

## Walk for No More Raises Funds for Safe Berks Programs

On Saturday, April 29th, Safe Berks held our third annual WALK FOR NO MORE: Together We Can End Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at First Energy Stadium in Reading. The event was a tremendous success, raising nearly \$20,000 to support Safe Berks' critical services and programs! Our success would not have been possible without our wonderful dedicated walkers, as well as the assistance of the Reading Fightins' staff, including Director of Business Development Anthony Pignetti, to whom we extend our sincere gratitude!

Thanks also to all businesses and individuals who donated raffle prizes and services – we raised a significant amount of money as well as awareness with our raffle and information tables at the stadium. We also wish to thank Dr. Joseph Cicala, Alvernia University, Vice President for University Life and Dean of Students for participating, along with many 2015 judicial candidates and other community leaders.

Finally, thanks to the "heart" of the event: the hundreds of walkers and fundraisers! Alvernia University took home the two team prizes: largest team (23 members!), and the team that raised the most money at \$1,476.00. The individual who raised the most money was Jane Palmer from the team Safe, Strong and Indivisible, who raised \$665.00. Congratulations!



Walk for NO MORE 2017: Walkers in full swing!



Walk for NO MORE 2017: Anthony Pignetti, Crazy Hot Dog Guy, Screwball, Change-up the Turtle

## A Message From Our CEO



Safe Berks held numerous events to recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month (“SAAM”) throughout April. Many of these occurred on college campuses with “Take Back the Night” events, and a showing of the documentary film *Finding Jenn’s Voice* at the Penn State Berks Campus.

We continue to pursue opportunities for our new attorney/advocate, Carmen Bloom White, to provide advocacy, support and education on our five college campuses, and we are in the process of developing a Memorandum of Understanding with each campus to ensure that our services are widely available at each location.

Our 3rd Annual Walk for No More occurred on April 29th at the First Energy Stadium in conjunction with the Reading Fightins. We hope to encourage more community participation in this fun event, which includes admission to the game that day and a symbolic walk before the start of the game to recognize our role in preventing domestic violence and sexual assault and to support victims and survivors. We encourage you to check out our social media sites to see what a fun and important event this is.

We ended our SAAM commemoration with a very special 10-year “thank you” to all who have supported PeaceTrust hosted by Carolyn Holleran at the Reading Public Museum. Our featured speaker, Jennifer Storm, shared her story of surviving sexual assault and addiction, and her determination to work tirelessly for victims and survivors as the Pennsylvania Victim Advocate. Her story inspired hope and optimism, and clearly illuminated a path forward for survivors to live wholly and with joy and purpose. We thank her for her courage in sharing her story.

I want to also take this opportunity to thank Carolyn Holleran for leading this effort for ten years, and to those of you who answered her call. The need to secure unrestricted funding to see us through the changing seas of government funding remains. We ask those of you who have been our “Angels” to continue your support, and we ask those of you unfamiliar with our amazing group of women to learn more about the work we do and support our efforts by joining PeaceTrust!

Together we have done incredible things and many in our community have found safety and renewed purpose through our programs. We cannot do it without you!

*Mary Kay Bernosky*

## Walk for NO MORE



Walk for NO MORE 2017: Jose Restituyo, his son Izayaih Restituyo, Angel Marin, and Cristopher Lindsey-Soto.



Walk for NO MORE 2017: Our Roller Derby friends joined the fun!

# Peace Trust

## Luncheon Held for Peace Trust Donors

On May 1, 2017 Carolyn Holleran hosted a luncheon to thank the members of Peace Trust for their ongoing commitment and generosity to Safe Berks. Over 65 members attended the event, which was held in the Auditorium of the Reading Public Museum.

In 2007 Carolyn was made aware that funds for our medical advocacy program would not be renewed. Knowing how important this was to the agency, Carolyn dedicated herself to making a pledge to the agency over the next five years to ensure that there were ongoing funds to cover this program. She then turned to like-minded individuals who also made the commitment to pledge money that would provide unrestricted funds for the agency. Her effort was extremely successful and PeaceTrust was born.

Following the luncheon, Jennifer Storm, the PA Victim Advocate, shared her story of sexual assault, her subsequent substance abuse and ultimately that of a survivor who works tirelessly everyday helping victims of violence. She provides a voice for those who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault as well as help them navigate a complex legal system to obtain some measure of justice.

In the ten years that PeaceTrust has existed members have contributed over \$800,000 in unrestricted funds to the agency. 2017 marks the end of the second round of a five-year commitment by our Peace Trust Angels. In noting this anniversary, Carolyn said, "I am so proud of this



*The first Peace Trust meeting held at Stirling Guest Hotel in 2007.*



*Jennifer Storm, PA Victim Advocate, Mary Kay Bernosky, CEO of Safe Berks and Carolyn Holleran, founder of PeaceTrust.*

assembly of women who have joined together to help make Safe Berks a strong force in our community. We will continue our work until we achieve our vision of eliminating domestic violence and sexual assault from our community."

PeaceTrust is open to any individual who would be willing to make a 5-year commitment of \$500/year for a total pledge of \$2500. Please contact Mary Kay Bernosky at 610-373-1206 for more details.

