Young Women’s Action Team

Day of Action
Against Street Harassment

The Street Belongs To All Of Us
Blow The Whistle On Street Harassment
This Message Brought To You By Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team

May 4, 2006
A CALL TO ACTION!

In 2003, the Young Women’s Action Team (YWAT) surveyed 168 young women in Rogers Park about the issue of street harassment. 86 percent said they had been “catcalled” and 60 percent said they felt unsafe walking in their neighborhood. In addition, five focus groups were conducted with young women ages 11 to 19. The YWAT created a report called “Hey Cutie, Can I Get Your Digits?” based on their responses. Many participants expressed “anger, fear, and anxiety” as a result of street harassment. When asked if they’d “ever tried to talk back when someone cat-called,” an 11 year old girl responded, “I want to respond to catcalls, but I am afraid I might get hurt.” What was significant to the girls was the feeling that they couldn’t walk home from school on certain streets, particularly Morse and Howard, without facing intense harassment from boys their age but mainly from grown men hanging out on the corners.

In December 2005, the YWAT issued a call to action. We reached out to men and women [young and old] across Chicago to participate in a Citywide Day of Action against Street Harassment on May 4th 2006. We wanted everyone to hear the message that “The Streets Belong to All of Us.” We hoped that at least 100 different “actions” individual and collective would take place across Chicago on May 4th. We surpassed our goal with over 140 actions [collective and individual]!

2005-2006 YWAT Leadership Core
Shay Armstead, Von Steuben High School
Shannon Bittner, Northeastern Illinois University
Renee Braggs, Lane Tech High School
Ronnett Lockett, Lane Tech High School
Lillian Matamni, Lane Tech High School
Daphnee Rene, Sullivan High School
Jonnae Taylor, Prologue High School
Joyce Taylor, Truman College
Crystal Villanueva, St. Scholastica
Emilya Whitis, Lane Tech High School

Mariame Kaba, Adult Ally
Day of Action Coordinators: Daphnee Rene, Lillian Matamni, and Mariame Kaba

These Streets...Are Mine
By: Shay Armstead, 18
[YWAT Leadership Core Member]
On my block
The streets that scare me at night
Are the same streets that are supposed to protect me during the day.
These are the streets of many young girls
Young girls who don’t know that they have entered the nest where predators lay.
This is my neighborhood
This world I didn’t belong to was right around me but it seemed so very far away
Why are the cops so busy harassing young boys instead of helping me when I call out RAPE!
This world was not mine because I was scared to show off my long legs and curvy figure like most of my sistahs
I was uncomfortable in my neighborhood...
This World
The world was not mine because I wouldn’t use my mouth to speak
I was lost in a world of its own in my neighborhood
The world around me
Now this world is mine because I no longer bite my tongue and shut my eyes
I no longer pretend to protect my mind
Not in my neighborhood, not this time
I’m gonna’ march proud and sing the song so many are afraid to sing
Stop harassing me! Stop harassing my sisters and brothers and let freedom ring!
Not only in my dreams but in my world
My neighborhood
I’m gonna’ start with these same streets!
On January 28, 2006, the YWAT hosted an information meeting at Loyola University and members of the Pink Bloque (www.pinkbloque.org) presented a workshop about creative resistance to street harassment. Thirty-five youth and adults attended this very inspiring session.

On May 4, 2006, The Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team sponsored a community march to Support Girls’ Safety at 5:30 p.m. starting at Loyola Park and ending at the Morse EL. On this same day throughout the city of Chicago, over 140 actions, individual and collective, were taken to raise awareness on the issue of street harassment.

The Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team encouraged these actions and shares the success of the day through this written and pictorial collection of documented action.

The objectives:

1.) To raise public awareness that street harassment is HARM and a form of violence against women and girls

2.) To build a base of individuals who are committed to ending street harassment

3.) To demand community accountability for the eradication of street harassment by involving ALL community members in this effort

4.) To document the resistance to street harassment through this zine.

