

Sex scandals spark college campus conversation

Meg Wiseman

Staff Reporter

Sexual assault and harassment is making big news in Hollywood, but both can also be found in even the smallest of towns. Students often think they can do whatever they want to once sent off into the college world, but some end up disregarding safety.

According to *Mlive*, 9 out of 15 surveyed universities in Michigan reported multiple cases of rape on campus during 2017.

MSU sophomore Sami Luke is used to hearing about assault on campus.

"It's really unfortunate how many people I know have been sexually assaulted. You don't think that it happens to you until you process it and realize 'oh, actually happened, that was sexual assault,'" Luke, a graduate of Okemos High School, said.

The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network's (RAINN) statistics show that 18 to 24 year-old, college-

aged women are three times more likely to be raped or assaulted than women of other ages. Assault is even more likely to happen to someone who identifies as LGBTQ+ — and it does not just happen to women, either. In early 2016, 16 percent of men attending the University of Vermont reported having been a victim of sexual assault.

From 1998 to early 2017, 17.7 million women have reported being raped, and 2.78 million men were reported victims of rape or assault as of 2017.

Only 3 percent of reported rapists end up being convicted, making sexual assault one of the most under-reported crimes. Generally, assault is left unreported due to the victim feeling scared of the consequences or hesitant due to possible backlash. Some just don't feel it is important enough to even tell anyone about in the first place.

With movements such as #MeToo and 'Time's Up' on the rise; more people are feeling inclined to speak up. Making sure that the victim is always heard can help to decrease the ignorance and false information surrounding rape and assault.

Sexual assault can happen anywhere. It is not just in big cities, on dark street corners, in bars. Our

world is one that houses different types of people, and everyone intermixes in college. For those filling out applications and going out on tours, an important thing to keep in mind are the various ways to stay safe.

RAINN's website has specific tips for keeping yourself and others safe on campus. A few of the most universally applicable are to travel with friends or in groups, to never post your location on social media and making sure you are aware of the resources available to you, such as the human resources department.

Online programs are beginning to emerge with the goal of raising awareness. One titled 'Impressions' is specifically designed for incoming and first-year college students. During the hour long program, multiple subjects, including identifying sexual assault and inspecting two Title IX cases, are used to teach about consent culture and how to report uncomfortable situations.

Michigan colleges are working to reduce statistics and educate in their own way. Under the leadership of Michigan first lady Sue Snyder, grants are being sent to different universities, including MSU, to help launch workshops alerting students about the truths and lies surrounding sexual assault.

Sex and the city: harassment in D.C.

Bryce Kobe

Staff Reporter

The sexual climate in politics has been a center of attention for reporters throughout the 2016 election and has continued afterward.

President Trump's infamous comments about groping women have been quoted thousands of times, and many are appalled that the leader of our country can get away with bragging about sexual abuse.

"I definitely think that those comments were inappropriate, especially for someone of that position," Abdullah Hashsham (12) said.

Party affiliation aside, I think we can all agree that having someone who sexually abuses others as president is not ideal.

However, political parties are rarely, if ever, a motivation for sexual harassment. Sexual harassment and abuse is almost exclusively a tool of those with influence.

Many stars of the Hollywood movie industry have had their mis-

conduct exposed recently, and the reason they got away with it for so long is because of their influence.

Politicians happen to be some of the most powerful individuals in our society, which doesn't breed a healthy sexual climate in Washington.

Unfortunately, political office is historically a job reserved for men. This is still visible today, where women are outnumbered by at least 3:1 in every level of government, according to *catalyst.org*.

The disadvantages seem to continue for women in Congress.

According to *Politico*, Congress follows its own guidelines for settling internal sexual harassment complaints, and they are completely behind closed doors.

There are attempts at legislation that would make these cases public and allow actual courts to oversee such disputes, but these reforms may not arrive for a long time.

Despite the power that accompanies the position, it is essential for those holding office to avoid an uncomfortable sexual climate, and to not be held above the law.

'Time's Up' movement draws support from wide range of groups

Madeline Robins

Web Editor

Two powerful words have already taken over 2018 with their punch of feminism in the entertainment industry, which was recently uncovered to be festering with sex scandals.

