



CENTER FOR WOMEN IN TRANSITION

INTERVIEW WITH DIANE ROSENFELD

How did you become involved in the movement to end rape on college campuses?

Well, I believe that schools actually can prevent rape. So I want to put my energy into that, rather than into the criminal justice or law enforcement side.

I was the first senior counsel in the Violence against Women office in the Justice Dept. Our office wasn't that focused on campus sexual assault at the time, but when I came to Harvard in 2004 a group of students approached me for help getting the administration to take this seriously. At that point the area was not really well developed, so there wasn't really good guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, which is the agency that enforces Title IX.

Why do you think the movement has garnered so much attention recently?

I think it's a confluence of many different types of activism.

Around 2007 I started developing legal policy on Title IX, and I started seeing it as a potentially fertile source of civil rights. At that same time I started a legal clinic at Harvard, and in 2011 I became involved with a group of students from Yale who were talking about a toxic environment on campus. Soon after, we filed a Title IX complaint and that same year Russlynn Ali from the Office of Civil Rights wrote the "Dear Colleague" letter outlining schools' responsibilities to keep students safe from sexual assault.

Recently we've heard people express concern about false reporting on college campuses. What are your thoughts on that?

Well, we know that sexual assault is not falsely reported any more or less than any other crime. It can actually be very traumatic to report a sexual assault, and those who report often face retaliation. And so I think it's important to talk back to, and to address it with statistics.

When having conversations about sexual assault on campus, I hear so many people express thoughts like "Why do these girls go to these parties? Why do they drink so much?"

Well, I think that the worst thing that should happen to a woman if she gets drunk is that she has a hangover the next day. Not possibly getting raped and losing her education. When someone gets drunk they are not consenting to being violated.

So many of these cases are not mistaken, drunken hook-ups. They're premeditated acts of violence against incapacitated persons. You see that in every case that's profiled in *The Hunting Ground* (a 2015 documentary film on campus sexual assault).

STATS ON CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT

19%
of women, or 1 in 5, in their freshman year of college were victims of an attempted or completed rape, either by force or while incapacitated due to alcohol or drugs

37%
of women have been victims of attempted or completed rape between ages 14-20

Four out of five
rape victims subsequently suffer from chronic physical or psychological conditions, and overall, rape is believed to carry the highest annual victim cost of any crime, at \$127 billion per year.



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Social media can build connections and create global community. But it also has the potential to cause great harm.

A recent news story highlights this troubling phenomenon. A man in Pennsylvania sent his ex-wife a series of Facebook messages saying, "There's one way to love you but a thousand ways to kill you." And, "Fold up your [protection from abuse order] and put it in your pocket. Is it thick enough to stop a bullet?" He claims the messages were not threats but a way of expressing himself—a kind of emotional release after a breakup.

Taken to court, he was convicted of several counts related to making threats. His case then went before the Supreme Court, who overturned the convictions and sent it back to the lower courts. Justice Alito wrote an opinion stating "[t]hreats of violence and intimidation are among the most favored weapons of domestic abusers, and the rise of social media has only made those tactics more commonplace." Threats, intimidation, coercion, are part of the pattern of abuse in domestic and sexual violence. And social media provides abusers with more tools to exert power and control.

My question is simple: What kind of a world do we live in where we would even want say these things to or about another human being? Let's use technology to encourage each other, teach each other, and share messages that lift us up. Let's make our global online community one that inspires, empowers, and elevates us all. Post your own positive messages and "like" the Center on Facebook. Let's show the world the power of positive social media!

Charisse Mitchell
Executive Director



The Center's mission is to respond to, reduce, and prevent domestic and sexual violence. This mission will be achieved through education, collaboration, and advocacy, with crisis and supportive services to victims and survivors.

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The Center for Women in Transition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Welcome



We welcome Greg Peloquin to the position of Legal Advocate. Greg comes to our agency from Grand Valley State University with a BA in Criminal Justice. He is one of the three bilingual advocates we have on staff. Outside of work, Greg enjoys spending time with his wife Kimmy and their cat Splatter, playing sports, and eating good food. Greg tells us he is, "excited to help others learn more about themselves and thus help him learn more about himself!"