The YWAT is a youth-led, adult supported social change project that empowers young women under 21 years old to take action on issues that affect their lives.
What you should NOT do:
You say, 'Do not shout out, "Nice ones" to me or any other woman. That is harassment.' He says, 'Jeez, can't you take a compliment?' Don't say, 'Yes, I can take a compliment, but that is not a compliment. That is harassment.' He will then counter with something like, 'Well, you're crazy if you take it that way. I meant it as a compliment.' This allows him to justify his behavior to you, himself and anyone else standing around.

BASIC ADVICE*
If you are the victim of harassment, take the following steps:

Be safe
Safety is a priority. If you are in a situation in which you feel unsafe at all, remove yourself from it as quickly as possible.

If you feel safe enough to respond to your harasser, do the following:

1. Name the behavior
For example, 'Do not slap my bottom. That is harassment' or 'Do not make suggestive remarks to me. That is harassment' or 'Do not comment on my body. That is harassment'. You can also simply say in a strong voice, 'Don't sexually harass women' or 'Stop! that is sexual harassment.'

2. Name the perpetrator
'You, the man in the blue pinstriped suit, remove your hand from my breast.' Or 'You, the driver of the blue Polo, do not ogle my breasts'

3. Use strong body language
Look the harasser in the eye, speak in a strong, clear voice.

4. Do not apologize or ask a question
Don't say, 'Excuse me...' 'Would you...' 'Do you realize...' 'I'm sorry, but...' 'Please...'

5. Do not get into a dialogue with the harasser
Do not answer any of the harassers questions. Simply repeat your statement or leave.

6. Do not swear or lose your temper
For many harassers, the goal is to get a rise out of you, which is why they participate in this kind of behavior. For them to see you getting angry or upset just encourages them to continue to harass both you and other people. In addition, if a passer-by hears you shout out, 'You f**ing a****ole' when they have seen or heard nothing the harasser has done, they will tend to think you are the harasser. This, again, benefits the harasser, who can put on a 'Can you believe this woman?' look. If you remain calm, it will be clear that you are the person being harassed and the perpetrator is in the wrong. It will also take away the reward (upsetting you) for their action.

What you should do:
When he says, 'Jeez, can't you take a compliment?' Either leave the situation, having made your point, or repeat your statement, 'Do not shout out, "Nice ones" to me or any other woman. That is harassment.' If he continues to try to engage you in a dialogue, either leave or keep repeating your statement.

HARASSMENT
any number of acts or comments by people who are not close friends or family members (although sometimes they can make offensive remarks too but they are often easier to challenge). Acts and comments considered harassment:

Ogling  
Leering  
Staring  
Wolf-whistles  
Touching  
'Hey baby'  
'Give us a smile'  
'Nice ones'  
'I'd like to give you one'  
'Hello sexy'  
'Cheer up, love, it might never happen' (it just did)  
'Oooh, I wouldn't eat that if I were you? too fattening'  
'Thunder thighs'

*adapted from Back Off
ON THURSDAY, MAY 4,
YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT
TOOK A STAND AGAINST STREET HARASSMENT
by passing out flyers on sexual harassment on North Ave. during rush hour.
The Girlfriends Group at Noble Street Charter School spoke at their school assembly about street harassment and its effects on them. They wore tee-shirts (left) that said “Girlfriends” on the front and a statement of the bearer’s choice about street harassment on the back. One, for example, read, “No Respect, No Attention.” “The event went extremely well,” said Marcia Welcome, adult supporter of the group.

The staff from WGLP & Metro Seniors in Action watched the video War Zone and had an energetic discussion afterward. Some of the things discussed were:

- Our own experiences of harassment, how it feels, and how we’ve dealt with it
- Ways that we, through the demands of our jobs and our work for social justice, can sometimes be put in the way of harassers. We talked about men with power that we need to deal with who can sometimes be inappropriate, and how in doing community outreach sometimes we encounter harassment as well.
- The need for more dialogue through schools. We thought this video, and dialogues around it, should be made available to help young women put into context what they are experiencing every day on the street.
- How to raise young children—both boys and girls—so that we don’t reinforce media stereotypes about gender roles, and so that we make sure they are all safe.

Thanks for organizing the day of action, and good luck with the march!

