



Volume 2, Issue 2

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In Clarion County:  
415a Wood St  
Clarion, PA 16214  
(814) 226-7273

In Clearfield County:  
90 Beaver Dr.  
Suite 212D  
Dubois, PA 15801  
(814) 371-9677

In Jefferson County:  
18 Western Ave.  
Suite E  
Brookville, PA  
15825

24 Hour Hotline:  
1-800-793-3620

By Ben Thompson, PASSAGES, Inc. Prevention Educator

Few moments in life are as special as the awkward pause in a conversation. It's almost magical. The look of complete shock and wonderment while trying to hold it all together. This happens every time someone asks me that standard summer Bar-B-Q or family reunion small talk question "What's new?" Maybe I should stop answering it with, "I just got out of jail on Monday!" All they wanted was the simple stereotypical roofer, mechanic, or plumber answer, but why lie when the truth is just so unbelievable?

What their brains are inevitably unable to comprehend is the vastness of the blight that is sexual violence in our place in time. I try hard to explain in layman's terms what my life is like working for PASSAGES, Inc. Most of the time I'm met with head nods and uh-hum. People tend to think of themselves in league with my motives and passion to stop sexual abuse from happening to children. Where I lose them is when I start to talk about the work we do with inmates at our county jail. Most people have a lack of compassion with no consideration for empathy towards these individuals. Even the inmates themselves admit that they have not been the best of

citizens. Despite all the negative experiences from the past, part of the rehabilitation process is giving them the opportunity to create a better future.

From the outside, it is clearly not a "normal" group of students, not a normal group of parents. Once a week, for ninety minutes, we meet to discuss what it takes to provide kids a life free from fear and violence. My bag and person are searched with disapproving looks from the corrections officer. Their fears and suspicion are quelled by my assurance that the warden has a list of what I have and approves. I'm then escorted past a set of locking doors and down the hallway past three cells blocs to an 18' x 12' room that also serves as the prison library. Two benches straddle the table that takes up most of the space. The guards then bring the 6 men or 6 women in for the group to start.

Stigma always surrounds a prisoner. They are struggling themselves to see the person/ parent that they were meant to be and not the criminal we all see. But we don't talk about any of that. Most of the time they are very engaged in the class discussion. The scenarios in class brings out just how much they care about kids. They also feel very passionate about perpetrators of sexual violence



Volunteers Leanne Merryman & Jessica Clontz help with Dubois Community Days, June 2018.

and don't hesitate to speak their minds. At the end of the course, 100% say it was worth coming to and they would recommend it to others.

Preventing sexual violence in the lives of our children and the children of our communities is everyone's moral contract. Here at PASSAGES, Inc. we do the best we can to educate these prisoners and other parents. The rest is up to them. As for me, I just can't find a way to stay out of jail.

## Sexual Violence and the LGBTQ Community



In July, we welcomed two new volunteers, Alaina Shaffer and Laura Ruane. Not long after, Alaina joined our team as our new Prevention Educator for the Clearfield/Jefferson County region.

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*“...Individuals of the LGBTQ community are at a higher risk to be assaulted by a stranger.”*

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By Paige Weber, PASSAGES, Inc. Summer Intern

Sexual violence does not discriminate. It can happen to anyone regardless of their age, appearance, class, gender, race, or sexual orientation. Members of the LGBTQ community are subject to the same sexual violence as the general populations; however, there are different factors and concerns that are unique for the experiences of the LGBTQ community when it comes to sexual violence. The general population is at more risk to be assaulted by someone they know than by a stranger. Statistics put out by the National Sexual Violence Research Center (NSVRC) state that in eight out of ten rape cases the victim knew the perpetrator, but individuals of the LGBTQ community are at a higher risk to be assaulted by a stranger. The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence points out that perpetrators use sexual violence as a way to punish or humiliate someone for being LGBTQ. Another situation that is common is when a perpetrator be-

lieves that they can change a woman's sexual orientation and target lesbian women or bisexual women.

