

# SARA

The Sexual Assault Resource Agency  
VOICES OF HOPE AND HEALING

SARA's mission is to eliminate sexual violence and its impact by providing education, advocacy, and support to women, men, and children. We serve residents of Charlottesville, and Albemarle, Nelson, Louisa, Fluvanna, and Greene Counties who have experienced any kind of sexual assault, abuse, harassment, or stalking. SARA also offers educational and prevention programming to engage people in the effort to create a community free of sexual violence.

Fall 2011

## Announcing the recipient of the **2011** **Annette DeGregoria Grimm Award**

### **Pat Cheeks**

Please join us to honor her at the  
**Annual SARA  
Award Celebration**



**Thursday  
November 17**

7:30 am – 9:30 am  
in the  
Abbott Dining Room  
at the  
University of Virginia  
Darden School of Business

**SARA**  
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We are **building** a community . . .  
free from sexual violence.

Pat Cheeks started volunteering with SARA in 1981, when it was still known as the Charlottesville Rape Crisis Group. Then a student, she remained involved with SARA for over twenty years, along the way becoming a



board certified, Psychiatric/Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist. For all her work for SARA and survivors of sexual assault, she will be honored on November 17th as the recipient of the annual Annette DeGregoria Grimm Award for extraordinary contributions to the elimination of sexual violence.

"The programs that moved SARA into becoming one of the largest and most effective organizations in the state were largely due to her active involvement," says the woman for whom the award is named, Annette Grimm, former executive director of SARA. "Her knowledge and expertise concerning issues surrounding sexual violence defined all of SARA's programs. If there is anyone who

should be credited for SARA's success as an agency from its inception as CRCG, it would be Pat."

As a volunteer, Pat responded to hotline calls, assisted victims in the emergency room and through the court process, offered support for women referred by local physicians, and started SARA's first sexual assault support group. Pat served as president of the SARA Board, supervised staff, provided training for new volunteers, and was an advocate and guest speaker locally and on state and national levels. As SARA expanded, she was a critical resource for staff, volunteers, and Board members, helping to guide the direction of SARA's programs. Married and mother of two adult children, Pat is currently living in the Shenandoah Valley running her own life transitions practice called "Natural Transitions." She will be honored at the Annual SARA Award Celebration on November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia. Tickets available at [www.saracville.org](http://www.saracville.org) or by calling 434-295-7273, ext. 20.

## Upcoming Events:

October TBD • Faith Community Forum

November 17 • Annual Award Celebration

February 11 • Barnes & Noble Book Fair

March TBD • SARA Art Sale

Art submission guidelines at  
[saracville.org/blog](http://saracville.org/blog).

April 14 • SARA Three-for-All

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## The Active Bystander Pledge

SARA invites all community members to take this pledge:

*Because I know sexual assault, abuse, and stalking will impact the lives of those I love and the lives of those others love, and;*

*because I know reducing the number of victims requires a broad social change, and;*

*because I know I am a part of establishing what is acceptable in our community, and;*

*because I know others will observe my choices and follow my lead,*

I pledge to:

- *Believe and support children, men, and women who have experienced any form of assault or abuse.*
- *Find a way to intervene in any situation that feels potentially high-risk for assault or abuse.*
- *Regularly and visibly endorse the values of safety, victim support and intolerance of all forms of violence.*
- *Change anything I may be doing that contributes to sexual assault, abuse, or stalking violence.*
- *Support and encourage the adults in my life to take responsibility for ending all forms of assault or abuse.*

**Sign the pledge at**

**[www.saracville.org/pledge](http://www.saracville.org/pledge). Our goal is**

**50,000 signatures!**

## Offensive Classroom Behavior?

While you're teaching, so much is happening you're not always in the ideal frame of mind to deal with a student who makes a sexually offensive gesture or remark. But if you've planned your response ahead of time, you can intervene effectively.

It is tempting to let a brief infraction slide, because it's over now and the target most likely isn't speaking up. However, behaviors like this are an opportunity for students to see what they can or can't get away with.

