

NEWS RELEASE

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Workshop addressing Sexual Violence attended by 97 professionals working with families

Grand Rapids, MN (Jan. 14, 2008) -- Sexual abuse has become a social epidemic and its path affects many. A workshop, **An Introduction of Understanding the Dynamics of Sexual Violence: Victims, Offenders, and Their Families**, was attended by 97 professionals who work with families affected by sexual abuse, Friday, November 30, 2007, in Grand Rapids.

Sexual abuse treatment has been complicated by strong socio-political/ideological variables that often isolate the victim and/or perpetrator as well as the family. Recognizing these challenges, the Child Protection Task force of St. Joseph's Catholic Community, The Institute for Psychological and Sexual Health, Inc., and the Itasca Alliance against Sexual Assault, developed a workshop to educate and bring together professionals who work with families affected by sexual abuse; including law enforcement, educators, mental health and health care professionals, social service personnel, clergy and youth leaders.

The workshop presented an initial view of sexual assault dynamics to increase the understanding of both victim and offender. The program focused on victim impact, victim and perpetrator information, the stages of a complete treatment program and innovative approaches to working with the perpetrator/victim and the non-offending partner. Primary presenters were Christos Petsoulis of the Institute of Psychological and Sexual Health of Duluth and Lisa Adamich, Director of Itasca Alliance Against Sexual Assault of Grand Rapids.

In Minnesota 93% of victims/survivors who used advocacy services were sexually assaulted by someone known to them (friend, family member, co-worker, neighbor). Other startling statistics include, according to the FBI, one in four girls are sexually assaulted before the age of 18 and one in six boys. A recently published eight-year study indicates that when perpetrators of rape are current or former husbands/boyfriends, the crimes go unreported to law enforcement 77% of the time; rapes are unreported 61% of the time when perpetrators are friends/acquaintances; rapes go unreported 54% of the times when perpetrators are strangers (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002).

Coming Up:

The St. Joseph's Child Protection Task Force will be bringing John Crudele of Holy Family in St. Louis Park to speak to teen and parents, March 26. Crudele is a local author and speaker who targets Catholic teens and their parents on issues of faith and morals, with the virtue of chastity as one of his major topics. He incorporates faith-based principles, personal stories, and challenges young people and adults alike to live their faith in an authentic way. For more information on John Crudele you can visit his we site: www.johncrudele.com.

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Lisa Adamich, Director of the Itasca Alliance Against Sexual Assault;.Kay Furlong, Gwynne Bobich, Teresa Matetich, Kim Geislinger, Karen Karls, and JoAnn Ryan - St. Joseph's Child Protection Task Force; Jeff McConnell, Susan Quilty, Linda Petsoulis, Christos Petsoulis - presenters from the Institute for Psychological and Sexual Health of Duluth.

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