## Carmen Bloom White Joins Safe Berks

Carmen White joined Safe Berks in a newly created position as Attorney for victims of sexual assault and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) on college campuses in January 2017. She comes to Safe Berks from the District Attorney’s office where she served as Assistant District Attorney. Carmen handled the most serious domestic violence cases in Berks County along with adult sexual assault cases. Carmen earned her undergraduate degree in political science at Kutztown University. She then went on to pursue her law degree at Seton Hall University located in Newark New Jersey. She clerked for one year for the Honorable Rudolph A. Filko, J.S.C., in the Criminal Division of the Superior Court – Passaic Vicinage (Paterson, NJ), before returning to the Berks County District Attorney’s office.

In her position as Title IX attorney at Safe Berks, Carmen will have the opportunity to serve as advocate in disciplinary proceedings on campus where the victim is entitled to an advocate of his/her choice. When a hearing occurs, Carmen will be able to assist students with the appropriate questions to ask, and to make statements.

Carmen Bloom White



### Carmen is available for:

- Educational seminars about sexual assault prevention and response seminars for school administrators and employees, students and parents, law enforcement, and the community,
- Representation/advocacy – free for college students.
- Facilitate on-campus safety planning for victims if they want to pursue/participate in an official Title IX disciplinary proceedings against another student.
- Representing college students in Common Pleas Court if they seek Protections from Abuse (PFAs) or Sexual Violence Protection Orders (SVPOs).
- Provide confidential support and legal guidance to college students.
- Carmen can assist/accompany students if they do wish to report an incident to their school, and assist in filing a Title IX complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

### What is Title IX?

- Title IX (Education Amendments of 1972 to Civil Rights Act 1964): No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance.
- Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment under Title IX
- Title IX applies obligations to colleges/universities receiving federal funds. Federally funded schools must ensure that students of all ages are not denied or limited in their ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs or activities on the basis of sex. Five in Berks County:
  - Albright College – Reading
  - Alvernia University – Reading
  - Kutztown University – Maxatawny Township
  - Reading Area Community College – Reading
  - Penn State Berks – Spring Township

The Office of Civil Rights requires a prompt, fair, impartial investigation be completed by the college/university. This coincides with or may be the same as the disciplinary process if a student assaults another student.

### Did you know . . .

- **1/5 women is sexually assaulted in college, and most frequently it happens in her freshman or sophomore year.**
- **In about 75-80% of cases, she knows her attacker. Men are also victimized, but statistics are tough to present. (White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, April 2014)**
- **Approximately 2% for incapacitated sexual assault survivors and 13% of forcible rape survivors report the crime to campus or local law enforcement**
- **Less than 5% of incidents that could qualify as harassment or rape are reported to law enforcement officials – National Institute of Justice**

### Announcing!

Our New Toll Free Hotline Number  
**844.789.SAFE (7233)**

And our new text line

**Text SAFE BERKS to 20121**  
**Available 24/7/365**

## Safe Berks Invites Latina Women to Join Photo Voice Group Project

In 2016 Safe Berks was awarded a grant from Raliance, a national collaborative initiative dedicated to ending sexual violence in one generation. Raliance was founded by three leading sexual violence prevention organizations – the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault-PreventConnect, and the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

The goal of the project is to improve Safe Berks services for Latina survivors.

The grant funds a written community survey of Latina women about their life experiences, including with sexual violence, which is currently being administered in five locations: Centro Hispano Daniel Torres, The Reading Hospital Women’s Health Center, and all three Berks Community Health Center sites.

The grant also supports a PHOTO VOICE project, entitled, “Los Retratos de mi Voz” (“the pictures of my voice”), for Latina survivors of sexual maltreatment or violence. The Safe Berks team is actively recruiting 16 Latina survivors to participate in two Photo Voice groups beginning in mid-June at the Goggleworks Center for the Arts. The groups will be facilitated by project team members and photography instruction will be provided by Danielle Rearden, of “Discovering Your Goddess.”

If you or someone you know is a Latina survivor of sexual maltreatment, including childhood violence, please consider joining a PHOTO VOICE group!



### About PHOTO VOICE:

- Participation is strictly confidential.
- There is no cost for participation; each group member who completes the program will receive a free digital camera and a \$25 VISA gift card.
- The groups will meet for six 2-Hour sessions at the convenience of the members.
- Additional Safe Berks services and resources will be available, only at the request of the participant.

For additional information, please contact Ineavelle Ruiz, Director of Residential Services at Safe Berks. Email: [IneavelleR@SafeBerks.org](mailto:IneavelleR@SafeBerks.org) or telephone: 610.373.1206 Ext. 202.

A big “Thank-you” to our Walk for NO MORE corporate sponsors:



*Missy & Allen Zimmerman*



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## The vision of Safe Berks is to eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault in Berks County.

- Crisis Services
- Residential Services
- Education and Outreach
- Counseling
- Legal Services
- Systems Advocacy

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*Save the Date!*

## Celebration of Peace

Monday, December 11, 2017

6-8 PM

Doubletree by Hilton

### Donate Now

The DONATE NOW button, found on our website, is a convenient way to designate donations for use as needed or for specific appeals or campaigns. Training or program registrations can also be processed using electronic funds transfer, and donor receipts are generated immediately via email. The official registration and financial information of Safe Berks may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does imply endorsement.

### Contact Us

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United Way of Berks County

