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THE CASKET

Take Back the Night



StFX Take Back the Night co-ordinators Nancy Forestell, department of history and women's and gender studies at StFX and Molly Peters and Annie Chau, of Responding to and Preventing Sexual Violence Project - Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, are planning this year's activities which take place Sept. 25.

PHOTO: Emily Hiltz

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An annual march raising awareness around sexual violence is happening this week. The Take Back the Night march has been taking place at StFX for the last few years but the worldwide event has a much longer history, going back over two decades.

"We're just continuing on and making sure that this annual event is relevant with people who can share interesting stories or insights into the issues," Annie Chau, one of the co-ordinators with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre said.

"For me, I suppose in a way, it's the first event in the fall, when people are back from summer that really sets the year off to address this issue."

The march will take place Sept. 25 beginning with poster making at Bloomfield Centre, on StFX's campus. After that, speeches will take place on the StFX library steps.

"We'll have a few speakers, talk about the issues and we'll sort of get geared up and energized for the march which will probably start around 7 p.m.," Chau said.

The march will take place off campus onto West Street, Main Street, back up Church Street and then back to campus. People are encouraged to bring noise makers for the march. Chau said the event aims to break the silence.

"You're encouraged to chant and be loud and to talk about these issues," Chau said. "For me it's a really energizing event, for someone who works on this issue every day, to see people getting excited and loud about it."

Chau said it's sometimes surprising how energized people get after the march.

"A lot of the violence prevention events or workshops or education things that people go to or participate in, people don't necessarily leave feeling energized to take action," Chau said. "I think why this event is so important and powerful is that, yes, we are learning about the issues and raising awareness about the issues generally and that can be quite somber but it's also a way for people to take action."

Although the event begins and ends at StFX, Chau said the march is for everyone. She noted the Take Back the Night event is similar to a project focused around sexual violence prevention she is working on with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre in Paqtnekek.

"We're hoping to get some folks from there to come and join us in the march," Chau said.

"While it starts at the university, we really march through the town and we want other people to be involved in it - allies and survivors and victim and allies of those survivors are victims are more than welcome to come and make some noise with us."