

## Sexual Assault Awareness Month Events

### 19th Annual SARA Vigil

April 11. 2-4pm, Sojourners United Church of Christ, Charlottesville. The vigil is a safe space for survivors to share stories and support others in their journey. All are welcome.

### Walk-A-Mile In Her Shoes

April 18. The men's march to stop sexual assault. Lee Park, downtown Charlottesville. 1pm Sign in. 1:30pm Kick-off. 2:00pm After-walk reception. Register in advance and learn more at [www.SARAcville.org/walk10.htm](http://www.SARAcville.org/walk10.htm). Why walk? Because we are *all* affected by sexual assault.

### Denim Day

April 22. Denim Day has been internationally celebrated since 1999 in protest of an Italian High Court ruling that overturned a rape conviction because the victim was wearing jeans. Enraged by the verdict, women of the Italian Legislature protested the decision by wearing jeans to work. In collaboration with Women's Health Virginia and Jean Theory, SARA is celebrating Denim Day by encouraging you to wear jeans to work on April 22 and to help shatter myths about rape and rape victims. Jean Theory is supporting our efforts by distributing myths and facts cards with every item they sell in April. **Jean Theory is also donating 10% of sales to SARA** the week of April 18-24. Stop by Jean Theory to get the facts!

### Joint Open House for SARA/Foothills Child Advocacy Center/Children Youth and Family Services VOCA Program

April 26. 4-6pm. 1013 Little High Street, Charlottesville. Please join SARA and our community partners for a joint open house. Stop by each of our offices (right next to each other!) to learn more about our programs and how we work together to serve our community. Staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions, including our new director and counselor.

### Brown Bag Lunch Series

April 1, April 7, April 14, April 21, April 28. 12:30pm, Albemarle County 5th Street Office Building, Room B. Bring your lunch and join SARA and guest speakers during April for discussions on the following topics:

- Changes in Protective Order Legislation: What Does it Mean for Your Clients?
- They're Coming: Sexual Assault Response Team Protocols and What They Mean for Our Communities
- Vicarious Trauma, Boundaries, and Self-Care: Taking care of ourselves while serving survivors
- The Invisible Victims: Male Survivors of Sexual Violence
- Cultural Competency: What does it mean and how do we develop it within our agencies?

**For more information about topics and speakers, please visit [www.saracville.org](http://www.saracville.org).**

## Sexual Assault Response Team Update

For several months, SARA has been collaborating with Charlottesville and Albemarle law enforcement, Commonwealth Attorneys, Victim/Witness Programs, the Forensic Nurse Examiner program at UVA hospital, and other interested stakeholders to create a Charlottesville/Albemarle Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and SART protocol.

SART teams are established to:

- Meet the needs of the victim with crisis intervention and support services.
- Provide a medical exam for sexual assault victims.
- Provide a joint, effective, sensitive approach to victims of sexual assault.
- Conduct an investigation of the crime.
- Document and preserve forensic evidence for potential prosecution.

What do we expect to come out of this collaboration? In addition to improved prosecution of sex crimes, we expect to see all victims offered appropriate and culturally competent crisis intervention, health care services, medical and legal accompaniment, and advocacy services without delay and without regard to victim location, status, race, age, language, or other factor. All victims will be treated with compassion, sensitivity, and confidentiality. Forensic evidence will be documented and preserved for potential prosecution whenever possible, consistent with victim wishes.

**After months of great team work, the Charlottesville/Albemarle SART protocol is scheduled to be in place this July!** SARTs for Nelson, Louisa, Greene, and Fluvanna Counties are coming soon too!

## New Staff at SARA

If you come to our **open house on April 26**, you will have the chance to meet two new SARA staff members: our new executive director, Margaret Mikkelsen, and our new counselor, Sarah Lewis.

Margaret joined SARA in January with a background in non-profit management, most recently at [Avaaz.org](http://Avaaz.org) and Students Active for Ending Rape (SAFER). She has spent her career working for organizations committed to social justice. She received a master's degree in public policy and management from the University of York, a master's degree in political science from The Johns Hopkins University, and a bachelor's degree from Amherst College.

Michelle Thompson, our former counselor, is off to Belize as a member of the Peace Corps. Our new counselor, Sarah Lewis, has been a licensed clinical social worker for ten years. Formerly on staff at The Collins Center in Harrisonburg, she brings a wealth of experience treating men, women, and children who have experienced trauma. She is a panelist for the VA Department of Health's Stop It Now program and a graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College and Virginia Commonwealth University.