

A HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Since 1972 Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR) has provided counseling and advocacy services for victim/survivors of sexual assault and education about sexual assault and its prevention for the professional community and the general public. WOAR was founded for the purpose of providing support for sexual assault victims and their families and of working with the community to prevent rape. Our goals are:

- *To eliminate rape in our society, beginning with the community that WOAR serves.*
- *To educate the community that WOAR serves.*
- *To provide needed support and referrals to victims of sexual assault, their families and friends in Philadelphia.*
- *To empower women to gain control over their lives.*

WOAR continues to strive to make Philadelphia a less violent community. Our advocacy has resulted in many changes throughout the years, including:

- 1972** WOAR office opens with hotline staffed by 20 volunteers at Philadelphia General Hospital.
- 1974** District Attorney's Office and Police Department accept proposals from WOAR for treatment of rape victim/survivors. WOAR's Court Accompaniment Program begins. WOAR advocates for rape shield law.
- 1975** WOAR participates in the formation of Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, a network of rape crisis centers throughout the state.
- 1976** State legislature passes bill making survivor's prior sexual history inadmissible in court (rape shield). WOAR counselors staff emergency rooms at Jefferson and Presbyterian Hospitals when Philadelphia General Hospital closes. WOAR helps found Women's Way.
- 1977** WOAR advocates creation of specialized rape units in District Attorney's Office and Police Department.

- 1978** Rape Prosecution Unit is implemented in District Attorney's Office. WOAR sponsors four-day national conference on medical, legal, psychological and cultural aspects of rape.
- 1979** WOAR conducts outreach and education program for adolescents; annual supporting membership drive is instituted.
- 1980** WOAR's Child Sexual Abuse Program begins with specialized direct services and prevention education for children and training for professionals. Episcopal Hospital replaces Presbyterian for emergency room services for sexual assault victim/survivors.
- 1981** WOAR develops rape prevention training program and organizes Philadelphia's first Rape Prevention Week to promote awareness about sexual assault prevention. Sex Crimes Unit established in Police Department.
- 1982** Bill signed into law guaranteeing confidentiality in communications between rape crisis counselors and victims. Children's Hospital begins sexual assault program—WOAR trains hospital staff.
- 1983** WOAR's Task Force on the Sex Offender proposes treatment programs for sex offenders in Pennsylvania prisons. WOAR begins offering low-cost self defense classes to women in the community.
- 1984** WOAR pilots training program for professionals working with older people to identify and assist older sexual assault victim/survivors. WOAR produces self-defense instruction manual and videotape.
- 1985** Spousal Sexual Assault Bill passed, eliminating the marital exemption in the rape law. WOAR collaborates with Voyage House to provide counseling and advocacy for adolescent victim/survivors and community outreach and education.
- 1986** WOAR co-presents conference for judges on child sexual abuse. WOAR develops Clinical Program and expands counseling services for children and adults.
- 1987** WOAR presents conference on AIDS and sexual assault—to our knowledge, the first such conference in the nation. WOAR presents child sexual abuse prevention day at The Gallery.
- 1988** WOAR responds to a series of attacks on women in center city by bringing rape prevention information to 5,000 individuals who live and

work in the area. WOAR produces personal safety activity book for young children.

- 1989** WOAR co-sponsors eleventh annual conference of the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault—600 participants from across the country gather in Philadelphia for several days of workshops and community-wide events.
- 1990** Sexual Assault Awareness Week culminates in WOAR conference on adolescent sexual abuse, ***"Making the Connection: Teens Talk About Sexual Abuse and Teen Risk-Taking."***
- 1991** WOAR develop training manual on sexual assault and substance abuse for use in rape crisis centers throughout the state. WOAR produces video on sexual assault and the healing process.
- 1992** Jody Pinto Award established to honor individuals who have shown exemplary dedication to WOAR's commitment to end sexual violence. WOAR produces video about women of color survivors in recovery from addictions.
- 1993** WOAR actively advocates for the establishment of anti-stalking legislation in Pennsylvania. WOAR turns 20 on May 1—with our name in lights atop the PECO building!
- 1994** WOAR sponsors professional/community conference titled ***"Juvenile Sex Offenders: From Victim to Offender to Survivor"*** in the fall.
- 1995** WOAR hired first male staff person as Education/Training Specialist. WOAR celebrated its 25th anniversary.
- 1998** WOAR created a Men's Task Force – a diverse group of men from the Philadelphia Community. The major outcome of the Task Force was the development of our Program "Today's Boys Are Tomorrow's Men" training curriculum for male youth on sexual violence issues.
- 1999** WOAR presented testimony before Philadelphia City Council concerning the Philadelphia Police Department miscoding and downgrading sexual assault complaints.

WOAR joins forces with the Women's Law Project, the Penn Women's Center, and the National Organization of Women to address the Philadelphia Police Department's miscoding and downgrading sexual assault complaints.

2000 Community Advocate Review Board established review of The Philadelphia Police Department's Special Victims Unit coding of sexual assault complaints.

WOAR's Executive Director receives the Philadelphia Coalition for Victim Advocacy Catherine Bachrach Award for outstanding advocacy on behalf of victims of crime in Philadelphia.