A 2017 statistic by the NSVRC states that in the United States one in three women and one in six men have experienced some form of sexual violence in their life. Many researchers believe that these numbers are actually low because not everyone discloses that they were assaulted. There are many reasons as to why survivors do not disclose. Some are afraid because they feel that others will blame them or not believe them. It could also be that they knew their attacker and are afraid of the confrontation or just want to forget about the situation. Members of the LGBTQ community have these fears and more. Individuals in the LGBTQ community stated that their fears revolve around not being taken seriously and not having their experience labeled as sexual assault or rape. They also feel that they have to explain the situations in more detail than a survivor that

was not part of the LGBTQ community and that they are exposed to homophobic responses from the criminal justice system.

Most people feel very alone after they are assaulted. They feel attacked and judged by others and as if no one believes them. These feelings are even worse for individuals in the LGBTQ community. Many of them already feel isolated from others or have unsupportive friends and family. Feelings of self-blame can increase. Sexual violence can make LGBTQ survivors feel that they are being punished for who they are or that they are different or wrong for who they are. It is important that we help all survivors feel that they are believed, they are not alone, and this is not their fault, regardless of how they identify.

## #EndSextortionPA

By Tia DeShong, PASSAGES, Inc. Volunteer Coordinator and Community Outreach Advocate

While sexual extortion, or “Sextortion,” is not a new crime, the advent of digital technology and the popularity of social media has made it easier than ever for people to force others into sexual acts.

Sextortion can manifest in multiple ways; a landlord may withhold housing or threaten eviction if their tenant does not submit to providing sexual photos. A mental health provider may threaten to falsify file information if the patient refuses their advances. Recently, in Bedford County, PA, former district attorney Bill Higgins was charged with obstruction of justice, official oppression by denying rights, reckless endangerment of another person, and intimidating a witness after allegations surfaced that he sought lighter sentences for female defendants who had sex with him. All of these cases represent a situation in which a power dynamic has been exploited for sexual gain. We also see sextortion in so-called “revenge porn cases.” In

these cases, a former-intimate partner will threaten to share previously-consensual intimate photos or texts as a method of coercion. Often, victims feel powerless in these cases, as the images were once freely-given. In all cases of sextortion, a victim is caught in a dire catch-22; they either submit to the sexual act or face a loss of reputation, service, or other thing of value.

While sextortion is considered a crime in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, California, Texas, and Utah, Pennsylvania currently has no law officially criminalizing sextortion and the existing laws we have against sexual violence are often unable to address the nuances of these cases in the modern, digital age. These loopholes and lapses often allow perpetrators to go unpunished or escape with light sentences. Not only does this make us all more vulnerable to victimization, it also prohibits victims from getting the justice they deserve.

In light of these legal loopholes, PASSAGES,

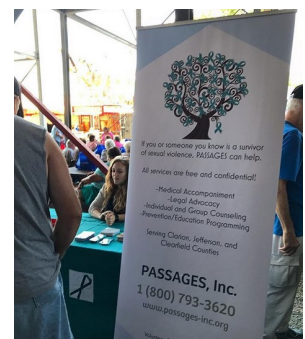
Inc., the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, and the Office of Victim Advocate, and the District Attorney’s Association all support a bipartisan measure introduced by Senators Judy Schwank (D-Berks) and Randy Vulakovich (R-Allegheny) that would criminalize acts of sextortion and establish penalties that would match the severity of this crime. This legislation, Senate Bill 1134, was formally introduced in April and unanimously approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee to move out of committee and into full senate consideration in early June. Please join us in urging our local representations to #EndSextortionPA and support SB 1134.

If you or someone you know believes you have been the victim of sextortion, but don’t know where to begin, PASSAGES can help. Call our 24-hour toll free hotline: 1800-793-3620. PASSAGES, Inc. – Prevention And Services for Sexual Assault through Guidance, Empowerment, and Support.

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Our summer intern, Paige Weber, helped provide information about elder abuse during the Jefferson County Area Agency on Aging’s 2018 Senior Picnic at the Jefferson County fairgrounds in July 2018.



