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SERVI BRAINER AREA AND C L MINNESOTA



Members of Psychology Club at Central Lakes College Alex Kahl (left), Dalerie DeRosier, Chayna Cusey and Beth Pace set up a table on campus this week with handmade T-shirts to raise awareness of sexual assault victims and debunk common misconceptions about the issue.

BD Video brainerddispatch.com Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

CENTRAL LAKES COLLEGE

Students bust sexual assault myths, raise awareness

By Theresa Bourke
Staff Writer

“It’s not rape if they knew each other.”
“Victims cause the violence that has happened to them.”

“Sexual assault is an act of lust or passion.”

Hand-decorated T-shirts with these common myths about sexual assault are on display at Central Lakes College this week.

Members of CLC’s Psychology Club made the T-shirts and are offering them up for students to wear around campus during the noon hour each day this week to raise awareness for sexual assault and spread the truth by debunking frequent misconceptions.

“The front of the T-shirts

explain a myth that is usually told about sexual assault, and the back of it has the fact that is actually proven about the myth,” Psychology Club president Chayna Cusey said.

It’s no secret sexual assault has been a prominent issue in the media over the last year. Psychology instructor and club adviser Alita Reque-Peterson said all that national attention is one reason the club is tackling the subject.

“What we want to do is raise awareness about what it is and what it’s not,” she said.

For club member Beth Pace, the awareness event is about changing the way victims are treated.

“Because women who are assaulted shouldn’t feel like they should be ashamed of what

happened to them because they didn’t do anything wrong,” Pace said.

Victims, she went on, should not have to endure being told they just drank too much or were wearing the wrong clothes or walking down the wrong street.

Cusey pointed to a recent rape case in Ireland drawing international attention for the use of a 17-year-old accuser’s underwear as evidence against her. The accused rapist was acquitted after his attorney pointed to the lacy thong underwear worn by the complainant as evidence she was “asking for it.”

“Whenever you go on social media, that’s all you hear about,

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Crow Wing County commissioners face vocal Pequot Lakes critic



Koering

Koering defends his record, Thiede goes on offensive about his election loss

By Frank Lee
Staff Writer



Thiede

Instead of the sound of crickets chirping, the Crow Wing Board of Commissioners got an earful during the usually mundane portion of its meeting from a resident who had a lot to say.

Vic Kreuziger of Pequot Lakes first asked the board for more time to speak before the open forum even began Tuesday, Nov. 27, meeting and then went through a laundry list of criticisms.

“You’ve addressed us before, Vic, so we know you’re schooled in many things. ... Just be reasonable because we know that you can ‘wind it up’ pretty far,” Chairman Paul Thiede said.

Kreuziger replied to much laughter, “I’m a taxpayer. Taxpayers aren’t reasonable.”

Kreuziger began with how county commissioners are compensated. They serve a four-year, \$30,000-a-year

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Gull Dam Brewing Co. owners announce closure, retirement

NISSWA — After four years, Mark and Barb Anderson, owners of Gull Dam Brewing Co., announced their plans to retire and shutter the Nisswa microbrewery.

In a news release posted to the company’s Facebook page, the Andersons announced Dec. 31 will be the taproom’s final day of operation, with plans to sell the business.

“This was a fun venture, our beer is world-class and Mark and I have met so many wonderful people at the brewery,” stated Barb Anderson in the release.

Gull Dam Brewing opened in October 2014, the first microbrewery to open in Nisswa and the second in the Brainerd lakes area, which now includes at least six such businesses. Mark Anderson told the Dispatch in 2016 the venture began as homebrewing in 2011 — what he described as a “midlife crisis” — and when those brews



Kelly Humphrey / Brainerd Dispatch file photo
Gull Dam Brewing owner Mark Anderson.

received good reviews from friends, the hobby progressed into a business. They bought an iconic building on Highway 371 just south of Schaefer’s Foods. The building, built in 2002, features an eye-catching water wheel on its front side facing the highway.

The Gull Dam Brewing name came about because the brewery is named after the Gull Lake Dam, Mark Anderson

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CENTRAL LAKES COLLEGE

Walk sheds light on mental health

Crow Wing County groups work to make mental illness OK

By Theresa Bourke
Staff Writer

More than 18 percent of adults in the U.S. suffer from mental illness.

Locally, mental illnesses affect more than 1 in 4 Crow Wing County adults.

Those statistics — collected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Crow Wing Energized, respectively — have drawn attention in the area and driven several Crow Wing County groups to stand up against the stigma of mental health.

Most recently, Phi Theta Kappa students at Central Lakes College organized a mental health awareness walk to let their peers know about resources available on campus for those suffering with mental health issues.