"Time's Up" caught its first taste of the spotlight during the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards, held on Jan. 7. As the night began with every big-name actress donning a black gown, it was clear to see this movement was about to take off as it took the attention in every monologue and acceptance speech of the night, however, the movement is not only for the entertainment

industry. Time's Up was born out of a letter written by Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, a member of the National Farmworkers Women's Alliance, to the women of Hollywood who helped in exposing Harvey Weinstein and pushing the #MeToo campaign off the ground. The letter was written on behalf of 700,000 female farmworkers who had been sexually harassed and assaulted, yet did not have the same platform to speak out for themselves as the victims of Weinstein.

The letter of solidarity was published in *Time* magazine and on Jan. 1 *The New York Times* announced the movement, citing the letter and the desire of people with no platform to speak out about harassment. The aim of the movement is to

make sure no victim will be silenced, and bring better and more equal opportunities to all women, regardless of their race, background or sexual orientation.

"People in lower positions don't have the means or opportunities or maybe even the courage to do so and this [Time's Up] could really help them," Meg Doster (12) said. Doster is the president of Feminism Club.

Matthew Langley's (11) opinions on the issue of gender inequality in the workplace and the harassment

of women perfectly break down what Time's Up stands for.

"I think it's really important to help break down this culture that has been around for decades," Langley said.

One in three women, according to a 2015 *Cosmopolitan* poll, in the workplace claim to have experienced sexual harassment, yet 71 percent have failed to report it.

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Time's Up is ready for these num-

bers to dramatically decrease by supporting women in more prominently seen roles to speak out and inspire others.

Melissa Eades comments on what it is like to be a woman in a higher position of authority.

"You might be the first, you might be the only, and people view you differently. So you have to work harder to prove yourself capable and worthy of being in the position that you're in," Eades said.

Aside from a call for everyone to wear black at the Golden Globes, other initiatives announced by Time's Up include persisting for legal legislation against companies who tolerate harassment and getting more gender equality in education and pay from studio and

talent agencies. Time's Up is also providing millions of women who do not have access to proper legal representation with ways to speak out and receive justice.

The National Women's Law Center is responsible for handling any cases where attorneys or public relations professionals may be dispensed to help women who have been harassed.

To donate to this growing fund, visit the Time's Up GoFundMe page.

Time's Up also urges its supporters to be conscious of where they are spending money, asking consumers to make sure they are giving money to companies who have more equitable leadership and opportunities.

87%

believe assault is a problem in the US

59%

believes society shames victims

40%

know someone who has been a victim of assault

76%

have heard someone tell a sexist joke in school





Second annual Women's March sees large crowds across America

Lucy Potter

Staff Reporter

January 21, 2018 marked the second annual Women's March. At least 5,000 people, as estimated by the March's founder, showed up to stand on the mud and wet grass in front of the Capitol and rally for the causes of the Women's March movement.

The crowd—which looked to be mostly female but diverse in all other regards—held many handmade, creative signs. Three read, “Not My Cheeto”, “Wake Up!” and “Eat a Tide Pod, Patriarchy!” Most others said something similar and were often witty. And, like last year, the pink cat-eared knit hats had a huge turn out.

“There [were] so many people and it was so cool to see that many people sharing the same views and fighting for a similar cause,” Amanda Brown (12) said. “It was very empowering.”

The Women's March movement is intended to spread activism and awareness of institutional injustice and inequality regarding race, gender, sex, income, religion, sexuality or other demographic, though with a main focus on the inequities faced by all women. One of the March's core phrases is “Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights.”

Hunter Keefe (12) acknowledged an even broader message.

“Action has to be taken outside of the March,” Keefe said. “The March is just a rally, and a feel-good thing, but that's not the end of it. Take action outside on your own.”

Not only does the group inform people of the inequalities faced by many Americans and tell them to take action, it also shows you *how* by providing ways to get involved.

“It's one thing to say, ‘We need

to do this or that, and let's empower people,’” Brown said. “But what I really liked about the March was that [the speakers] said, ‘No, we actually have a solution. Here's how you can get involved and make a difference.’ And that's what is important: showing people how they can make the change. I was actually interested in going into politics because I see how awful [the female representation] is now. At the March they said they would have workshops to teach people how to get started [in politics], especially women because we are the most underrepresented.”

The Lansing March had twelve speakers, all women, but each different in other ways.

“They had really good speakers there,” Keefe said. “Everyone who was speaking did a great job, and all had different, good points; there weren't too many things that repeated.”

Heather Bruegl, Native American activist and historian, began the rally acknowledging the Potawatomi and Fox Native American lands that the March was held on. Bruegl then delved into the ‘history-repeats-itself’ idea.

