crisis Center**

Hotline: 866-617-3224 Business: 217-446-1337

**DECATUR**

**Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center**

Hotline: 217-428-0770 Business: 217-428-0770

**DEKALB**

**Safe Passage, Inc.**

Hotline: 815-756-5228 Business: 815-756-7930

**ELGIN**

**Community Crisis Center**

Hotline: 847-697-2380 Business: 847-697-2380

**GALENA**

**Riverview Center, Inc., Sexual Assault  
Prevention & Intervention Services**

Hotline: 888-707-8155 Business: 815-777-8155

**GLEN ELLYN**

**YWCA Metropolitan Chicago, West Suburban  
Center, Sexual Violence and Support Services**

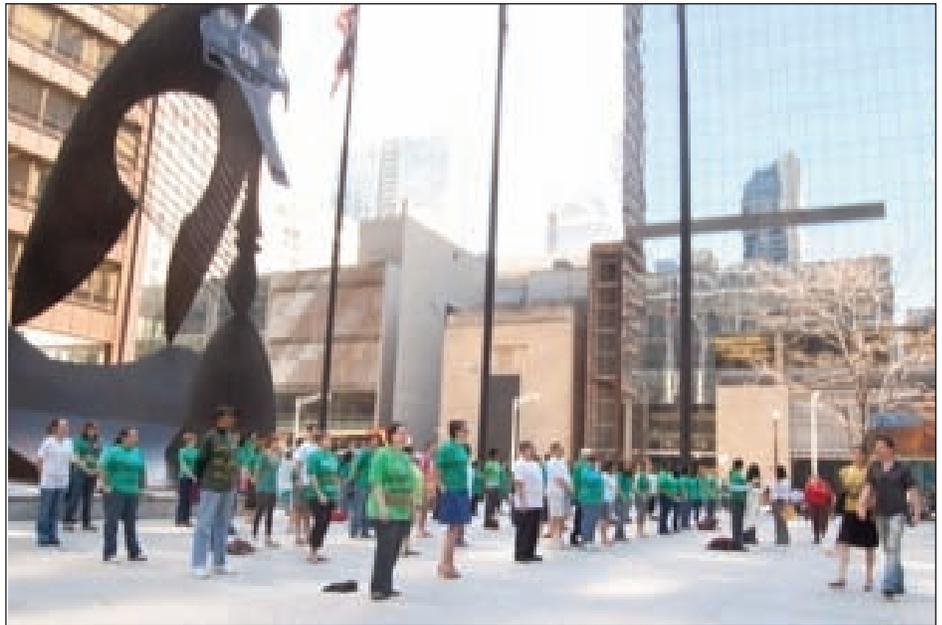
Hotline: 630-971-3927 Business: 630-790-6600

**GURNEE**

**Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center**

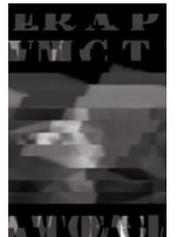
Hotline: 847-872-7799

Business: 847-244-1187



**STANDING SILENT WITNESS**

Standing Silent Witness is Rape Victim Advocates' signature event for Sexual Assault Awareness Month; this year was RVA's largest gathering with over 80 people participating. Standing silently for one hour, participants wear t-shirts displaying the stories of sexual assault survivors in order to "break the silence" about sexual violence. A powerful, moving demonstration, these community members, advocates, volunteers and survivors bear witness to stories that are too often invisible and unacknowledged.



**CLOTHESLINE PROJECT - ROCKFORD**

Students, faculty, friends and family members met at Rockford College for an inspirational evening of remembrance and education. Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling and Rockford Wave agencies provided informational presentations on prevention, treatment, statistics and services about sexual assault and domestic violence. The Clothesline Project was displayed by RSAC.





**eliminating racism  
empowering women**  
ywca

**IN THE COMMUNITY  
- CHICAGO HEIGHTS**

Above: YWCA South Suburban Center educator Kimberley Mead collaborated with teaching staff from Aunt Martha's Youth Service to create an art therapy project for the children in that program. The children provided phrases in their own words to be placed on the canvas along with a painted imprint of their hands. The project will be displayed at the YWCA.

Right: Throughout the month of April, YWCA South Suburban Counselors, including Indria Perrilloux (left) and Addie Johnson, worked with clientele to create art work reflective of a "Healing Heart" for them. The pieces that have been created will be displayed as patches on a teal background in a "quilt" venue to tell a collective story about healing.



**HICKORY HILLS**  
The Pillars Community Services  
Hotline: 708-482-9600  
Business: 708-741-4500

**JOLIET**  
Sexual Assault Service Center  
Guardian Angel Community Services  
Hotline: 815-730-8984  
Business: 815-729-0930

**KANKAKEE**  
Kankakee County Center Against Sexual Assault  
Hotline: 815-932-3322  
Business: 815-932-7273

**MACOMB**  
Western Illinois Regional Council/Community Action Agency Victim Services  
Hotline: 309-837-5555  
Business: 309-836-2148

**MCHEERY**  
Voice Sexual Assault Program  
Hotline: 800- 892-8900  
Business: 815-759-7066

**PEORIA**  
The Center for the Prevention of Abuse - Sexual Assault Services  
Hotline: 309-691-4111  
Business: 309-691-0551

**PRINCETON**  
Freedom House, Inc.  
Hotline: 800-474-6031  
Business: 815-872-0087

**QUAD CITIES**  
Rape/Sexual Assault Program, Family Resources Inc.  
Hotline: 309-797-1777  
Business: 309-797-6534

**QUINCY**  
Quanada Sexual Assault Program  
Hotline: 800-369-2287  
Business: 217-223-2030

**ROCKFORD**  
Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling, Inc. (RSAC)  
Hotline: 815-636-9811  
Business: 815-636-9811

**SPRINGFIELD**  
Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault  
Hotline: 217-753-8081  
Business: 217-744-2560

**STERLING**  
YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
Hotline: 815-626-7277  
Business: 815-625-0333

**STREATOR**  
ADV & SAS  
Hotline: 800-892-3375  
Business: 815-672-2353

**URBANA**  
A Woman's Fund, Inc., Rape Crisis Services  
Hotline: 217-355-5203  
Business: 217-355-5214

**VANDALIA**  
Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies (SAFE)  
Hotline: 800-625-1414  
Business: 618-283-1414

**Listen Up**  
ICASA podcasts @ [www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org)



Flags, each representing a victim of sexual violence, were placed outside of Guardian Angel Home Community Services in Joliet. The flags were part of the center's Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities. For more information on SAAM activities around the state see pages 8-11.

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