“I have been super impressed by the amount of work that they put in,” PTK adviser Kate Porter said of her students. “They want

to reduce the stigma of mental health and make sure people are aware of the resources on campus. We know, maybe, that there are counselors on campus, but we don’t know who they are or what they look like.”

Those counselors — Suzie Karsnia and Allison Medeck — joined the PTK students in addressing the large group assembled for the walk Tuesday, Nov. 27, inside CLC’s Brainerd campus.

“We want to basically show support for mental health just by being here,” PTK President Diana España told the group. “Mental illness is a circumstance in which we all, some way or another, have struggled with or know somebody who has struggled with. We’re here to walk together to represent those struggles and the need to bring this topic forward.”

Karsnia and Medeck urged students to come see them about

any issues or problems they may be having, whether it’s a mental health crisis or not.

“Know that if you’re struggling with anything, any relationship issues, with anything to do with school, anything that just doesn’t feel right or feels kind of funky, feel free to visit with me,” Karsnia said.

“Come see us if life happens or maybe you’re not sure what you need to do in a situation,” Medeck added. “We can help you get in the right direction.”

CLC President Hara Charlier and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Joy Bodin joined in on the efforts, too.

“We want this to be a place where everyone understands that it’s OK not to be OK, and there are a lot of wonderful people here to help you with whatever your struggles are,” Charlier said.

After España and others
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addressed the group, speaking through a microphone for all those in the vicinity to hear, the group of about 50 participants marched through the CLC halls during the busy noon hour to spread their message.

España pointed to what seems an abundance of suicides in the Brainerd area in the last couple years — including both kids and adults — as a motive for her drive to spread mental health awareness.

“Raising awareness now and in the future is going to be very key to really understanding the roots of the issues and trying to get people to come speak about their problems sooner rather than later,” España said.

Other community efforts

Crow Wing County, the city of Brainerd, Essentia Health, Brainerd Public Schools and the Pequot Lakes School District are among other area groups who have joined in on the efforts to end the stigma of mental health.

“Our culture, if you will, is one where there’s a lot of mental health challenges,” Essentia Health-Central President Adam Rees said in a phone interview. “And the idea is that if we can create a grassroots movement with these multiple stakeholders that the likelihood of us starting to shift the culture in a more positive manner is greater than if we do it alone.”

That grassroots movement started with United Way and Crow Wing Energized, a community health and wellness movement spearheaded by Essentia Health and Crow Wing County.

Rees said the United Way board decided to start hosting community meetings earlier this year to

talk about mental health issues and see if the community could all rally around one specific approach.

Out of those meetings came Crow Wing County’s version of Make It OK, a campaign started in Minnesota to reduce the stigma of mental illness. Rees said all of his employees went through two hours of Make It OK ambassador training this past spring and are

“So we’ll have people reaching out within their workplaces, service clubs they’re involved in, churches, and deliver this message,” she said. “So we’re really expecting that we’re going to have some great reaches around the community.”

Those trained Make It OK ambassadors also include Cori Reynolds, community education

really can be a physical thing.”

With several staff members in Brainerd School District having completed ambassador training, Reynolds said right now, they are focusing on staff members, making sure they’re comfortable talking about mental health issues.

“As we go, we’ll start layering in. Once it’s OK for us, how do we make it OK for students, too?” she said.

Up in Pequot Lakes, O’Neil said mental health is often on his mind while working with middle school students, especially with the abundance of physical, emotional and hormonal changes students go through at that age.

“Learning that 1 in 5 ... individuals are dramatically influenced by mental health in their immediate family, that tells me that we should be doing something,” O’Neil said over the phone, adding he believes the Make It OK training helped improve his work at school.

“It’s helping to be a better principal working with my colleagues and acknowledging that those same statistics that impact our students impact our staff, too, and making sure that we are listening to people when they need a healthy vent,” O’Neil said.

Back at CLC, speaker bureaus where students and staff can have informal discussions and share their own mental health stories are another way the college is working to end the stigma on campus.

“There’s a lot of stress and pressure at this time in (students’) lives,” CLC counselor Karsnia said in September during National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. “Now they’re more independent and they might live on their own, so they’re not seen by their parents or someone daily to know, and so we want to make sure students

know there’s resources to ask for help and that what they’re feeling is OK and normal.”

For Bodin, vice president of academic and student affairs at CLC, the goal of all the mental health initiatives is simple: “It’s about the success of our students and helping them move forward with their goals and dreams.”

