

“Coaching Boys Into Men” or Men Can Stop Rape Catholic Charities Phoenix House

Organization Description/Mission: We are an agency that provides shelter and services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Project Contact:

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Project Details:

Coaching Boys Into Men:

“Coaching Boys Into Men” (more info can be found at www.endabuse.org) is a national initiative aimed at decreasing violence against women. This is, of course, in line with our mandate. Their audience is one that we have traditionally struggled with gaining entry to.

Athletics is an important aspect of American life. Young people learn a variety of life lessons that influence how they see themselves, teamwork, fair play and determination. Athletes learn about strategy and focus as well as responsibility to their team or their school.

This project would involve talking to coaches about how to use their role of mentor to deliberately make change and explaining the “Coaching Boys Into Men” program and how they can implement with their team.

“Every coach is in a position that allows him to directly influence the attitudes of his athletes and to help eliminate the disrespectful perceptions of women and girls.”
(quoted directly from CBIM promotional material)

Men Can Stop Rape:

“My strength is not for hurting” is the tag line for Men Can Stop Rape – a national campaign that describes itself as a way to:

“Mobilize male youth to prevent men’s violence against women. We build young men’s capacity to challenge harmful aspects of traditional masculinity, to value alternative visions of male strength and to embrace their vital role as allies with women and girls in fostering healthy relationships and gender equity.”

“Coaching Boys Into Men” or Men Can Stop Rape Catholic Charities Phoenix House (Continued)

The Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault has encouraged agencies like us all across Iowa to get involved and find ways to use this amazing advertising campaign in our communities. We have been able to collaborate with athletes at IWCC, distribute t-shirts with the tag line and logo and put some of the posters we have up around Pottawattamie County. Two factors have limited us in our ability to widely distribute these posters and they are connected to each other. The first is time – everyone feels the pinch of too many tasks, too little time. The second however, is the campaign title itself. There are people that are uncomfortable using the word rape. We *should* be uncomfortable with rape – the idea of it – and actively work against ideas and beliefs that increase rape victims. Since it takes time to explain the campaign and address some people’s discomfort it is more than a matter of taking them around and tacking them to bulletin boards. Permission must be given most places to post information.

Dates: Flexible for both projects

Time Commitment:

Coaching Boys Into Men:

Task	Time Estimate
Initial training and strategy session at Phoenix House	3 hrs
Development/organization of plan by group	6 hrs
Gathering of resources and putting together presentations (many things available on the internet)	10 hrs
Contacting athletic directors/coaches	
Letter/mailing	5 hrs
Follow up and scheduling	8 hrs
Presentations	1 hr each plus travel

Men Can Stop Rape:

Task	Time Estimate
Initial training and familiarization with campaign At Phoenix House	2 hrs
Organization of target schools, businesses agencies etc (perhaps splitting by area)	2 hrs
Obtaining permission and distribution of posters	avg 15 min per place

“Coaching Boys Into Men” or Men Can Stop Rape Catholic Charities Phoenix House (Continued)

Benefit to the Community:

Background on both project ideas in general:

I would like to say that there is a reason that both of our project ideas target boys/men. Although we hired our first male staff as an AmeriCorps worker this year and currently have two male volunteers that answer our crisis line, we are still primarily an agency staffed by women. We recognize the need for strong male allies in our community and your organization is coed. It is not always imperative for men to be the only ones speaking to men, in fact the idea of female/male co-facilitators for the coaches trainings may be the way your group decides to organize. But men need to be in on the conversation. For young men there is some instant credibility when older males who have already negotiated the path to manhood speak.

Coaching Boys Into Men:

Our hope is that the information will impact the coaches/athletic directors both personally and professionally. Many of them will be fathers, grandfathers and uncles – of girls and boys – so the information may be used or passed on at home. Of course our primary goal is for them to really ‘buy in’ and create an environment with their sports teams that actively discourages disrespectful language and behavior towards women and girls.

We all know coaches that have been around for years, many coaching sibling sets and even different generations. Think of the ripple effect.

Men Can Stop Rape:

The more that we can create opportunities for young men to think about violence against women and to talk about it, the better chance we have of making change.

The response to the campaign so far has been very positive. When I speak to young men (at whom the ad campaign is primarily aimed), they say that they like the tag line because it states the obvious – that men and women have differences in physical strength, they like the men chosen as models – because they don’t look like “wimps” (I’ve cleaned that up a bit) and because it implies that people have a choice about their behavior. They say that it doesn’t feel ‘preachy’ and addresses situation they might actually find themselves in.

The added benefit is for those people that we end up having conversations with in order to get permission to put up the posters. Even if ultimately they decide not to allow it, we may have planted a seed – for a conversation, a thought or a change an attitude or behavior.