We welcome Ashley Robinson to the position of Crisis & Supportive Services Coordinator. Ashley comes to us from Bethany Christian Services in Holland, where she supervised the Transitional Foster Care Program. Her years of work in the child welfare field led to her becoming the proud parent of seven amazing foster and adoptive children. Outside the office, Ashley enjoys spending time with family, discovering new recipes and getting lost in sci-fi thrillers and mysteries. She tells us, "I am excited to join the team and mission of the Center in walking alongside women on their journey of recognizing their strength and reclaiming their voice."



www.facebook.com/cwit.mi



PREVENTION UPDATE

As part of the Center's mission to prevent domestic and sexual violence, we are working with Allegan and Ottawa County schools to prevent interpersonal violence and promote healthy relationships and respect. Through our Violence Prevention in Schools program, we are able to work with two schools each year and provide a Violence Prevention Inventory assessment at no cost.

The inventory identifies existing prevention efforts in the areas of bullying, dating violence, healthy relationships, sexual assault and harassment. Based on the results of the survey, the Center can provide consultation and resources to help schools enhance prevention curricula, staff training and policies to meet schools' individual needs.

Since 2013, our agency has partnered with four school districts:

Spring Lake Public Schools was the first school district to partner with our agency. We piloted the Violence Prevention Inventory assessment here in 2013. This past school year, CWIT provided resources for a presentation on masculinity and non-violence presented by former CWIT board member Jeff McMartin of Spring Lake. As a result, students organized a co-ed group named We for She dedicated to promoting gender equality and advocating for social change to prevent gender-based violence. These students collected donations for the Center and are continuing to plan awareness projects for the school and community.

Plainwell High School invited CWIT to partner with their Teen Dating Violence Advocacy Team to promote respectful relationships and prevent dating violence. They completed the Violence Prevention Inventory in 2014. The Advocacy Team added a definition of adolescent dating violence to the student handbook. Awareness materials including Relationship Spectrum posters from loveisrespect.org were displayed in the hallways and resource signs were hung in restrooms. The Center provided bystander skills training to fifty students trained as "Quiet Heroes" encouraging students to promote respect among their peers. The Plainwell High School PALS organized a Respect Week campaign for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in February. The Advocacy Teams has set goals and priorities for next year to continue this great work.

Zeeland East and West High Schools engaged in the assessment this year, with 1,041 students participating! The Prevention Coordinator presented the survey results to staff and was invited to present student data at their March "be nice" assembly.

West Ottawa High School staff and students have recently completed the surveys. We're excited about taking next steps with West Ottawa in the coming year!

We welcome opportunities to work with your school in the near future! For more information about the Violence Prevention in Schools program, please contact Lesley Coghill, the Prevention Coordinator at Center for Women in Transition, at LesleyC@cwitmi.org or 616-494-1741.

Thank you

Thank you to our donors who contributed towards violence prevention work: Greater Ottawa County United Way, Marion A. and Ruth K. Sherwood Family Fund and the Elmer "Lou" Dense Fund of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, The Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area, The Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation, the 100 (or More) Tri-Cities Women Who Care, and the Remembering Maggie Fund.





Reach
for the
Stars
gala & auction

Photographer, Tina Klein





This year's Reach for the Stars was a stunning success for our agency! Combining entertainment, education, and fundraising, we brought the Lakeshore communities together in support of our mission.

Keynote speaker Diane Rosenfeld* challenged the audience to stand up and speak out against any form of violence, but focused in particular on the epidemic of campus sexual assault happening at schools across the nation. (*See page 1)

As always, we are humbled by the generosity of our community partners. This year's Reach for the Stars raised over \$100,000 – a new record for this event. Thank you for your support!

WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING REACH FOR THE STARS SPONSORS.

SPEAKER

Global Concepts
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GOTR 5k and Season Wrap-Up

What happens when you bring over 1,400 girls, 360 coaches, 623 community runners, and more than 100 volunteers together at Grand Valley's Lubbers Stadium? The Girls on the Run Ottawa-Allegan 5k event!