First, you have to know your school policy. For instance, the section in the Charlottesville City Schools Code of Student Conduct outlines this type of Sexual Offense:

*"Any unwelcome communication that is sexually suggestive, sexually degrading or implies sexual motive or intentions, such as sexual remarks, or innuendoes about an individual's clothing, appearance or activities; sexual jokes; sexual gestures; public conversations about sexual exploits; sexual rumors and rating lists; hawking, catcalls, and whistles; sexually graphic computer files, messages or games, etc."*

So if a sexual gesture or remark is considered a serious offense, how do you respond? First, find a way to check in with the target of the behavior. As soon as you know he or she's stable enough that you can check in again later, you should immediately respond to the offender. Many educators will be tempted to get into a conversation with the offending student, which is appropriate in other situations; in this case a serious infraction has occurred, and the school administrators need to handle the situation right away. Pause the class activity just long enough to call the office, write up a referral slip, and send the student straight to the office.

The most important thing is to not ignore this behavior. In climates where small offenses are permitted, the larger offenses can flourish, and victims feel helpless. It's a great idea to follow up with your administrator. Part of the plan for the offending student might include steps that you can take in the classroom to keep him/her on track. Finally, if you're dealing with a proliferation of such offenses, call SARA. We have staff devoted to preventing sexual offenses among youth, and will support you as you establish a safe environment in your classroom.

## Highlights from Fiscal Year 2011 (July 2010-June 2011)

- 545 advocacy, therapy, and crisis services clients served
- 1,037 children and adolescents participated in prevention programs
- 833 allied professionals and 107 educators trained
- 3,000 community members reached through outreach activities

*The first time I came here I was nervous, but instantly I was welcomed and felt safe. This has been one of the best things I have done for myself.*

The staff at SARA provided advocacy and therapy services to 276 clients this year (64 children and 212 adults). 24% of our clients (66) received therapy from a licensed clinical social worker, or a therapist under her supervision. We answered 351 hotline calls from 296 callers. We ran four support groups, including our therapeutic horseback riding program for girls. We continued to see an increase in the number of men and boys seeking services. We also added a bilingual therapist to our team.

SARA not only increased the number of students it served versus fiscal year 2010, it increased the number of contact hours with students. 1,037 students in grades three through nine in seven local schools participated in our multi-session prevention programs. Each student attended 4-9 sessions depending on grade level. Preliminary reports are very promising. For example, middle school students answered questions about consent 38% correctly on the pre-test, and 63% correctly on the post-test. Thanks to the generous supporters of our successful Campaign for Prevention, we will continue these programs in the 2011-12 school year.

*I want every one to be respected and feel safe at our school.*

SARA's prevention educators also trained teachers and other staff. A district-wide training that was open to teachers from all Charlottesville schools showed great results. Knowledge of risk and protective factors increased from 24% to 100%. Knowledge of prevention strategies increased from 47% to 89%. Teachers' willingness to intervene increased from 76% to 100%.

**Dear SARA,**

**I am a parent of a pre-teen, and I realize he's beginning to wonder about sexual things much more these days. How do I offer guidance and support, without encouraging risk-taking?**

Your son is fortunate to have a supportive parent like you. He can really benefit from you just being real with him. More parent-teen communication about sex leads to delayed and safer sexual behavior. Amidst all the parenting advice floating around, I encourage you to try this one thing: Commit to posing an OPEN question to your pre-teen by the end of the day tomorrow to learn more about what he's thinking about dating, hooking up, etc.

You could ask about a movie he saw recently – maybe you saw it with him. It could be that you want to find out more about the friend he was talking to after practice. You could mention this article, and ask what's on his mind. You could ask if he'd like to have his friends over this weekend (under your supervision!), and find out more about his friends. The key is to be open, to show him that you are truly interested in his life and what he's thinking.

Don't be afraid to let the conversation become a dialogue about sex. If you shut the door on that topic, it will be far more difficult to open it again later, and he'll get his sexual advice from peers and other confusing sources. Push through the discomfort, and be honest with your child that won't make questions about sex taboo. Try not to dominate the conversation. Don't beat around the bush—they'll just leave the conversation confused. This is especially difficult for us as adults, because we really don't want to actually talk about sex. But, for your child's sake, just be direct and specific—he needs to know exactly what you mean by what you say.

Make it an on-going dialogue about dating and sexuality, not just a one-time 'sex talk'. Once you've opened the door, it will get easier and easier to talk about. If your children know they can come to you with questions, they will!