Melissa Spatz
Women and Girls’ Leadership Project
May 4, 2006: SOUTHWEST WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST STREET HARASSMENT ON THE SOUTHWEST SIDE OF CHICAGO

By: Bylynda Bridges, Children’s Counselor, SouthWest Women Working Together

On May 4th 2006, Southwest Women Working Together Staff organized in the office and in the community to show support of the Young Women’s Action Team Day to speak out against street harassment. On every staff door and cubicle, red signs emphasizing “RESPECT” let me tell You what it means to ME!.....STOP street harassment!” were displayed, so every community and shelter participant receiving services, and any person that walked through SWWT doors were greeted with the message that respect begins with understanding that one has the right to expect it verbally in their everyday comings and going. In addition, Southwest Women Working Together’s Children’s counselor, Bylynda Bridges, who provides services at Sherman Elementary School on 51st and Morgan, brought the message to the youth she serves in the 21st century program through discussing what respect is with participants, and giving signs out. The Children’s Counselor also drove from Southwest Women Working Together’s Administrative office on 6845 S Western Ave, north to 55th and Western and 55th street east to 55th and Morgan to Sherman School on 1000 W. 51st displaying Respect Signs on each side of her personal vehicle windows, while waving and blowing the horn occasionally at stop signs and stop lights ...This route covers 2 schools and 3 neighborhoods in Chicago’s south side, the signs remained on Bylynda’s vehicle overnight, so they were also displayed in the Southeast side of Chicago, particularly the South Shore and South Chicago areas also as Bylynda Bridges traveled home from work. The message continues on: many of the signs continue to be displayed on many staff doors and cubicles currently. SouthWest Women congratulates YWAT for their activism and advocacy and thanks them for allowing SWWT to take part of their efforts to stop street harassment and violence against women and children in our communities.
“This was a very important workshop to hold and I am glad that we did it. The boys really did not want to listen at first, but once we talked about the issue and brought it home to them they sat up and paid some attention.” Roselyn, 17

“I learned that some boys really don’t realize [that] some of the things they say to us young women really does affect us in so many ways. I also began to understand that the street harassment is really ok with boys that have certain state of mind.” -Keanna, 15

“I was really glad that we got to express our feelings about the issue of street harassment. I think that our meeting was hard to plan and run but went really well!” -Dyon, 16

“I think sexual harassment is very degrading. I think when men harass women that makes them like low down dirty dogs...I think men should respect women for who we are-I think they shouldn’t disrespect us. I think they should treat us like young, intelligent women.” -Rosalle, 15

“Street harassment is very degrading if that person doesn’t even know who they are on a personal level—they only look at the way you look and walk. That is very shallow and the only wanna talk to you because of the way you look.” -Iris, 15

I learned that both men and women can get harassed on the street but in different ways. It was interesting hearing the boys’ point of view of what street harassment was, and their own personal experiences.” -Britney, 15.

“One thing I learned was that most med do in fact understand where we were coming form. I also learned that men will respect women when we respect ourselves. Sometimes women don’t’ demand respect and we should.” -Stephanie, 15

“My personal feelings about street harassment are that it’s kind of bogus how men come and approach women. It makes me and many other women feel bad. We tried to get our point across during out workshop-coming at a woman by looking at her or calling her out of her name makes her feel bad.” -Lucinda, 18

“Actually before the workshop I didn’t know that if you holla at someone it could be called harassment. Street harassment happens all the time. If you don’t want to talk to them, they get really made and say, ‘I didn’t want to talk to yo’ ass anyway.” -CoCo, 18
On May 4, the Girl World Teen Group at Alternatives, Inc. held a workshop for young men and women aged 14 and older to discuss the definition and effect of street harassment. On May 4, 2006, from 5-6:30 p.m., thirty-one young men and fifteen young women from the Rogers Park, Lakeview, and Uptown communities came to the workshop to discuss their personal experiences with sexual harassment. During the event, the young women worked with the audience in determining how street harassment can be defined; how street harassment affects us all on a personal level and what can be done about this problem. Girls also shared personal harassment stories with the audience. In Teen Group’s opinion, some main themes emerged from this meeting:

- Everyone defines street harassment differently;
- Both men and women are negatively impacted by street harassment—young men shared that they often felt pressured to harass young women in order to shower their “manhood”; young women felt objectified by the harassment;
- This is an uncomfortable topic for young men and women to discuss in a meaningful way—during the initial parts of the workshop—the Teen Group had to work hard to facilitate conversation;
- When the issue of street harassment is personalized, neither young men nor young women liked or accepted it;
- This is an important issue that we (Teen Group) needs to explore more with other boys’ groups.
Street harassment is sexual intimidation on the street. It can include whistling, sexual remarks, offensive stares, groping, threats, and physical and sexual attacks. It involves a person affirming his right to intrude on another person’s space, forcing him or her to interact with the perpetrator as a sexual object.