The culmination of a 10-week season of physical training and healthy minds/healthy bodies curriculum, the annual 5k offers a chance for teams from each school to celebrate their achievements together. Activities before the 5k included Happy Hair, the Secret Mean Stinks anti-bullying activity, and a photo booth.

Congratulations to all the Girls on the Run participants for an amazing season!

WHY DO YOU SUPPORT THE CENTER?

This issue we're starting a new feature where we ask community members to share their reasons for supporting Center for Women in Transition.

“ We support the Center because it makes Holland a safer place for women and children. The Center educates the general public about domestic and sexual violence, provides places of safety for women in danger, and support for rebuilding lives. The Center also works to prevent the conditions that lead to this hidden violence. The Center is about helping women find their way into healthier lives—and we're glad to help!

Carol & David Myers



PETS & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence survivors' relationships with their pets often bind them to dangerous situations, as many can't fathom placing their pets' lives in jeopardy by leaving them in abusive homes. The Humane Society estimates that one third of domestic violence victims "prolong their abusive relationships out of concern for the well-being of their pets."

Additionally, there is strong evidence to support the role of companion animals in assisting and alleviating the symptoms of trauma. Dogs in particular have been used to help individuals with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). It can be very difficult to feel safe in the world after experiencing violence. Not only do dogs provide protection and help their owners feel safe, they can help survivors relearn trust. The unconditional love that a companion animal provides can help with the healing process-- even just petting a cat or dog has been shown to lower blood pressure and cut down on levels of stress hormones.

Center for Women in Transition supports the important connection between domestic and sexual violence survivors and their pets by assisting our clients with some of the costs associated with pet ownership. Boarding pets during a crisis period, vaccinations, pet fees at apartments, even the costs of food and litter are expenses that are extremely difficult to bear for survivors facing financial challenges. If you would like to help, we are accepting monetary donations to assist with this need. You can make a gift online at cwitmi.org/donate or send a check.

Please be sure to indicate "Furry Hearts" when you make your donation to 411 Butternut Drive, Holland, MI 49424.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Le Style de Vie

Save the Date!

Saturday, September 12

5pm-8pm under the tent behind Butch's Dry Dock

What's New? Beer tasting! We've heard your feedback and added tables for craft beer tasting alongside the wine tasting tables.

Lakeshore Reserve

As part of our 13th annual Le Style de Vie celebration, we're introducing a new way to support the Center's work: Lakeshore Reserve.

What is Lakeshore Reserve? It's a group of men and women who, through a tax-deductible donation of \$350, commit to helping families in our community heal from abuse. Lakeshore Reserve members will receive four event tickets, recognition at the event, and more. To learn more, visit cwitmi.org/events.



THANK YOU

We thank the following organizations and individuals for their support.

100 or More Women Who Care Tri-Cities designated for trauma therapy and violence prevention

Allegan County Community Foundation designated for Girls on the Run and Housing/Empowerment

Bodhi Tree Yoga Studio

Consumers Energy Foundation

Counterpart of Grand Haven

Daniel Estrada

Empowerment Studio

Holland Junior Welfare League designated for Girls on the Run and general support

Leann Scholten and volunteers from Mary Kay

May basket donors

Park Township

Ruth Zwald

The Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation designated for violence prevention

Third Coast Yoga

TJX Foundation

Tulip City Panche

Velo City Cycles

WGHN

Cut-a-thon for a Cause

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, August 15 and join our friends at Donaylle Nicole Hair Studio as they host a cut-a-thon for a cause. The event runs from 9am-5pm during the annual Grand Haven sidewalk sales. A chance to freshen up your look in time for fall and help raise funds for our agency. Sounds like a win-win.

We'll see you there!

Where: Donaylle Nicole Hair Studio
117 Washington Ave, Grand Haven, MI 49417

When: Saturday, August 15, 9am-5pm



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CENTER FOR
WOMEN IN
TRANSITION

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HEADS UP!



Our latest Annual Report is now available. Want a copy mailed to you? Give us a call at 616-494-1744.



Sexual Assault on Campus

An Update on Violence
Prevention Work

Pets & Domestic Violence