**Comedy For A Cause**  
**8th Annual Funny Fundraiser!**  
 Proceeds Benefit **PASSAGES, Inc.**  
 Prevention And Service for Sexual Assault through Guidance, Empowerment, and Support

**Saturday, September 8**  
 Doors: 6:00pm • Dinner 6:30pm • Show: 8:00pm

**Headliner**  
  
**John Knight**  
 Seen On Showtime!

**Feature**  
  
**Helene Angley**  
 Seen On "Gotham Live"

**Host**  
  
**David Kaye**  
 Seen On Comedy Central!

**Purchase Tickets at**  
**PASSAGES, Inc. Locations**

**Park Inn by Radisson** 18 Western Ave Suite E  
 45 Holiday Drive Clarion, PA 16214  
**Brookville**  
 814-849-5303

**\$30<sup>00</sup> Donation** 415a Wood Street  
 Includes Dinner, Dessert & Refreshments  
 Cash Bar  
**Clarion**  
 814-226-7273

Gift Basket Auction • 50/50 Raffle  
 Company Table Sponsorship Available  
 90 Beaver Drive Ste 212D  
**DuBois**  
 814-371-9677

**Tickets Online:**  
**www.slapstickproductions.com**

If you or someone you know needs to  
 speak with a counselor,  
 we are available 24/7.  
 Call us toll-free at:  
 1-800-793-3620



**Community Partner**  
**Event Sponsorship Form**



**PASSAGES, Inc. Presents "Comedy for a Cause"**  
 An Evening of Comedy, Magic, Dinner, and Raffles  
 September 8, 2018 at the Park Inn by Radisson

**Gold Table Sponsorship - \$500**

- Advertisement in Event Program
- Table Sponsorship
- Visual and verbal recognition at the event
- Recognition on the PASSAGES website & social media outlets
- Reserved Premium seating for 8
- Can place business promotional items at event tables

**Silver Table Sponsorship - \$350**

- Advertisement in Event Program
- Table Sponsorship
- Visual and verbal recognition at the event & social media outlets
- Recognition on the PASSAGES website & social media outlets
- Reserved seating for 8

**Teal Sponsorship - \$100**

- Recognition in the Event Program
- 2 Individual tickets

**Gift Basket Donation**

- Recognition at the Event Program Raffle Tables
- Recognition on the PASSAGES website & social media outlets

**Monetary Donation - \$**

- Recognition on the PASSAGES website & social media outlets or can be Anonymous

Sponsorship must be received by **Aug 31, 2018**

Please consider supporting PASSAGES, Inc. for the **8th Annual Comedy Club Fundraiser** to be held on Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at the Clarion Park Inn by the Radisson. This is our yearly fundraiser and the need for community support is vital to the future of our organization. The net proceeds from all donations for this event will support the daily operations of PASSAGES, Inc.

**Individual Tickets \$30**

- Includes GREAT NIGHT of COMEDY, Lasagna Dinner, Desserts, and Non-alcoholic Drinks

**PASSAGES, INC.**  
 A Non-Profit Organization

Provides free and confidential services to any person in need of assistance as a result of sexual violence

**Individual Services:**

- Individual supportive counseling
  - Medical Advocacy
  - Legal Advocacy
- Community Services:**
- 24 hour crisis hotline in Clarion, Jefferson and Clearfield Counties
  - Group counseling for sexual assault victims
  - Recruitment and training of Sexual Assault Counselors
  - Sexual Violence prevention presentations
  - Referral Service

**Educational Services:**

- Respect for boundaries (Safe/Unsafe Touch)
- Bullying/Harassment Awareness
- Internet Safety
- Sexual Violence: 101
- Date/Acquaintance Rape
- Dangers of Sexting
- Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault
- We can tailor to your specific needs

**Professional Services:**

- Technical assistance regarding sexual violence issues
- In-service training
- Child Abuse/Mandated Reporter training

Join us for our 2018  
 Funny Fundraiser—  
 Comedy for a Cause on  
 Saturday, September 8!  
 Is your business  
 interested in helping to  
 sponsor our event?  
 Please submit a  
 sponsorship letter to one  
 of our offices!

PASSAGES, Inc. Serving Clarion, Clearfield, & Jefferson Counties

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Recognition Listing \_\_\_\_\_

(how you would like your name/company's name to appear on materials)

**Sponsorship Level:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 Gold Table Sponsorship \_\_\_\_\_ \$350 Silver Table Sponsorship \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Teal Sponsorship  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ Monetary Donation \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Individual Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ Total Value of Gift Basket

Total \$ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to PASSAGES, Inc.  
 Mail to: PASSAGES, Inc. 415A Wood Street Clarion PA 16214  
 Questions? Call 1(800)793-3620

PASSAGES, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Funded in part by the United Way of Clarion County, Dubois United Way, VOCA, and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.