(www.umich.edu/~handbook/violence/streetharass/html)

"Rape culture" is a term used to denote a culture in which rape and other sexual violence is common and in which prevalent attitudes, norms, practices and media condone, normalize excuse or encourage rape and other violence against women." (www.wikipedia.com) Living in a rape culture is harmful for both men and women.

Street harassment perpetuates the idea that women are pliant sex objects here for nothing that more than men’s pleasure. If a man says, “Smile, baby,” chances are the woman will smile because she fears the violence that might follow.

All artwork in this handout was created by Eric Drooker. Please visit www.drooker.com to see more.

How can you fight the Rape Culture and Street Harassment?

When someone says no to talking with you, dancing with you, being touched by you, knowing you, taking a drink from you, or having sex with you, accept the answer and walk away.

Do not encroach on a woman’s personal space. Just because you don’t think you are being offensive, doesn’t mean that you are not.

Notice ads that portray women in a sexually submissive style. Do not purchase from those companies.

Do not be silent or laugh politely when sexist jokes are told. Tell people why the jokes are not funny.

Read and discuss Transforming a Rape Culture, by Emilie Buchwald.

Support your local rape crisis organization.

Do not look at rape as a “woman’s problem.” It affects everyone!

Ask yourself why so much sports news involves violence against women.

Hold your friends to high standards. Would you feel comfortable with them dating your sister?

When someone says she/he was raped, believe him/her.

Stop using the word rape lightly. The guy you are playing video games with did not “rape you” when he beat you in the game.

Research sexual assault within the United States military. Go to http://hometown.aol.com/milesfdn/myhomepage to learn what’s going on.

Women are angry for a reason. And we are entitled to it.

Learn, listen, become allies in our fight.

The Roger’s Park Young Women’s Action Team will be sponsoring a Community March To Support Girl’s Safety on May 4th, 2006, at 5:30 PM. It will start at Loyola Park and end at the Morse El.

For more information on street harassment, please see:

www.streetharassmentproject.org

www.tolerance.org

www.rohan.sdsu.edu/~gwick/rapeculture.html

www.umich.edu/~handbook/violence/streetharass/html

www.filmfatale.net

www.loolwa.com

www.hollabacknyc.blogspot.com

www.mencanstoprape.org
I cannot remember how the Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline first became involved with the Day of Action. When I heard about it, I knew it was something that I wanted to do. The idea of confronting people about their behavior was very scary to me, which made me realize that I had to do it. I received a lot of encouragement from Mariame Kaba and inspiration from her stories about the YWAT. The pamphlet actually stemmed from a very bad day at work. After feeling that all of society was encouraged to rape women I had a strong desire to stand in the middle of the street yelling out reasons why and how not to be a rapist (such as: don’t drug a girl so that you can rape her, don’t hit a girl so that you can rape her.) In my mind, the pamphlet was much more “in your face” but the final product was a little toned down because I really wanted people to read it and not just get defensive. The final product also changed because I wanted to make it more about street harassment and its role in the rape culture. I have attached a copy and you have my permission to use it in your zine with appropriate acknowledgments.

I begged, borrowed and stole volunteers who were willing to donate their time and clamber out of bed in time for a 7 AM pass out at north side CTA stations... I think that everyone had a fairly good time. To be honest, I think most of my volunteers were more upfront about what we were passing out than I was.

Most of them, when handing the flyer to someone, said something about ending street harassment. I simply handed the flyer to people while wishing them a good morning. Overall it seemed that everything went well. I was very unprepared for how many we would need. Thankfully Mariame drove by and resupplied us all.

