

November 1-7 is  **SAFE**
Teen Personal Safety Awareness Week

**THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR
WOMEN'S SAFETY AWARENESS, INC.**
**(The "NOWSA") announces that November 1-7
has been established as
"Teen Personal Safety Awareness Week" in New York:
"Covers for a Cause" campaign is launched**

We are pleased to announce that the New York State Legislative Body passed a Resolution which memorialized that Governor David A. Paterson has proclaimed November 1-7 as "**TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK**" in the State of New York. The National Organization for Women's Safety Awareness (The NOWSA), a §501(c)(3) not for profit charity, has worked with volunteers, local organizations and elected officials diligently to accomplish this goal.

This undertaking was the first phase of a larger safety initiative and community education movement started by the NOWSA, an organization that was established to fulfill a fundamental need in our country to provide more information, awareness, and knowledge about women's safety issues and to help prevent crime and violence against women of all ages. The second component of this advancement is the implementation of the safety awareness campaign known as "**COVERS FOR A CAUSE**" that will be directed at teens in Middle and High Schools in New York State and throughout the United States.

"**COVERS FOR A CAUSE**" is a personal safety awareness campaign which combines youthful contemporary art and cartoons with relevant safety tips, reminders, information and messages on visually appealing book covers. The campaign will 1.) raise awareness about the crimes that are committed against our teens which tragically can lead to injury or even death and 2.) educate teens on how to prevent them.

The objective of "**TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK**" is to encourage every school district in New York to incorporate personal

safety education and awareness into the curriculum, particularly during this special week, so that violence and crime against teens and women are decreased.

“TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK” will act as a catalyst for local teen personal safety awareness activities and events, which will reach millions of teens and families in New York and ultimately throughout the United States. The initiative will also encourage local organizations to work together in youth crime prevention projects. The campaign will seek to generate substantial media and internet coverage and the creation of public service television and radio announcements that will disseminate practical teen safety advice. Alliances will be formed with other non-profit organizations and municipalities.

In the weeks following the establishment of **“TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK”** in New York, the NOWSA will present news, updates, latest resources, research, and suggestions that will help assist individuals and organizations in making **“TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK”** a success.

Parents, teachers, legislators, elected officials and all members of the community have a part to play in decreasing crime against teens and women, no matter how large or small. By having teens and educators work directly together, alongside parents and community groups, young people can be saved from serious injury and even death simply by educating and discussing how to prevent incidents from occurring. It is, of course, important to provide a safe environment to all students when they are at school. It may, however, be *even more* important for students to learn how to be safe when they are not on school grounds, in social setting and elsewhere.

The counties outside New York City now account for approximately 56% of the reported crime statewide, as compared to 38% in 1990. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, teens and young adults experience the highest rates of violent crime. In 2006, 42.3% of personal crimes of violence involving strangers involved children between the ages of 12 and 15 and 43.4% of young adults between the ages of 16 to 19. (See Table 29. Personal crimes of violence, 2006: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cvus0602.pdf>.) Many of these incidents and resulting serious injuries and even deaths can be prevented without swaddling our teens in bubble wrap. **“TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK”** will help people understand the real risks to teens and the simple changes they can make to reduce those risks - so that teens can enjoy safer, healthier, and more active lives.

By helping to facilitate students and educators working together – and when educational institutions reach out to local law enforcement and other national and local organizations – our Middle and High schools will be more secure and students will be more informed and safer.

The NOWSA will be offering an “i-Guide” for “**TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK**” which will include program ideas for events throughout the week of November 1-7 and throughout the year. Through supervised school activities, students can develop their knowledge and perceptions of crime and its avoidance. Awareness and not fear will be instilled in students’ minds. For example, students will identify actions and events that relate to youth crime and by working in groups, students can discuss specific crimes that are frequently committed in the area and produce a list of how different individuals and organizations are affected by it, including victims, perpetrators and their relatives, the police, their friends, etc.

Suggested activities include, but not be limited to the following:

- Students and teachers can discuss the thought provoking safety messages contained on the “**COVERS FOR A CAUSE**” book covers in class. The campaign’s strategy will be to influence students’ participation by associating it with the benefits that they value, such as spending time with friends, dating, communicating electronically, having fun, and gaining recognition from peers and adults. In addition, it will offer students something else they value: the opportunity to be a part of something “cool and exciting”. Once the exchange of information is strong and meaningful, it will become a MESSAGE FOR LIFE. By changing attitudes of teens through education, violence against women of all ages will be decreased.
- Students and participating adults can gather in the school auditorium for an assembly where an opening address will be given by the principal or a key visitor, such as an elected official or senior police officer. A safety awareness seminar can be presented.
- Magazine or newspaper articles and headlines can be used to stimulate in school discussions. Pupils will compare their perceptions with local crime statistics.
- Students can work with a crime reporter from the local newspaper to write an article about preventing youth crime.
- Photographs and other safety related materials can be displayed in the school or elsewhere in the local community.
- Schools can create a safety awareness poster competition.
- Students can be shown appropriate videos regarding safety

related topics including peer pressure, truancy, safe dating, theft, bullying, internet safety, drug misuse, etc.

- Students can work with police officers or other safety advocates, using role-play to follow the experience of a young person 1.) being arrested, taken to a police station, questioned and charged with a crime; 2.) who is in an unsafe situation and what can be done to avoid being the victim of a crime.

- Videos and other materials can help students explore facts about drugs and relate them to drug use/misuse. Discussions can include peer influence and the importance of dispelling myths about the effects of taking drugs.

- Focus groups can be formed where students can reflect on specific facts they learned, what skills they developed and how those skills can be applied to real life situations.

After participating in the above activities, students will learn how to, among other things:

- develop an awareness of the causes of crime
- explore legal and human rights
- gain a greater understanding of the importance of respect for others
- investigate crime and its consequences
- demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how they can apply simple principles to their lives which will dramatically decrease their chances of being the victim of a crime
- describe some of the emotional traumas associated with crime
- draw on what they have learned when looking at the social and moral implications of crime and safety
- recognize and challenge stereotypical views of the law agencies
- demonstrate an understanding of the effects of crime on individuals and society
- increase their knowledge and understanding of personal safety issues
- identify the possible outcomes of specific events and how they can apply what they have learned
- identify the relationship between knowledge and understanding and recognize the skills gained as a result of the learning activities
- transfer knowledge, skills and understanding to real life situations

In conclusion, “**TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK**” will help Middle and High school students live safer lives and will, over time, help decrease incidents of violence against women of all ages. Remember that “education leads to prevention”. It’s as simple as that!

Thank you for working together with our communities and our students to make Middle and High schools across the state the safest, and the most proactive and informed in our country. We are grateful for your dedication to the vision of the NOWSA and the objectives of “**TEEN PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK**”. On behalf of the dedicated board and volunteers of the NOWSA, thank you for helping to keep our teens safe, happy, and healthy during the school year and beyond!

Please visit www.TheNOWSA.org for additional information.

With my warmest regards,

Lidia

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