

Community stands together to ‘Take Back the Night’

By DeSean Payne

Staff Writer

Published: Sunday, April 18, 2010

Updated: Sunday, April 18, 2010

Take Back the Night, an event focusing on sexual assault awareness, will be hosted by the New Mexico State University Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education Program tomorrow from 6 to 8 p.m. John Rivers, WAVE community organizer, said this event is working along side the Take Back the News, a print production of stories surrounding sexual violence by members in the community, to spread awareness of sexual violence.

“New Mexico is the No. 2 state in the country for reported sexual assault,” said Marisa Ortman, city prevention educator for La Piñon Sexual Assault Recovery Services.

In light of this, Ortman said Take Back the Night is an important event to bring awareness to sexual violence in the community, and resources for victims of sexual violence.

Rivers said WAVE has hosted the event for the past five years, and this year community members will be encouraged to tell stories.

The event will have a march starting at the Corbett Outdoor Stage that will go along University Avenue, and end at the Corbett Auditorium. Rivers said, at the auditorium, people can choose to share stories from Take Back the News, and there will be an open microphone for anyone who would like to share a story.

“I think this event is important because it allows people to speak up. When people are quiet, [sexual assault] happens,” said Katie Silva, a member of Feminists Reinventing Equality Everywhere.

Rivers said about 100 to 200 people usually attend the event, and people not directly affected by sexual assault can still be made aware of the wide spread issue.

“We are trying to help give a voice to people affected by sexual violence,” Rivers said. “We want this event to raise awareness, especially for those who don’t understand how serious of an issue this is.”

Ortman and Silva said the sexual assault is a serious issue on campus and in the community.

“Sexual violence is an issue for the community and not just for the individual,” said Ortman, who also will speak and have a resource table at the event.

Rivers said the only way to prevent sexual assault is to raise awareness.

The event is free and is open to all members of the community and NMSU.

For more information about La Piñon, e-mail Ortman at marisa@lapinon.org. For help, call the 24-hour La Pinon hotline at 526-3437.

For more information about WAVE, call 646-2813.

DeSean Payne is a staff writer and can be contacted at trunews@nmsu.edu.