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# Sexual Assault Walk Raises Awareness - Jo... text size A A A



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An annual event shines the light on a problem that is often in the shadows. People are taking steps to end sexual violence and make others aware of this serious problem.

About 400 people came to Metrocenter Saturday morning. They came to walk, raise money, and make a difference.

The "Walk in Their Shoes" event is personal for Taylor Walker. In February 2012 Walker says she was raped inside a Vanderbilt parking garage. The experience changed her life, and now she's very involved with Nashville's Sexual Assault Center. "It really opened my eyes that there are other survivors. There are other people like me," says Taylor Walker.

Advocates say many victims suffer in silence. There are several t-shirts that hang on a clothesline, representing people who've survived sexual abuse and violence. This walk helps raise awareness. "The important piece here is we want the community talking about this issue. It is sort of hush hush at this point, and to start making a change, people have to talk about it," says Dede Bearden with the Sexual Assault Center.

Saturday's walk includes survivors, friends, and family members. Not every victim is a woman. Brett Pack was abused as a child. "I am a survivor, and I want to get more involved in the community and have more of a voice for the children," says Pack.

Organizers hope this walk helps others take the important step of reporting a crime, and asking for help. "I really advocate getting counseling and therapy to have a support system behind you," says Walker.

Taylor Walker says she's not a victim, she's a survivor. Walker is committed to ending sexual violence. "It's a very common thing and we can change it. It just takes a lot of people and a lot of attention," says Walker.

Taylor Walker speaks publicly about her experience to help others. The man charged with raping her, Tyrone Batts, is scheduled for trial this summer.

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