Mental health by the numbers

Every three years, Crow Wing Energized conducts a Crow Wing County community health survey. The most recent survey, mailed to 4,000 adults in fall 2017, garnered more than 1,000 responses, about a 27.1 percent response rate. The survey shows 28.2 percent of adults in Crow Wing County — more than 1 in 4 — are impacted by mental illness. Depression and anxiety, it shows, are more common in the county than diabetes. The percentage of adults reporting a mental illness increased from 24.4 percent in 2014.

The 2016 national survey on drug use and health by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that reported more than 18 percent of U.S. adults struggle with mental illness also reported the most prevalent ages for mental illness are 18–25, with 22.1 percent of adults in that age range reporting mental health issues. Of those affected, only 43.1 percent of adults sought treatment for mental illnesses in 2016, according to the study.

“Our goal, ultimately, with Make It OK,” Sell said, “is to help people reach out for help before they get to crisis stage.”

For more information on the Make It OK campaign, visit <http://makeitok.org>. A list of local resources for those struggling with mental illness can be found at <https://crowwing.us/410/Mental-Health>.



Phi Theta Kappa students at Central Lakes College lead a walk through the campus to raise awareness for mental health Tuesday, Nov. 27.

BD Video brainerddispatch.com Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

now working through Crow Wing Energized to teach classes and share what they’ve learned about how to comfortably talk about mental illness and what to say to those suffering.

“The Make It OK platform allows you to have those words to say, ‘Tell me more,’ and to know what not to say,” Kathy Sell, Essential Health marketing manager, said in a phone interview. “To say just, ‘Well everyone has a bad day,’ kind of undermines what they’re trying to share with you.”

As of September, Sell said 117 people within the community had gone through Make It OK ambassador training, making them fit to deliver the organization’s message to others in the community.

director in the Brainerd School District; Tony Oltmann, Lutheran Social Service foster care coordinator, who works with the county on mental health programs; Mike O’Neil, Pequot Lakes Middle School principal; and several students and staff members at CLC.

Making mental illness OK

The goal of the campaign, the ambassadors agreed, is to normalize conversations about mental health and not ostracize those who struggle.

“Just like it’s OK to have a physical illness, it’s OK to have a mental illness, and it’s OK to get help for it,” Reynolds said during a phone interview. “It’s not about laziness or stress or lack of willpower or weakness. It

assault prevention and support center out of Denver, for why the statements on their T-shirts are misconceptions.

According to The Blue Bench, sexual assault is largely about power and control and not a spontaneous crime of sexual passion. It also reports about 80 percent of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, such as a neighbor, friend, co-worker, classmate or partner.

From a psychology standpoint, the students looked at the effect trauma can have on a person’s memory, disproving the idea all victims who “change

their story” or may not remember events clearly are lying.

“We know that stress and hormones impact memory, recollection of events. We know that our memory is very reconstructive,” Reque-Peterson said. “So the goal is just to be very aware about all these pieces that tie into assault and that common myth that if she hadn’t been dressed that way, well that’s simply not true. It’s about power and control.”

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RESOURCES ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

The event was also about making sure students and staff know about resources on campus and around the community related to sexual violence. CLC allows those on campus to anonymously report an act of sexual violence online at <https://mycampuseye.com/web/D7C6>. More information on campus policies and community resources is available at www.clcmn.edu/sexualviolenceprevention.

MYTHS

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where women are just lying about it,” Cusey said, noting, in reality, less than 10 percent of sexual assault accusations are proven false, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

“So people can’t really use that as a valid argument,” Cusey added.

The students displayed posters citing sources, like The Blue Bench — a sexual

GULL DAM

From Page A1

said. The dam, along with the Gull Lake Dam Road leading to it, are commonly shortened to the Gull Dam and the Gull Dam Road.

“The name Gull Dam, everyone has made fun of that for years and years, but yet nobody’s ever registered it or trademarked it,” Anderson said in 2016. “It’s just a play on things that’s actually been around the local history here for 100 years.”

In addition to taproom

and beer garden sales, Gull Dam beer has been distributed to over 330 bars, restaurants and liquor stores, according to the release. One little known bit of Gull Dam trivia: Hollywood actor Kevin Sorbo, who played Hercules in the television series “Hercules: The Legendary Jour-

neys,” is a minority shareholder of the company.

“The Andersons wish to thank their employees for their hard work, dedication to quality and customer service,” the release stated. “They especially would like to thank their customers for their loyal support, continuous patronage and won-

derful friendships. Finally, they would like to thank their master brewer Doug Stoffer, to whom all credit goes for the exceptional Gull Dam beer he created. Doug has brewed around the world and has won numerous brewing medals — from two continents — which highlight his

achievements in the competitive craft beer world.”

The Andersons plan to host a retirement party Dec. 29 in the Gull Dam taproom featuring The Lamont Cranston Band — the same band that played at the brewery’s grand opening, according to the release.

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