

Shuttle aids women walkers

■ ASUO's Project SafeRide has provided free shuttle service for women since 1985

By Allyson Taylor
for the Emerald

In 1985, ASUO proposed a shuttle service intended to protect women from potential rape. Today this service is known as Project SafeRide, and is still an alternative for women to walking alone at night. The group's main concern is making sure women feel safe on campus by offering rides from work or school-related activities while at the same time preventing potential sexual assault situations.

According to SafeRide's Women Helping Women pamphlet, ASUO conducted a survey among University students in 1985 and found that most women "did not feel safe walking alone at night." The program was then founded in response to the survey, in order to help make students feel safe on campus.

The SafeRide drivers are all female volunteers, Alexandra Kerl told the Emerald in January 2000. When the program was first started in 1985, there was concern about whether men should be allowed to drive for the shuttle. The eventual decision was that women should provide this service to other women, because the program was meant to protect women from potential rape and to empower them to protect themselves and others, former ASUO state affairs coordinator Debra Kester told the Emerald in 1985.

The original idea behind SafeRide was to "present an alter-

native for women walking alone on campus," Kester said. According to its policy book, the group's mission today is to "provide a free and reliable rape-prevention service to women who would otherwise walk alone at night and risk possible sexual assault."

The program was established as a campus rape prevention program, so it offers rides only to University students, staff and faculty, and drivers may ask riders to show their University identification, according to SafeRide's pamphlet.

"Usually they were very helpful. The only problem was they did not make many trips to Kinsrow (Road), and I would have to find another way home."

Michelle Marks
junior

When the program was being put together, some asked what men could do to prevent rape instead of helping the program by driving. In response, Kester said men's role in rape prevention is to "help provide the funding necessary for the shuttle service and provide education to others, particularly men, on the myth of rape."

University junior Michelle Marks said she used SafeRide quite a bit last year as a way to get home from work and University events when the buses were no longer running at night. Marks said she enjoyed her experiences

with SafeRide.

"Usually they were very helpful," Marks said. "The only problem was they did not make many trips to Kinsrow (Road), and I would have to find another way home."

Today, the program has about 80 volunteer drivers and 7 dispatchers and is able to give safe transportation to an average of 80 women per night, according to its Women Helping Women pamphlet.

According to the Department of Public Safety Web site, the number of forcible sex offenses in the campus area rose from one reported case in 1998 to three reported cases in 2000.

Women interested in using SafeRide are encouraged to make reservations by calling 346-4239. During fall and winter terms, SafeRide operates Sunday through Thursday from 6 p.m. to midnight, and Friday and Saturday from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. During spring term, operation hours are Sunday through Thursday from 7 p.m. to midnight, and Friday and Saturday from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Summer hours are Sunday through Thursday from 9 p.m. to midnight and Friday and Saturday from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

If women are interested in volunteering for SafeRide as drivers, office workers or fundraisers, the group's members "always welcome more support," according to their Women Helping Women pamphlet. Those who would like to help should contact volunteer coordinator Brooke Johnson at the SafeRide office at 346-0653.

Allyson Taylor is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

Student group revives old programs

■ The campus-based group Students for Choice will offer family planning for both men and women at the University

By Ryan Nyburg
for the Emerald

The pro-choice group Students for Choice, an affiliate of the College Democrats, will be broadening its horizons this year. The 10-month-old group will offer new services and information, including pregnancy prevention information and sexually transmitted disease awareness. The group will also provide contraception to those who may not be able to afford it.

"A lot of people come into college unaware of the dangers of unprotected sex," Students for Choice co-director Kate Phillips said. "I think high schools don't always teach students everything they need to know. There is a lot of misinformation out there. People don't always know what they can do to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. We want to make them aware of the consequences of having sex without protection."

The University's chapter of Students for Choice was founded for a second time in January 2001 by Sara Poynter after the group had called it quits the previous June.

"I was looking for a way to get involved on campus with reproductive rights," said Poynter, who has since graduated. "I ... decided to get the group started here on campus again. The leadership last year graduated, and the people they appointed never carried on with it,

and the group just dissipated. So we decided to get things going again here on campus. I was glad to be involved with this organization."

"We don't want people to see this group as just for women. It's not just about women. A lot of different people are unaware of the options that they have. We want to get people involved by planning more events and more speakers over the course of the year to make people aware."

Lauren Manes
co-director,
Students for Choice

The group's new services fall under the Family Planning Expansion Project, which provides free pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease tests, gynecological tests and contraception to those who can't afford these services regularly. Applicants for the program will be given a test to determine whether they fall into the category of people qualifying for the free services. Students for Choice will offer the test to interested people.

The group has other goals for the year as well.

"We also want to increase our

membership and get people interested in our group," group member Courtney Smith said. "This is really a great group to belong to."

"We don't want people to see this group as just for women," co-director Lauren Manes said. "It's not just about women. A lot of different people are unaware of the options that they have. We want to get people involved by planning more events and more speakers over the course of the year to make people aware."

Students for Choice is also looking at expanding its political activities.

"We are looking at a national view now as well as a local one," Phillips said. "Since the Oregon Legislature isn't in session this year, we're going to be driving more toward national reproductive rights issues."

"People need to know what their rights are," Phillips said. "People need to realize how important these rights are. We take legal abortion and that we can get contraception for granted. College students have never lived in a time when we couldn't express our reproductive freedoms, so it's easy to forget how important they are. If even a few of these rights are taken away, lots of things will change. People need to know that."

Students for Choice can be contacted at s4choice@gladstone.uoregon.edu or by phone at 346-0644. The group also has a table in the Women's Center where messages can be left and more information is available.

Ryan Nyburg is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

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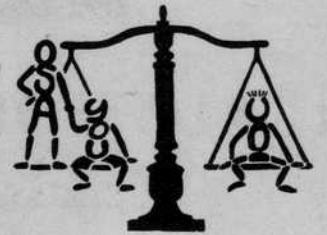
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