Since the DoA I have noticed a slight change in the way I deal with people on the street. It still bothers me (I guess 32 years of socialization doesn’t change overnight) but I no longer feel any need to placate strangers with a smile. I have had to confront many of my own fears about how I deal with feeling threatened by strangers. I’m working on it and will continue to do so. I am grateful for the opportunity that this day gave me and I hope to involved with the YWAT in the future.

Good luck and thanks again!

-Jennifer Kronk
The group participants shared their own experiences of harassment, and had amazing discussions. Some highlights follow.

"We had a complex and far-reaching conversation about street harassment. To my surprise, much of the conversation was centered around the more seemingly innocent forms of harassment—about which we generally agreed—and not as much about the overtly "nasty" stuff (although we did get into that some, too). For instance, we talked about how much they hate it when people ask them to smile, or when people say you're mean just because you're not smiling. Many of them felt that you have to have a tough demeanor in order to get by. They found it demeaning that men expected them to put up this sunny front....

...One highlight of the group: A--- talked about some ways that she shuts down men who mess with her in public. For instance, when we were talking about men whispering in our ears, she said that when a guy did that to her, she made fun of how his breath smelled. She had us all in stitches. However, at one point, a change came over her and she became more serious. She said, 'But you know what, you guys, I done stuff to girls before, too.' (A--- is bisexual.) She shared about how one time she had grabbed a girl's behind in public, and she told us about the comments she had made to girls. About one girl in particular, (to whom she had made some explicit comments) she said, 'You know what, she laughed and stuff, but I bet she was embarrassed. That was wrong what I did! I never realized it before. That was wrong!' Watching the realization wash over her face was one of the most inspiring things I've ever seen." [A—told me that she later shared her realization with one of the young men at the school, who had also participated in the street harassment curriculum. Her face glowed; she seemed so full of joy at her realization, at her power to personally make a change.]

From the young men's group at the same school:
"I began by asking the group if they were familiar with the legal definition of street harassment. E--- responded by saying, 'When the cops harass you,' which I personally found an insightful reply. A few others offered up definitions, but M--- eventually said, 'What? When you yell 'hey, bitch' to somebody.' After lots of laughing, the group was off. We read 'Gloria,' which actually ended up being the only handout we covered during this group. The guys responded to questions about how they approach girls- the best methods and techniques- and the types of the ladies they approach. Our group conversation was filtered with comments about bitches and hoes, how girls prefer getting mistreated, how girls are only after money and how guys get harassed as well. After so much trash-talking about women, I bet the guys that they wouldn't make some the same harsh comments in front of a group of ladies. They burst into yells and screams, saying that they would, so I invited Evin's group [of young women, same school] over for an open forum...

When the ladies arrived, several of the guys immediately coupled up with their girlfriends and sat back quietly during the conversation; I'm specifically thinking about G--- and V--- who were very vocal about women before they entered the room. A few guys, T--- and A--- continued to give their strong opinions about how they're treated by women even when they've approached them respectfully. Just when it appeared as though the ladies in the room might be overpowered or outtalked, a few ladies from Evin's group stepped up to represent and counter the guys' opinions...

At one point, the conversation was going so well that it was difficult for myself, Evin and Jason [group leaders] to get a word in. At times we all just stepped back and let them talk amongst themselves. Jason and Evin did get a chance to act out a few scenarios and the group discussed whether or not their reenactments should be considered street harassment. The interesting thing about the mixed group is that I'm not sure that either side reached a consensus on what should and shouldn't be considered street harassment...What I do know and did point out to the group was that the guys were overall a lot more subtle and objective in their opinions in the presence of the ladies. I told the group-at-large that to me, this served as evidence that they respected the ladies more than they were perhaps willing to admit. The response from the group was dead silence with a few of the guys looking up at me with doe eyes and agreeing shaking heads."
Typical Pick-Ups of 2006
by Iesha Griffin

‘Ey, shawty, wus good?
You from around this hood?
Can I talk 2 u for a minute?
Later on, can I hit it?
Can you give me a smile?
Can you have my child?
Can I kick it wit u?
Li'l Mama, what it do?
Can you slow down?
Do you go downtown?
You just gone walk past?
You know you got a nice ass.
Hey, sexy, come here.
Let me whisper in ya ear.
You ain’t gone say nothing? That’s okay,
I didn’t want yo ass anyway

