April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

OVER THE PAST YEAR we have continued to see an increase in sexual assault allegations against men in high profile positions.

The courage shown by these women in coming forward, identifying their abusers and then working to end such abuse, continues to put a spotlight on sexual assault. An additional outcome of these reports is an increase in reports on the local level.

The demand for services at the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC), located in Renton, has jumped 19% in 2018 to 4,888 requests. Throughout King County, more than 3,100 adult and children received specialized assistance from organizations with programming for sexual assault victims in 2018.

A closer look at the numbers shows that half of those requesting services were children under the age of 18. The risk is even higher for color, refugees, immigrants, LGBTQ, and other marginalized community members. One recent study found that 94% of Native American women in Seattle report they have been sexually assaulted.

Another way to help is by getting other cities in our region to join with Renton and commit to ending sexual violence. I have worked for the past several years with KCSARC Executive Director Mary Ellen Stone to get every one of the cities comprising the Sound Cities Association to proclaim April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Last year 30 did and this year 40.

One way we can get there is to continue to give a voice and resources to the abused, something Renton has been doing for decades. KCSARC was founded as Renton Rape Line over 40 years ago and has worked tirelessly to give voice to victims, their families, and the community while creating change in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about violence; and instilling courage in people so they can speak out about sexual assault.

To drive home her point she urged everyone to “be loud” and presented council with a proclamation proclaiming April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Renton from City Clerk Jason Seth.

In her remarks I was pleased that Executive Director Stone was at Monday’s meeting to accept the proclamation declaring April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Renton. In her remarks she thanked the council for the city’s continued support and reminded everyone that the more people who come forward to report sexual assault, the more we can turn this around.

Obviously, we still have a long way to go.

The fourth annual festival is scheduled for September 13 and 14. I hope you can join us.

Residents receive magnets with a message

Resident’s comments or suggestions, or just want to share all the great things that are happening in the city please email me. Thanks for reading.

Join us in downtown RENTON to celebrate PRSA’s 2019 National Public Relations Week. Renton was recently awarded a Certificate of Excellence for the promotion and development of the festival by the Puget Sound Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). PRSA was impressed with the city’s use of both traditional and non-traditional means of including the community in marketing the festival.

My thanks go to the members of the Mayor’s Inclusion Task Force for their work in sponsoring the event and moving it from just an idea in a meeting room. When I formed the task force, I asked them to unite the community, celebrate Renton’s cultural differences, and work to make this inclusive city with equal opportunities for all residents. The Renton Multicultural Festival accomplishes all three.

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The Renton Multicultural Festival has quickly become one of our city’s most highly anticipated events. That it’s a showcase for our diverse community after just three years is a credit to the time and energy contributed by dozens of volunteers.

The city and those volunteers were recently awarded a Certificate of Excellence for the promotion and development of the festival by the Puget Sound Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). PRSA was impressed with the city’s use of both traditional and non-traditional means of including the community in marketing the festival.

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