

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**“The Women’s Resources Center sponsors**

**Domestic Violence Awareness Month October 2014”**

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.  To try to increase awareness about domestic violence and its consequences, the Women’s Resources Center, along with other units of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, Gender and Women’s Studies, the Counseling Center, the Office for Student Conflict Resolution, Office of the Dean of Students, Campus Recreation, University Housing and the University of Illinois Police Department will be sponsoring activities and events throughout the month of October on campus.

Domestic violence includes psychological, emotional, physical, financial, and sexual abuse, occurring in intimate relationships. Domestic violence transcends race, class, gender, sexuality, ability status, and culture. In a 2000 study completed on the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s campus found that 87% of students who have dated while attending the university reported that they had experienced some level of abuse while dating.  This study found that those individuals who experienced some abuse consequently exhibited symptoms of depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, academic disruptions, and physical injury.  Yet, while this abuse may have led to damaging consequences, only 13% of the students who had been abused sought help, 8% filed a formal complaint through student discipline, and 2% filed a police report. It is estimated that over 1/4 of students at the University of Illinois have been physically abused by someone they were involved in a relationship with while a student.

The Women’s Resources Center provides resources and services for students who have experienced abuse within a relationship including weekly support groups, individual counseling, advocacy services, and referrals to the campus safe house and other supportive services within the community. We also provide educational programs designed to reduce violence and promote healthy relationships in the campus community.

Our keynote event for Domestic Violence Awareness Month will be a **Spoken Word Performance featuring Artist Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai at Unit One Allen Hall (1005 Gregory Drive in Urbana) from 7-8:30pm on Monday, October 13th**. Chicago-born writer, performer and spoken word artist (and UIUC alum) Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai weaves social, racial and gender themes into entertaining and poignant poems that have gained her a number of awards, global success and media attention. We are excited to welcome Kelly as our 2014 Domestic Violence Awareness month Keynote speaker, and we invite the entire campus community to attend this momentous occasion and insightful performance.

Additional activities this month include: a lunch and discussion on working to end gender violence, a screening of the acclaimed documentary *A Family Affair,* a Clothesline Art Project Workshop exploring the topics of supporting domestic violence survivors presented by Illini Art Therapy, and a Writ n’ Rhymed poetry open mic night in conjunction with Elka Kazmierczak’s *I Wish She Was Dead* art exhibition opening at the Women’s Resources Center.

To culminate our efforts in creating unity in the face of domestic violence, there will be a **Candlelight Vigil honoring survivors and mourning those we’ve lost outdoors on Anniversary Plaza on the quad on Thursday, October 23rd, from 7pm-9pm**. Come light a candle for victims and survivors, say a few words, and listen to our collective stories of struggle, survival, and solidarity in the face of domestic violence—as well as our work to end violence of all forms.

**For more information about Domestic Violence Awareness Month events and initiatives, watch for printed calendars or visit** [**www.go.illinois.edu/DVAM**](http://www.go.illinois.edu/DVAM) **and check out the Women’s Resources Center on campus.**

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