

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MAY 12, 2009**

### **PROCLAMATION REQUEST - SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH**

#### **Recommendation**

The City Clerk recommends:

- 1) That May 2009 be proclaimed as "Sexual Assault Prevention Month"; and
- 2) That the proclamation be posted on the City's website and published on the City Page, space permitting.

#### **Economic Impact**

N/A

#### **Communications Plan**

The Corporate Communications Department posts proclamations issued by the City on the City's website under "Events – Proclamations". Publishing proclamations on the City Page depends on space availability.

#### **Purpose**

To respond to the request received from the Women's Support Network of York Region, dated March 16, 2009.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The Women's Support Network of York Region made a deputation at the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 16, 2009, and at the Council meeting of April 14, 2009, Council directed the City Clerk to provide a report with respect to proclaiming May 2009 as "Sexual Assault Prevention Month" in the City of Vaughan (Attachment #1).

The proclamation request meets the City's Proclamation Policy, as follows:

"That upon request, the City of Vaughan issue Proclamations for events, campaigns or other similar matters:

- (i) which are promoted by any organization that is a registered charity pursuant to Section 248 of the Income Tax Act"

The Women's Support Network of York Region is the only sexual assault crisis centre serving all of York Region. The WSN offers expert free crisis counseling services by professionally trained staff as well as a core group of over 65 trained volunteers. Programs and services include Public Education and Outreach Program, Balanced Beginnings Program and a 24-hour toll-free anonymous and confidential crisis line.

#### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

### **Regional Implications**

This proclamation will bring awareness, as the WSN is the only crisis centre serving all of York Region.

### **Conclusion**

Staff is recommending that May 2009 be proclaimed as "Sexual Assault Prevention Month" and that the proclamation be posted on the City's website and published on the City Page, space permitting.

### **Attachments**

Attachment #1 Correspondence received from the Women's Support Network of York Region, dated March 16, 2009.

### **Report prepared by:**

Connie Bonsignore, Admin Assistant

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey A. Abrams  
City Clerk

CITY OF VAUGHAN

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2009**

Item 46, Report No. 18, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on April 14, 2009.

**46**

**DEPUTATION – MS. SUSAN DOBSON  
WOMEN’S SUPPORT NETWORK OF YORK REGION**

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the deputation of Ms. Susan Dobson, Public Education Outreach Worker, Women’s Support Network of York Region, 1110 Stellar Drive, Unit 109, Newmarket, L3Y 7B7, and written submission, dated March 16, 2009, be received; and
- 2) That the City Clerk provide a report proclaiming May 2009 to be “Sexual Assault Prevention Month” in the City of Vaughan.

www.womenssupportnetwork.ca

1110 Stellar Drive, Unit 109  
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 7B7  
T: 905.895.3646 F: 905.895.6542  
Crisis Line: 905.895.7313  
1.800.263.6734



women's support network  
of york region

March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## **Request for Proclamation by 9 Municipalities of York Region re: "Sexual Assault Prevention Month"**

### **Women's Support Network of York Region: "No More Sexual viOLENCE!"**

Women's Support Network of York Region is the only sexual assault/rape crisis centre serving all of York Region. WSN is a non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Services are offered by professionally trained staff as well as a core group of approximately sixty-five trained volunteers. All services are free. Programs and services include:

- 24-hour, toll-free, anonymous and confidential crisis line (1-800-263-6734)
- Individual crisis counseling, as well as longer-term counseling.
- Public Education and Outreach Program, including presentations to high schools, community groups and organizations covering issues such as, sexual assault, acquaintance sexual assault, drug-facilitated sexual assault, sexual harassment, healthy relationships and empowerment.
- Balanced Beginnings Program, delivered in elementary schools to grades 7 and 8 boys and girls, combing physical activities with educational/preventative content. Participating students learn how to be effective communicators, inclusive leaders, understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy dating relationships and the meaning of "no, means no".

Sexual violence is about power and control, an expression of hostility and an assertion of power. It is not about sex. Women, children and men can be sexually assaulted. Most often, the abuser is known to the survivor. 51% of Canadian Women have experienced at least one incident of violence since the age of 16. (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Sexual Assault Fact Sheet. Ottawa: C.A.C.S.W., 1985). Only 1 in 10 Sexual Assaults is reported to the police. Of those that are acquaintance rapes, only 1 in 100 is reported to the police (C.A.C.S.W., 1985). 63% of all sexual assaults reported to the police involve girls under the age of 18. (Russell, 1996) 83% of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime (OWD 1995, 1). 8 in 10 Aboriginal women in Ontario reported having experienced violence (Ontario Native Women's Association 1989, 17). Women with low household incomes, low levels of education and/or who are unemployed are at higher risk of being sexually assaulted than women in general (Johnson 1996, 108-109).

May is "Sexual Assault Prevention Month" in Ontario. To acknowledge this important designation, the Women's Support Network of York Region is organizing a region-wide initiative to provide public education and raise awareness of the issues of sexual violence in our communities. "Back To Basics Walk 2009 – Ensuring a Strong Foundation, One Step at a Time" is a weekend long event planned for May 29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

In partnership with York Regional Police, and various other agencies providing support to survivors of violence, the Women's Support Network of York Region will be kicking off the campaign with a 60 km walk across York Region. Participants are encouraged to take part in as much or as little of the walk as they can and are asked to collect pledges from sponsors for their efforts. For those who are unable to participate in the walk, all are invited to join us at the closing ceremony on May 31<sup>st</sup> for a free community breakfast, guest speakers, resource tables and agency representatives providing information about various social services available in York Region.

All proceeds raised through the event will go directly toward supporting the Women's Support Network of York Region and our mandate of eradicating sexual violence from our community. Donations from individuals and/or groups in support of the Women's Support Network and our mission are welcomed and greatly appreciated. As a non-profit organization, we depend on the generous donations from the communities we serve.

For more information, to register, and/or to make a donation, please contact: Susan Dobson at 905-895-3646 ext. 111 or email [susandobson@rogers.com](mailto:susandobson@rogers.com)

More information can also be accessed through the Women's Support Network of York Region's facebook page under our 'events' listing.

Donations can also be made at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)

**We are asking all the municipalities in York Region to show their support by partnering with The Women's Support Network to send a clear message across the Region that sexual violence is a serious issue that we as a society do not condone.**

**We need ongoing support from all levels of government, and society as a whole, to help raise and increase *awareness of the issue* of sexual violence, in the hope of fostering *change in the behaviour, of society.***

**Will the Mayor and Members of Council proclaim May to be "Sexual Assault Prevention Month" in the City of Vaughan?**

Sincerely,

Susan Dobson  
Public Education Outreach Worker  
Women's Support Network of York Region