

Ramsey County: A Start by Believing Community

Whereas, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men in the United States experience rape or attempted rape, at some point in their lives, and data from other sources report the rate for women is as high as 1 in 4; and

Whereas, according to a study by the University of Minnesota, the number of Minnesota women reporting a date-related sexual assault rises from 12 percent by the time they graduate from high school, 29 percent by age 23, to 33 percent by mid-life; and

Whereas, an analysis of the Minnesota Student Survey data by the University of Minnesota estimated 60 percent of teen first pregnancies in Minnesota are preceded by experiences of molestation, rape, or attempted rape; and

Whereas, 188 cases of child sexual abuse in Ramsey County were identified among reported cases of maltreatment in 2011; and

Whereas, current estimates suggest no more than 20 percent of sexual assaults will be reported to law enforcement and less than 3 percent will result in the conviction and incarceration of the perpetrator; and

Whereas, research documents that victims are far more likely to disclose their sexual assault to a friend or family member, and when these loved ones respond with disbelief, shame, or blame, victims suffer additional negative effects on their physical and psychological well-being and do not report their assault to law enforcement; and

Whereas, the national public awareness campaign "Start by Believing" is designed to improve the initial responses of friends, family members, and community professionals, including law enforcement and prosecutors, so they can help victims to access supportive resources and report their assaults; and

Whereas, Ramsey County has worked collaboratively across departments and with community partners for many years to prevent and respond to sexual violence in the community; and

Whereas, public health and the criminal justice system have different roles and responsibilities, but are united in the goals to prevent and reduce sexual violence in our community, from children to vulnerable adults;

Now Therefore, Be it Resolved by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, that the County re-dedicate itself to addressing the continuing problem of sexual violence through its support of the Ramsey County: A Start by Believing Community Initiative and its goal for everyone to believe victims upon report.

Now Therefore, Be it Resolved by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners that Ramsey County and its community partners will expand support for sexual violence survivors through training, education and outreach

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, that all municipal jurisdictions in Ramsey County are requested to join in this effort.