

New SWAT team uses strategic words as tactics

■ Presentations by the Sexual Wellness Advocacy Team are intended to fight sexual violence with communication

By Robin Weber
Oregon Daily Emerald

Let's talk about sex — consensual sex, that is.

As a song about that well-known three-letter word played in the background, interns from the University's Sexual Wellness Advocacy Team informed an audience of more than 20 people in the EMU Ben Linder Room on Wednesday night that the best defense against sexual assault isn't violence. It's not even abstinence.

It's words. The group reached out to the crowd with activities, an open forum on sexual stereotypes and a recorded account of a sexual assault victim's story, all aimed at opening up lines of communication about when sex is OK — and when it isn't.

The session is part of Sexual Assault Awareness Week activities and focuses on ways of ending sexual assault. This was the first SWAT presentation to the University, though they are hoping to make presentations to residence halls

and the Greek community.

The team came to the University in the fall as the brainchild of the Office of Student Life and the ASUO Women's Center.

Intern advisor Jennifer Smith took on the project in January after working at a domestic violence shelter as an advocate for women. She and her team of six interns — five women and one man — wanted to boost safety on campus.

"We needed intern education on campus with a message of healthy sexual communication," she said.

Posters with definitions of sexual assault, rape, consent and other sex-related terms were displayed across the room during the session. The walls were also decked with continuums of misconceptions about sex and people "asking for it." The audience was then asked to mark on the charts where they thought media, school, parents and friends stood on these issues.

"I think it was good they focused on consent and power struggles," audience member Claty Ansell said.

Crew members representing different years in school and both genders helped reach a broader audience.

The group debunked assumptions that a woman is saying "yes"

by her words, deeds or appearance.

"Just because they haven't said 'no' doesn't mean they've said 'yes,'" SWAT intern Michelle Flanigan said.

They also offered insight on how to have healthier sexual communications, legal resources for sexual assault survivors, how to report the incident to the police, how to support survivors and where to get medical care after an assault.

"I want to do whatever I can to help bring a male perspective and to show how men can get involved

in ending sexual assault," senior intern John Fillmore said.

Although the team recognizes sexual assault occurs in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, the talk focused on heterosexual situations where the woman is the victim, since statistics have shown that 90 percent of sexual assault survivors are female.

Fillmore said that the point of the session was not "male-bashing," but to find ways to improve healthy communication with both partners

in a relationship.

He said he took up the cause after having other positive leadership experiences and after learning about sexual assaults on campus, many of which go unreported.

In closing, the team — armed only with words — left the crowd with phrases reminding them of boundaries.

"No means no," Fillmore said, "even if you're naked."

E-mail reporter Robin Weber at robinweber@dailyemerald.com.

University Day projects aim to beautify campus

■ Organizers hope to draw several hundred volunteers to the daylong event

By Kathryn Petersen and Katie Mayer
Oregon Daily Emerald

Grab some grubby clothes, put on some gloves and get ready to do some spring cleaning.

From 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., faculty, staff, students and community members can gather to beautify campus for the 13th annual University Day.

"There are quite a few activities scheduled," University Day spokeswoman Jenise Williams said. "Anyone that wishes to help clean up the grounds is more than welcome."

One activity will be a tree planting at 10 a.m. to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the University. Several people will be speaking at the planting ceremony, including University President Dave Frohnmayer, Williams said.

University Day was started in 1990. It was revived from an earlier tradition, much like today's, which dates back to 1903. Students, faculty and staff come together to work on projects that include planting flowers, spreading bark mulch, picking up litter and painting.

Chris Loschiavo from the Office of Student Life said University Day is a collaborative effort among the University Day Committee, the Office of Student Life and Facilities Services. Student planners worked hard to promote participation, sending out letters with requests for donations to student groups and University departments, as well as announcing the event in their classes, he said. Facilities services employees play an important role in helping with activities throughout the day, Loschiavo said.

While the number of volunteers varies from year to year, Loschiavo said planners expect the nice weather to draw several hundred participants.

"University Day is all about

helping out and pitching in," Williams said. "It's a good way to show pride in our school."

Programming assistants from University Housing are encouraging students living in the residence halls to pitch in by holding a competition. All residents retrieve their mail at one of the three complex area desks, and the programming assistants will donate a new VCR or DVD player to the area desk with the highest percentage of University Day participants from the halls it serves, said Mindi Rice, a competition organizer. Residents will be able to check out this equipment from the desk.

"University Day is all about helping out and pitching in. It's a good way to show pride in our school."

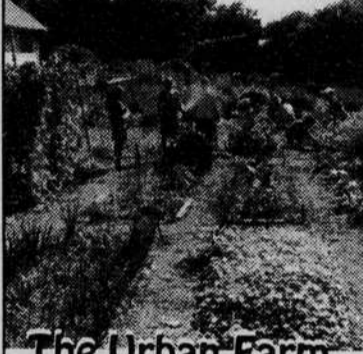
Jenise Williams
University Day spokeswoman

For those who would like to participate without getting their hands dirty, a financial contribution can be made by purchasing a brick or a bench. The bricks are \$100 and will be placed outside Oregon Hall. Once a brick is purchased, two or three lines of text may be placed on the brick to commemorate a name, a student group or anything of the owner's choosing.

Those with deeper pockets can purchase a bench, which cost about \$1,200. Loschiavo said the benches will be placed near the tree between the EMU and Carson Hall. Forms for purchasing a brick or a bench are available in the Office of Student Life. Students who want to participate in University Day activities can register from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in front of the Pioneer statue between Fenton and Friendly halls. Participants who work for an hour will receive a free T-shirt.

Kathryn Petersen is a freelance reporter for the Emerald. Katie Mayer is the freelance editor for the Emerald. She can be reached at katiemayer@dailyemerald.com.

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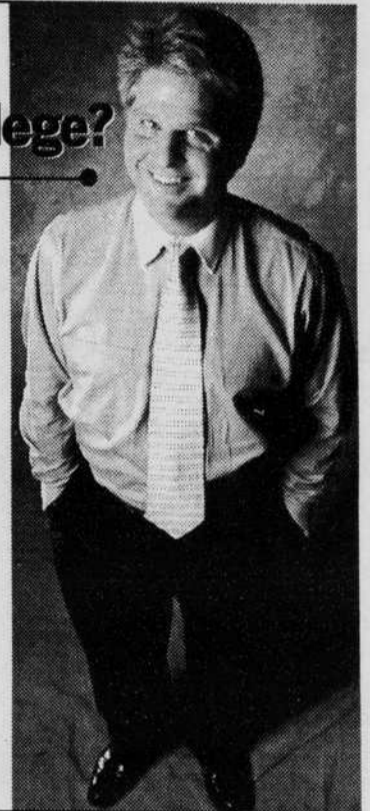
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