

WAVE hosts downtown rally

NMSU program marches to raise awareness for interpersonal violence

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Published: Sunday, November 15, 2009

Updated: Monday, November 16, 2009



The New Mexico State University Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education program hosted the third annual White Ribbon Campaign March and Rally on Saturday at the Downtown Plaza to raise awareness about interpersonal violence.

WAVE research assistant John Rivers said the event, which featured speakers on the topics of community violence, focused on taking a proactive stance in violence.

“[Violence] is a very big issue in our community,” Rivers said. “This is something that affects us all.”

The rally featured officer Lauris Gallegos from the Las Cruces Police Department, Pat Acosta from La Casa, Kasandra Gandara from the Children, Youth, and Family Department, Robert Duran and Joan Crowley from NMSU Criminal Justice, and Patrick Schuler with Montevis Price from WAVE.

“We see the affects of violence within our community,” Rivers said. “Even if it doesn’t happen to you personally, taking a stance for friends and loved ones will make you more aware.”

The speakers addressed types of interpersonal abuse. Crowley discussed the culture that surrounds violence and sexual violence in our community regarding.

“We live in a culture that does not believe the woman,” Crowley said. “Lack of resistance is not consent.”

Crowley made a request of the audience to not make rape a constant part of daily life in college.

“Stop collaborating,” Crowley said. “The jokes about rape, the skepticism of who really got raped and the criticism make you collaborators.”

In addition to sexual violence, speaker Patrick Schuler, of WAVE, discussed the actions the community can take to stop hate crimes.

“As a community, we need to support the victims of hate crimes,” Schuler said. “We need to work against people who support hate crimes and advocate for hate crime prevention.”

Schuler said events, such as the rally, help the non-violence cause.

“We need to look to the future and evaluate the process it takes to get there,” Schuler said. “We need to raise awareness about these issues.”

NMSU student Emily Burr said students should support programs like WAVE to make a difference on campus.

“If we don’t support these programs, [change] won’t happen,” Burr said. “If we don’t address the violence that happens on campus and in our community, nothing will change.”

Burr said more students should get involved to help stop violence on the NMSU campus.

“Students should take a proactive stance,” Burr said. “Sexual assault and relationship assault are most prominent in college years.”

Rivers said awareness is one of the main goals of the rally.

“As students, we need to be aware of what is happening around us,” Rivers said. “We each need to say, ‘I’m going to take a stance.’”