Mami
by Dora
Walking down the street
and eyes all on me.
Once around the corner the
whistles are starting.
Guys are standing to see me pass by.
I deserve it ‘cause I’m a queen, but
I don’t need all those eyes on me.
Hey, mami! You look good, or, Hey, mami!
You look lonely, can I walk with you?
I may look lonely, but it’s not that way.
On the way back they see me with a guy.
They don’t say anything when we walk on by.
To all you fellas, this is my guy.
He is the only one who can call me Mami.
So go on looking for your mami, ’cause
I got my Papi, and he got his Mami.

I Apologize
by Alicia Tovar

I apologize if I made you feel uncomfortable!
I apologize for making them comments;
you’re worth more than that.
I know how you felt that day.
I have gone through it too; it’s not right!
Why do guys holler at me when
they got something good at home:
a family, love...

U holler at me to feel
empowered, but you’re not, you’re just
like all them other fools out there
(it takes respect to give respect).
Respect yourself, respect others’ feelings,
cuz I will always remember that!
The spirited discussions allowed the youth to candidly express their opinions, but also challenged them to empathize with another perspective. Other take-aways included:

1. Coed open forums are important so that both dies can speak and listen.
2. Everyone operates from preconceived notions.
3. We should reconvene soon.

The Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team invited community groups, schools, churches and individuals to participate in a day of action to bring attention to street harassment. Global Girls facilitated 90 minute workshops with juniors and seniors at Westinghouse HS and South Shore School of Leadership to discuss what street harassment is and how it impacts males and females.

**Street Harassment is...**

To some, street harassment is “just something men do,” but to others, it’s insulting, disrespectful, and threatening. Street harassment is sexual intimidation on the street, ranging from whistling or other

“Most girls want you to ‘holla’ at them. It’s a compliment.”

“If they dress like a slut, then men treat them like a slut. We think that’s what they want.”

“Now, if somebody hollered at my sister, look out.”

These were just a few of the male comments offered at the beginning of street harassment workshops last month. “Wrong, wrong, and wrong again,” summed up the girls’ responses.
"This great experience made me feel good inside because doing the right thing to do is stop the harassment. I wish I could do that again." - Eriane Black, 16

I felt very good when we were passing out the flyers about sexual harassment, because we are letting people know how important it is to change the number of cases of sexual harassment." - Monica Arroyo

“I felt very good knowing that I did something to concern women, as well as men, about this issue that we are having in today’s world about street harassment. Personally, I felt that a little can do so much because women are getting the hint that it’s not right, and that they should defend their rights." - Cristell E. Hernandez

“I felt very good knowing that I did something to concern women, as well as men, about this issue that we are having in today’s world about street harassment. Personally, I felt that a little can do so much because women are getting the hint that it’s not right, and that they should defend their rights." - Monica Arroyo

I think we made a difference and I hope for more positive activities like this in the future.” - Dawn Johnson

“What I experienced was that some people didn’t care about what was on the flier, but some people took the time and read the letter. It made me feel like I was making a change in the society of the city.” - Kimberly Johnson

Our organization had a really great workshop on street harassment over at Wicker Park-and the girls just LOVED it. We had them design advertisements first on a piece of paper, where they had to draw a message they would share with people about women and street harassment. Then after we discussed them in a group, we had them bring the drawings outside to the park and draw them on the sidewalk. Each girl got a huge piece of the sidewalk, and it drew a lot of attention from the people in the park, and I think it raised some great awareness. Members of Girls in the Game at Wells High School passed out educational pamphlets on street and sexual harassment and passed them out outside of school.

Lots of people were asking the girls questions and they had a lot of great answers! Thanks so much for putting the word out about the day! It was really great to participate, and aligned so well with our mission at Girls in the Game.

Jenika Faes
Individuals In Action

The following is a list of people wore ORANGE on May 4th, educated themselves on Street Harassment, and informed others about the Day of Action.