“We are reliving a time I thought only happened in the past. Indigenous rights are threatened and people are being forced from their lands. I thought that wasn't supposed to happen today. But I have been proven wrong. The events of today make it seem as if Andrew Jackson is alive and well,” Bruegl said.

After her speech, Bruegl introduced The Snowbird Singers to the stage, an all-female Saginaw-Chippewa band that raises awareness for domestic violence, diabetes and drug abuse.

After they sang, the rest of the speakers went on; the M.C., Mahogany Jones, spoke in between each one.

“She was fantastic,” Keefe said. “She kept things moving along at a decent pace and made sure [speeches] weren't too long.”

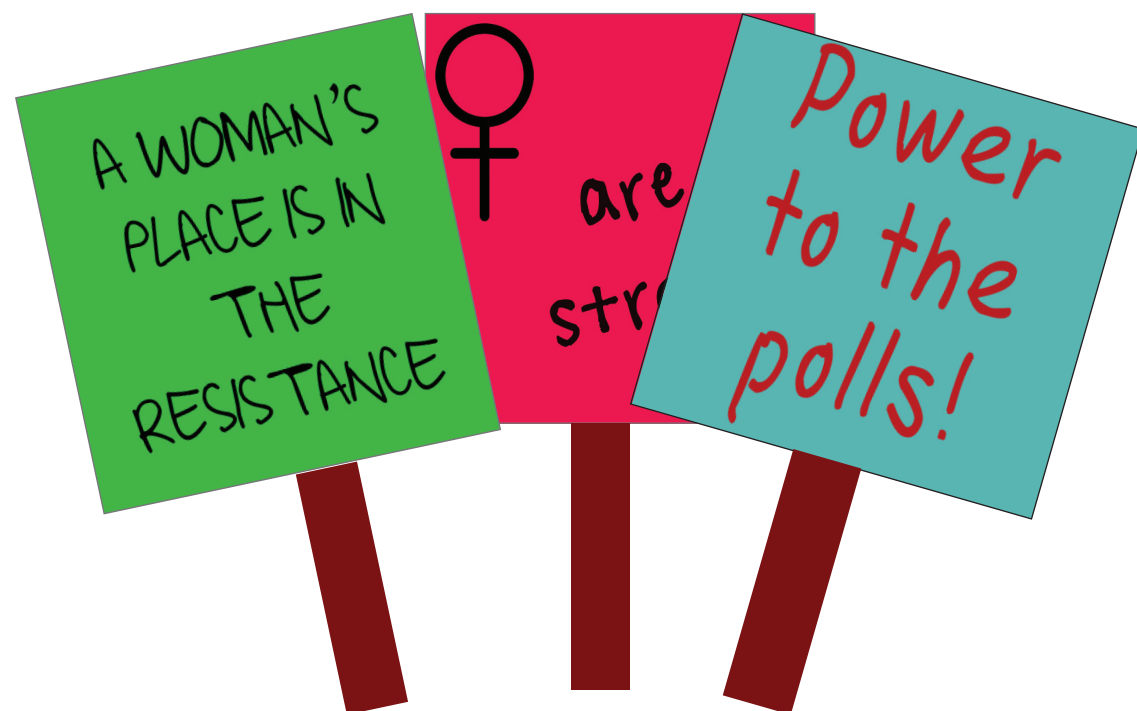
Jones, a rapper and natural-born public speaker, was hype, enunciated and inspirational. The perfect woman for the job. At the end of her first speech, Jones shared the essence

of the movement and event.

“We may differ in race, we may differ in religious beliefs, we may differ in our differences of opinions, and our gender identity, and our sexual orientations,” Jones said. “But there is one thing that we are not differing on today. And that is the fact that we will not be oppressed, we will not be pushed down, we will fight back, we will push back! And that is why we're here. And I think it's working.”

As of now, the Women's March intends to continue having marches around the country for more years to come. Fewer states hosted a march last year, the inaugural year, than this year. So, it's likely that the March locations will continue to increase.

“I loved it and I would do it again,” Brown said.



OHS population shares thoughts regarding sexism

Gigi Padalec

Social Media Specialist

Students spend about seven hours a day within the walls of Okemos High School, and the idea of feeling safe in school is an immense priority for many students, faculty, and their family.

