

Monmouth Hosts Annual “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” Event

Written by KIERA LANNI | PHOTOGRAPHY/LEISURE EDITOR
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The male students of Monmouth University slipped into high heels to bring awareness to sexual assault and gender violence for the annual “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” march on Wednesday, Apr. 13.

Over 200 walked to support the international event, which occurred during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Mark Holfelder, Associate Director of Residential Life, said, “The whole purpose of ‘Walk a Mile’ is to get gentlemen to don women’s shoes and walk. It gives men the chance to put themselves in a women’s place.”

“Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” was coordinated by Counseling and Psychological Services and Residential Life, and received partnership by 180 Turning Lives Around (a non-profit organization dedicated to ending domestic and sexual violence), the Office of Equity and Diversity, MU Athletics, and Greek Life.

The event was created by Frank Baird in 2001 with just a group of men marching around a park. Now, colleges around the world take part in bringing awareness to sexual assault and violence against women.

Thomas McCarthy, Assistant Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, said, “The event has remained an important part of the spring semester at Monmouth for the last 10 years. It’s important we have events like this.”

McCarthy feels the event’s longevity is due to its relevance and its impact. He said, “It’s an issue in society, it’s an issue on campuses, and it’s serious enough that we want to constantly bring awareness to it.”

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes began with opening remarks by speaker Tina Morgan, Assistant Coordinator for Victim Support Program of 180 Turning Lives Around.

Morgan’s main message was the sexual assault is a very heinous crime that no one should ever

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have to encounter, but it could happen to anyone. She said sexual assault is the most frequently unreported crime because of the embarrassment, shame, and worry about not being believed. “That’s why we come out,” she said. “To say, number one, you’re not alone. Number two, it’s a crime that happened to you that you did not ask for, so you cannot blame yourself.”

After the opening remarks, the male participants ran to grab a pair of women’s shoe, and lined up behind the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes banner to begin the march. The remaining participants followed the men as the walk from Wilson Hall, through the tunnel, around the quad, and back to Wilson Hall for closing remarks.

Trent Broderick, a member of Sigma Tau Gamma, was one of the participants to walk in a pair of high heels. “We wanted to make a stand against violence against women; it’s not right,” said Broderick. “Our principle is to be gentlemen and this is our show of being a gentleman.”

Fellow Sigma Tau Gamma member Brian Foye said, “When we heard it was part of Greek Week, we definitely wanted to step up and we wanted to be a part of something that none of us had ever been a part of. All of my brothers really loved it too.”

Samantha Muccini, case manager for Amanda’s Easel, a creative arts therapy program for children, was present at the event. She had the “Take a Walk in my Shoes,” display, which consisted of shoes decorated by victims of domestic violence.

“Clients create an art piece to really express themselves regarding what they’ve gone through with domestic violence and where they are now,” Muccini said. “It’s a really great way to use the art to create awareness about domestic violence.”

McCarthy hopes that once the event is over, participants do not lose the main message. “If you see something, say something,” he said. “If you see something not okay happening, don’t just sit idly by, step in. It’s really about bringing awareness more than anything else.”

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