Natalie Smith • Ari Bernstein • Silvia Gomez • Heather Hain • Ann Russo • Sara Manewith • Maria Mowbray • Sheena Reeves • Alpana Patel • Ora Schub • Bella Tronou • Alison Janus • Alex Gibson • Alexandra Ocampo • Antwyon Underwood • Ashley Broadshaw • Caitlyn Medina • Carol Burns • Cherie Greer • Chez Rompf • Damesha Outlaw • Debra Barbee • Erica Evans • Eula Ermon • EWern Chaney • Haley Ruetsche • Hillary Reser • Jenna Podrazu • Joquan Braggs • Julie Kramer • Keisha Hunt • Kendra Duncan • Kevon Green • Kimya Hendricks • Laurence Worthon • Linda Worthon • Lorri Kaczmarski • Marisol Ruiz • Max Jones • Micaiah Kline • Michelle Matthews • Mike Green • Misty Green • Mitchell Antz • Nicole Simmons • Stephanie Duncan • Tavis Grant • Tosheanna Hughes • Travis Nesbitt • Trella Wilson • Twilla Wilson • Vania Lopez • Zachary Rothstein • Odilia Perez • Sandi Belushi • Beatrice

The following people handed out information about street harassment and/or informed others:

Beatrice Asonganyi • Scott Smith • Larry Garrison • Shirley Descorbeth • Daphnee Rene • Kiley Bednar • Christine Rene

The following people wore ORANGE:

Wendy Harvell • Pinkie Hendricks • Yas Ahmed • Jane Ball • Danna Cintron • Ann Taylor Hopkins • TerriaGist • CrystalHolmes • Angelique Anderseon • Mary Starks • Betty Usher • Antwanette Williams • Rev. Penny Willis • Scott Rice • Quave’ Richardson • Jeni Gabrenya • Nick Gainer • Yolanda Owens • Morgan Paulus • Quintina Brown • Qua’Niyah Brown
Marchers who joined YWAT included Dante Hamilton, Jaleesa Hardwick, Tatiana Anthony, Shakeya Hawk, Adeola Matanmi, Chelsea Whitis, Shay Brown, Kristin Cox, Julie Wolther and children, Jane Kimondo and children, Jen Curley, Lara Reddin, Jim Gidore, Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin, Jennifer Kohler, Sue Straus, Quintina Brown, Crane High School Ladies Action Squad, Marion Nzinga Stamps Youth Center — Drumline, Flag team, and Dancers.
Join the Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team for

**A Community March**

When: Thursday May 4th 2006
Time: 5:30 p.m.

Where: Starting at Loyola Park, 1230 W. Greenleaf Ave.
Ending at the Morse EL

May 4th 2006 is the Citywide Day of Action against Street Harassment. Help us BLOW the WHISTLE on STREET HARASSMENT because the STREETS BELONG TO ALL OF US!

For more information, e-mail the Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team at rpywat@hotmail.com
Day of Action Blog

Yesterday was a GREAT DAY!

I woke up at 6 am on May 4th 2006. By 7am I was standing in front of the Granville EL station where I met a young woman named Laura who is a Loyola University student and Chicago Rape Crisis Center volunteer. Shortly, we were joined by Jennifer K, the coordinator for this “action,” also from the Chicago Rape Crisis Center. The assignment was to kickoff the Citywide Day of Action against Street Harassment by distributing pamphlets about the connection between street harassment and rape culture. Jennifer mentioned that she had received a phone call from another volunteer who was at the Loyola EL station saying that she had already run out of pamphlets. It was only 7:10 am. I knew at that moment that the Day of Action against Street Harassment was already a success. I left to make more copies. I dropped some off to Natalie S [a friend] who was volunteering in front of the Morse EL station, to two others in front of the Loyola stop, and finally made my way back to Laura and Jennifer. From the Berwyn to the Howard EL stops, morning rush hour commuters were greeted between 7 and 9 am by brave women saying NO to street harassment. Hundreds of people started their day thinking about the issue of street harassment and rape culture.

