

Partner Profiles



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Editor's Note: This article is part of an ongoing series that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area (UWTVA) and its funded Partners. To learn more about how you can give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, or to view the article archive, visit www.uwtva.org. To contact staff, call (207) 778-5048 or e-mail info@uwtva.org.

SAVES helps students with school-based services

An outgoing student who suddenly withdraws from peers and classroom activities . . . A young woman seeking support from the trauma that is taking its toll after years of family sexual violence . . . These are just two of the many students whose lives are touched by the caring staff of the school-based program the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area funds via Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services' (SAVES) school-based program. This program has two goals: 1) to reduce the vulnerability of young people to sexual coercion and violence, and 2) to reduce the personal and social trauma of sexual violence for students who have been victims of sexual abuse, harassment or assault.

The school-based intervention and prevention program is a natural extension of SAVES' mission to provide services to victims and to work towards the eradication of sexual violence. These services are available to students in Franklin County's four high schools: Mt. Blue, Mt. Abram, Rangeley Lakes Regional School, and Jay. Services include drop-in office hours for students, teacher/administration consultation services, support groups and prevention education programs. The school-based program is staffed by a veteran SAVES advocate who travels on a set schedule to these individual schools, averaging one day a week. The advocate works one-on-one with students who are victims of sexual abuse, harassment or assault. Referrals are made by parents, teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, administration and students themselves.

Some students seek one-on-one services following contact with SAVES' Rape Crisis Helpline, many others first become acquainted with these valuable services through the classroom prevention education presentations. These classroom presentations include topics as diverse as law, gender issues, healthy relationships and parenting. New opportunities are continually being developed, including community service opportunities peer education, facilitated by support group members. The school-based advocate co-facilitates the support groups at Mt. Blue and Mt. Abram High Schools. The groups enable the participants to have a better understanding of their reactions to past trauma, to improve their ability to cope successfully with personal, social and school demands and to reduce the risk of being a victim of sexual violence again.

The school-based program serves students without restrictions based on age, gender, race, disability or sexual orientation. If you would like to know more about the school-based programs offered by SAVES, or the organization's other services, please contact 778-9522. If you need help in a crisis, please call SAVES' 24-hour helpline at 1-800-871-7741. Cell phone users dial 1-866-740-9516.