

Men's Respect for Women March draws large crowd

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A great turnout from StFX students, faculty and athletes helped to lead the fifth annual Men's Respect for Women March down Main Street from Chisholm Park to Columbus Field Sunday afternoon.

Organized by Msgr. Hugh MacPherson Knights of Columbus Council in St. Andrews, with assistance from the St. Ninian Council in Antigonish, the goal of the event is to bring a focus to the issue of violence against women.

While the event raises proceeds to give to the Naomi Society, Henry van de Wiel said the main focus is for men in the community to stand up for the cause.

"We were very pleased with the support that Kent MacDonald and the university community gave the cause," van de Wiel said. "That's really the demographic that this is aimed at."

Following the march, former StFX English professor Jim Taylor delivered a keynote address to participants at Columbus Field. van de Wiel said the conclusion of Taylor's address stood

out for him and brought home the point well.

Taylor asked people to imagine if an artist at the stature of the great renaissance painters was commissioned to create

a painting entitled, 'violence against women.'

Taylor described what the painting would look like, adding in the painting there would be a castle with 13 gargoyles.

"In the end the person was speaking with the artist and couldn't figure out what the gargoyles were representing ... then he [the artist] said those were the 13 dental students from Dalhousie," van de Wiel said. "To me, that really pointed out the importance of treating women with dignity, instead of the way they did it."

Taylor's address also focused on the importance of language, how it is communicated and can be related to discrimination.

"There was a time that I was scornful of political correctness and the demands for gender awareness," Taylor said, noting he didn't understand why it mattered if mankind was used instead of humankind.

"My view today is very different," he said.

Taylor talked about the importance of people of all ages becoming engaged with these issues, noting it requires courage.

"Something must be done to address the problem of violence against women," Taylor said.



Tracy, Adam, Luke and Mark van de Wiel were among those who took part in the annual Men's Respect for Women March Sunday afternoon. PHOTO: Emily Hiltz

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