WOAR received recognition from AWARE, Inc. for work on behalf of victims of sexual assault.

WOAR produced a video, "Speak Out" discussing sexual assault in the Latino Community, and three Asian Outreach videos, which discussed sexual assault and related issues in the Asian Community.

2001 WOAR holds first major fundraiser (bowl-a-thon) which is a huge success.

WOAR's Executive Director interviewed by *Ms. Magazine*. Interview published nationally. Subject: Philadelphia Police Department's inadequate investigation of sexual assault complaints.

2002 WOAR holds Philadelphia's first *Men Against Sexual Violence* Conference, Community College, Philadelphia.

WOAR celebrates 30th Anniversary. Holds celebration; Honors District Attorney, Lynn Abraham; Senator Hardy Williams; Lieutenant, Mike Boyle, Philadelphia Police Department-Special Victims Unit; Radio Host, Tamlin Henry; Councilperson, Angel Ortiz; and Womens Law Project's Executive Director, Carole Tracy.

2003 WOAR's Executive Director receives "**Ordinary Women Doing Extraordinary Things**" award.

WOAR's Executive Director receives **SISTAHS/SISTAHS** Award for outstanding community leadership.

WOAR's Executive Director receives **International Seroptomist Distinguished Woman of the Year Award**.

2004 WOAR holds signature fund raising event honoring Delilah Rumberg, PCAR; Dr. Edna Foa, UPENN; and Christopher Mallios, District Attorney's Office.

2005 WOAR's Executive Director receives "**2005 Governor's**" award for outstanding citizen crime prevention volunteer.

WOAR trains 36 Latina community sexual assault counselor volunteers and 15 Asian community sexual assault counselor volunteers.

WOAR's Executive Director receives "**Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police Community Service**" award.

2006 WOAR holds major event "**Take It All Back**" in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness month in April.

The City of Philadelphia Mayor's office presents WOAR with a proclamation naming April 29th "**Women Organized Against Rape Day**".

WOAR enters partnership with the Center for The Treatment of Anxiety Disorders relative to the treatment of adolescents with Child Sexual Assault related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

WOAR provides sexual assault/sexual abuse trainings to Philadelphia Police Department line supervisors.

WOAR moves to new office at the Robert Morris Building, 100 North 17th Street, 4th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

2007 WOAR's Executive Director nominated and accepted into the Federal Bureau of Investigation Community Partnership Program.

WOAR holds 2nd Annual "**Take It All Back**" event in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness month in April.

WOAR holds **King Tut** exhibit fundraiser.

WOAR trains 10 new Latina community sexual assault counselor volunteers.

WOAR Community Outreach Manager, Cristina Perez receives the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape's "**Jody Pinto Award**" for outstanding work in the Latina Community.

2008 WOAR counseling services designs "**Building Blocks**" support group program for toddlers.

WOAR receives a \$15,000 grant from Verizon for the "**Building Blocks**" toddler support group.

University of Pennsylvania hosts two Vagina Monologue performances and donates the proceeds to WOAR in the amount of \$30,565.00.

Katie Rose Glickman, Vagina Monologue Producer, receives PCVA's Outstanding Volunteer Award.

WOAR holds 3rd Annual "**Take It All Back**" event in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness month in April. This year a community walk was added which raised over \$4,000.

WOAR moves to new office at One Penn Center-Suburban Station, 1617 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 1100, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

WOAR unveils new website.

2009 WOAR held 4th Annual "**Take It All Back**" event in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness month in April. This year a community walk continued and a raffle was held. Senator Tartaglione presented Senate Resolution 63, which passed on March 31, 2009, declaring April as "Sexual Assault" month in Pennsylvania. Mayor Michael Nutter and Councilman William Greenlee also spoke at the event.

WOAR's court advocates are founding members of the **Safe Courts 4 Kids** coalition, a collaboration between agencies serving children in court in Philadelphia. Members include the District Attorney's office, the First Judicial District, the Philadelphia Children's Alliance, and Keystone Mercy, represented by WOAR board member Maria Pajil Battle. In 2008-2009, the Safe Courts 4 Kids coalition wrote a grant to provide funding for the installation of closed-circuit television system in Courtrooms A and B at 1801 Vine Street, where child victims of sexual abuse testify against their perpetrators. We received the grant on May 14th, 2009 from the Connelly Foundation.

WOAR partnered with Councilman William Greenlee to get a bill passed in Pennsylvania whereas victims of sexual violence would be eligible for Family leave with their employer providing their company was qualified under the "Family Leave Policy".

On September 24, 2009 WOAR held a fundraiser titled "**Bridge of Courage**". WOAR honored Kathryn M. Brown, PhD, Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania; Councilman-At-Large William K. Greenlee, City of Philadelphia 15th Ward; Ralph J. Riviello, MD, FACEP, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine; and Rev. Dr. Alyn E. Waller, Senior Pastor, Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church for the work they do in the community supporting WOAR's mission. ArcheDream for Humankind, a dance troupe, performed "Jessica's Story", about a survivor of rape. The event was attended by 112 persons and raised \$22,500.