I heard from Salome Chasnoff, the director of BeyondMedia Education, that her volunteers had filmed students from the Associated Colleges of the Midwest – Urban Studies program conducting an action in front of the State of Illinois building; Wells High school students handing out fliers in front of their school; students at Depaul University coming together for a rally; youth participating in a workshop sponsored by Girls in the Game. Actions were taking place across Chicago and BeyondMedia was there to help document those actions.

YWAT member, Emilia Whitis, informed me that half of her class including her teacher arrived at Lane Tech High School this morning wearing ORANGE and sporting the YWAT’s snazzy button which states that the “STREETS BELONG TO ALL OF US.”

The Day culminated for me at the YWAT community march in Rogers Park. Words cannot express the spirit that was evident at this event. In fact, it was so nice that we had to do it twice. Over 100 people gathered in front of the Loyola Fieldhouse to support girls’ safety in Rogers Park. YWAT members handed out ORANGE t-shirts to those who wanted to wear them along with whistles and buttons. Behind a banner that said “The Street Belongs to All of Us – Blow the Whistle on Street Harassment – This message brought to you by the Rogers Park Young Women’s Action Team,” the crowd, a sea of ORANGE, marched across Sheridan Road to Morse Avenue. All along the way, we chanted “What do we say to Street Harassment…We say NO!” “What do we say to RAPE….We say NO!” “What do we say to Teen Dating Violence…We say NO!” “What do we say to DOMESTIC VIOLENCE…We say NO!” “What do we want in Rogers Park….A Harm Free Zone.” “No More Violence against Our Women.” The YWAT was joined by an eclectic group of supporters and community members from all walks of life. There were children as young as two years old and elders in their 60s. We were supported by male allies who wanted it to be known that they would stand with us as we raise awareness about violence against girls and women. There were people of all races. We were joined by members of the Sullivan High School Gay Straight Alliance who were kind enough to provide marchers with water, pizza, and terrific signs. Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin took time out of his busy schedule to march for young women’s safety in Rogers Park. Students from Northwestern University, Loyola University, various high schools and elementary schools joined the march. A group of young women from Crane High School who are building their own organization similar to the YWAT joined the March. Pedestrians heard the message that marchers were conveying and spontaneously joined us. Community residents came out of their homes to voice their support. Cars honked their horns in solidarity. It was festive because everyone knew that we were sharing this experience with other people committed to social justice. We marched from Loyola Park to Clark and Lunt then returned to the offices of the Rogers Park Community Council, blowing our whistles all the way through.

Thanks to Between Friends, a local domestic violence agency, marchers were provided with delicious pizza and drinks. This was well-received because everyone had built up an appetite and thirst from the energy expended during the march. After the food, the crowd began to thin out as people returned to their responsibilities and homes. Only YWAT members and a few other supporters remained. Soon, however, we noticed a school bus pulling up in front of the Rogers Park Community Council office where we were congregating and eating pizza.

Out came the drum line, dance line, and flag team from the Marion Nzinga Stamps Youth Center. They informed us that their bus was an hour late in picking them up and were incredibly disappointed to have missed the March because they wanted to reinforce the message that the “STREETS BELONG TO ALL OF US.” Never willing to end a celebration prematurely, members of the YWAT insisted that we march again. Amazingly as the drum line began to play, they were immediately surrounded by youth from the Howard Area Community Center, Field Elementary school, and other community residents. Soon there were over 60 people setting off again from Morse Avenue back to Loyola Park.

As the drum line played and the dancers danced and the flags waved, pedestrians smiled and waved. I looked up at the sky and thought -- Today was a GREAT DAY!

By Mariame Kaba, YWAT adult ally.
I just wanted to thank you for creating a wonderful opportunity for many of us to develop an action on this issue. My students had a great time that day and the response from the public was quite interesting. We learned many things that I will share with you.

The flowers were great and many people were so curious.

Again, thank you so much for inspiring so many people. I’m looking forward to the next event.

Mary Scott-Boria
Director, Urban Studies Program
Associated Colleges of the Midwest

Students planned a public action, in which they handed out literature and big flowers (pictured right). Students also displayed a large banner and wore tee-shirts with different statements (such as MY NAME IS NOT BABY…STOP STREET HARASSMENT). The students performed their action in front of the State of Illinois building from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.
www.youngwomensactionteam.org