

# NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
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## Highlights From The “What Were You Wearing?” Survivor Art Installation Opening Reception

*a month of activities and events addressing this important issue*

(INDIANAPOLIS, IN – April 5, 2018) – The opening reception that took place this week kicking-off the 22 day “What Were You Wearing?” Survivor Art Installation for Sexual Assault Awareness Month was poignant and moving. The Installation is open to the public and available for viewing through April 25<sup>th</sup>. Hosted on the **University of Indianapolis** campus in collaboration with **Beacon of Hope Crisis Center**.

Here are some words from key voices during the reception. University of Indianapolis President, Rob Manuel, stressed the importance of events on campus this month. “It’s so important that we have a higher calling of attention during this Sexual Assault Awareness Month and that we also recognize that sexual assault is a year-round societal concern.”

Anne Moelk, Title IX Coordinator, expressed that it’s time to end “victim-blaming.” “This installation and many of our other events throughout the month will continue to stress consent. It is extremely important to understand how crucial it is to give or receive consent for sexual activity.”

Sandra Ziebold, Beacon of Hope Crisis Center CEO, talked about the importance of these types of events. She said, “Although sexual assaults occur every 98 seconds in America, only 1 in 3 sexual assaults are reported. We should be asking “What can I do to help?” not “What were you wearing?” The point of this art installation is to help eliminate the notion that a victim is in any way responsible for their attack. Removing blame and shame from the dialogue will empower victims to report and heal.”

Survivor stories and what they were wearing when sexually assaulted are surrounded with content warnings and a call to end victim blaming. You will find these moving stories displayed in the Schwitzer Center, located at 1400 Campus Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46227 and a few more are in the Health Pavilion. In attendance at the opening reception was Caroline Fisher, Center of Hope Coordinator, Franciscan St. Francis Health. “I love that part of the art installation is featured in the Health Pavilion since sexual assault is a *huge health issue* and we don’t often think of it as a health issue,” said Caroline.

The inspirational poem behind this art installation, written by Dr. Mary Simmerling entitled What I Was Wearing is on display. The University of Indianapolis and Beacon of Hope Crisis Center are fortunate to present this recreation with permission from the original creators.

This installation provides a tangible response to one of our culture’s most pervasive

sexual assault myths. Outfits featured have been recreated from the stories of Student-Survivors. The stories utilized were donated by survivors and are used with their consent. Beacon of Hope Crisis Center will be available throughout the installation for awareness, prevention, education, advocacy services and referrals.

The reaction this week has been very positive. "Some participants have taken multiple ribbons to share with friends and spread awareness. Many are initially hesitant to ask questions because they are concerned about being politically correct. Encouraging students to ask those questions has started several productive conversations. Questions regarding sexual assault and how it affects people of all genders has been a common theme. They appreciate the effort to change the focus onto those who caused harm. Several have shared their personal stories confidentially and are seeking help. As an advocate I'm honored to be able to serve in this capacity." Savannah Tipton, Victim Advocate, Beacon of Hope Crisis Center.

The University of Indianapolis Title IX Campus Services and Beacon of Hope Crisis Center are collaborating to provide advanced advocacy for victims of crime. They both share an interest in and are providing preventative and supportive services to those impacted by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault regardless of gender, race, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, etc. This collaboration increases access to services and improves awareness in the community.

Read more about [UIndy's Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Policies](#).

Read more about upcoming UIndy and Beacon of Hope Crisis Center events during this April #SAAM18: <https://events.uindy.edu/event/sexual-assault-awareness-month/>

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About Beacon of Hope Crisis Center

Beacon of Hope Crisis Center a Christ-centered organization empowering victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to become self-sufficient by providing safety, support and education. Serving Central Indiana since 2009. Beacon of Hope, through its Crisis Intervention, Victim Advocacy, Counseling, "Teen Talk" Outreach and Education, Criminal Justice, Economic Sustainability and Foster Pet Programs offers victims of domestic violence and sexual assault free assistance in overcoming barriers that hold them in abusive situations. Beacon of Hope is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization located in Indianapolis, Indiana. More information about Beacon of Hope can be found at <http://beaconofhopeindy.org>.

About University of Indianapolis

The University of Indianapolis, which was founded in 1902, is closely tied to its surrounding University Heights neighborhood. Opening its doors in 1905 when the first building, now called Good Hall, was completed, from its beginning, the University has been coeducational and open to all races. The University's mission is to prepare its graduates for effective, responsible, and articulate membership in the complex societies in which they live and serve, and for excellence and leadership in their personal and professional lives. The University equips its students to become more capable in thought, judgment, communication, and action; to enhance their imaginations and creative talents; to gain a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Christian faith and an appreciation and respect for other religions; to cultivate rationality and tolerance for ambiguity; and to use their intellect in the process of discovery and synthesis of knowledge. For more information about the University of Indianapolis can be found at <https://uindy.edu>.

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