Much of that time is spent communicating with friends in between passing time or even sending a quick text when the teachers aren't looking.

With all of the communication going on there are still open doors for miscommunication and damaging statements.

With the rise of verbal, physical and sexual harassment throughout the country, there's still one lingering question: is it happening to our students at OHS?

“I think a lot of times what goes on outside of society is mirrored within these walls,” said Christine Sermak said.

Recently, physical and sexual harassment has become a prominent neutral discussion.

Olivia BATTERY (12) feels as if students at OHS will have an undeveloped opinion as this point.

“Like any high school,” BATTERY said. “I think most people's views of sex and sexuality are going to be a little undeveloped.”

With all the talk about sexism going on around us, students realize that OHS is not uncommon and sometimes what contributes sexist language is unclear.

“Yeah I have [heard comments], but never in a serious matter,” Aakila Mohammad (11) said. “But then again I'm not sure that makes it okay.”

Edna Wagner (11) feels that OHS is doing pretty well along the lines of offensive sexist comments.

“I haven't heard any sexist remarks at OHS. I believe the school does a good job not specifying jobs with gender, and they promote an open mind for different careers we may be nervous to perceive due to societal

pressures and gender roles because of gender,” Wagner said.

Similarly to Wagner, Trisha Funk (World Language) feels that there is a healthy climate at OHS.

“There doesn't seem to be a lot of tension between the students. It helps that we have leaders that are both female and male to provide a safe environment for all,” Funk said.

Okemos has a long history of excellence, and most students feel as if Okemos has done an excellent job of combating sexism.

“Okemos, in general, has a pretty respectful place in my opinion. I don't typically hear sexist remarks, and there's a lot of conversations that I think goes in between students about being respectful to each gender. People ask a lot of questions of each other about certain gender issues and are willing to have an open mind and share their own opinions,” Matthew Langley (11) said. Of course, sexism can't be eliminated completely, but Okemos, in general, seems to be a very respectful place for each gender.”

Raising awareness of human trafficking important in convicting abductors

Alma Cooper

Guest Writer

Sexual assault on women is extremely prevalent. In fact, one in nine girls will have experienced sexual assault by the age of 18.

Human trafficking is one of the ways this statistic is true. Millions of girls enter the vicious human trafficking cycle and many do not make it out, affecting millions of people.

This ‘modern slavery,’ is a multi-

billion dollar industry that affects every race, religion, ethnicity and gender. There is a report of human trafficking in every zip code in the state of Michigan, which may also be the reason that the Great Lakes state is ranked second in the nation for in this area. Those who are abducted and taken into the system are sold for an average price of \$90. Victims are then abused, overworked and mistreated by predators. Manipulation and belittlement leave victims with mental health issues along with various psychologi-

cal damage.

With such high rates of human trafficking in the state of Michigan, one would think that news broadcasts would

shine light on such a disheartening topic.

Sadly, this is not the case. Many misconceptions are connected to human trafficking because of the lack of coverage.

The topic of modern slavery is a sensitive one and it is important to address it with caution; however, we can not solve the problem if we do not bring any attention to it at all.

We must start the discussion in

order for change to occur. That is why it is important to provide resources for individuals who want to help enslaved victims.

One way that I personally am involved with the aid of human trafficking survivors is my platform of being the teen ambassador for the non profit organization, Fashion Hope. This international organization works with individuals who have just escaped the human trafficking cycle and are in the process of getting back on their feet. The program stretches to Australia, Thailand, India and the U.S., where they provide clothes and shelter along with the proper tools needed to join the

workforce and take back their life. As Fashion Hope's Teen Ambassador, I work with second hand stores like Plato's Closet where I take in any clothes that may be out of season and bring them to safe havens where human trafficking victims have resided.

These safe havens are homes located in loving neighborhoods that donate and provide appliances for those who have escaped the industry. Each home houses five victims and one aide who helps them with the adjustment to their new home. Fashion Hope provides a psychologist for its victims in its safe havens along with business professionals who

help the victims build interview skills and begin the process of building a resume. These victims are properly equipped with outstanding resources that were provided by individuals who want to see change occur in their own community.

One thing I love about Fashion Hope is that it really does take ‘a village’ to create a desired outcome. Donating clothes, old household appliances and unwanted furniture helps bring comfort and tranquility to the hearts of many abused victims. In providing a safe, comforting home, me and many other are able to turn these victims into survivors.



Assault & Sexism