

Students ignore campus escort services

By Jen Dell'Alba

In the spring of 1980, a sophomore woman was raped near Oregon State University's Kerr Library. The next day, 20 Finley Hall volunteers organized an escort service to help women make it across campus safely.

At Capitol Campus, however, there has been a successful escort service for the past two years, according to Police Supervisor Charles Alesky at Capitol Campus. The service is free to Capitol Campus students as it "helps to deter molesters," stated Alesky.

In contrast, the service at Oregon State University is gone. Few people know it ever existed.

About 30 miles north, the University of Oregon female students, outraged and frightened by a rape on the campus last October, will launch their new escort service in a week or two.

The object, explains Laura Romano of Oregon's Women's Referral and Resource Service, is to make female escorts available and, of course, to prevent future sexual assaults.

"Capitol Campus created its escort service as a precaution

and service for students on the campus," said Alesky.

But if the experiences of dozens of other campuses over the last year are any indication, Romano's service has only slim chances of survival.

According to Alesky, the escort service at Capitol Campus has "worked well for the past two years."

While many campuses, preparing for the increased night traffic of warmer weather, are now forming escort services, the services in general don't work well. Most don't prevent sexual assaults anyway, campus police around the country say.

"Generally volunteer escort services don't work very well," observes Daniel P. Keller, police chief at the University of Louisville and head of the nationwide Campus Crime Prevention Programs.

"Right after a rape or sexual assault, everyone comes out of the woodwork," he explains. "They want to help, but the incident fades, and they lose interest."

At the nation's biggest campus, Ohio State, three escort services typically go begging for people to escort, despite 62 assaults and ten rapes in the area last fall.

"We get maybe five calls a night," says Cindi Butler, who staffs one of the services.

At the University of Wisconsin's Reuter Hall, which began a service after a 1980 series of sexual assaults, "We get maybe five calls a night," notes Jim Whitland, the program's director.

"We're starting to advertise, make commercials, in hopes that it'll pick up," he says.

The University of Maryland-College Park reported six rapes and 23 assaults in 1983, and campus police expect a variety of escort services didn't improve the 1984 statistics.

UM police Corporal Kathy Atwell says a volunteer service, started in the early seventies, continues, but, "Because they're volunteers, and they lack the funding, they're iffy."

"We've had escort services over the years, but as with everything else you have to work at, people get tired, bored, and the thing falls apart," say operations officer Richard Gould of Oregon State's defunct service.

His department provides an escort service, he adds, "But they (students) have to call. I'd say that we get maybe one call per night, and that's an average."

But OSU, with nearly 3,000 female students living on campus, needs an escort service, Gould maintains. Campus police investigated 10 sexual assaults last year, a figure Gould says is high.

A sense of immunity often keeps students from calling.

"Oh, you hear stories of people being chased across the campus," says freshman Tabatha Somerville. "But it's never happened to me."

"There seems to be a problem with lack of interest in the program," notes Greg Colucci of Kent State's now-folded escort service. "People just

don't want to get involved."

Programs with full-time paid coordinators seem to do better, Louisville's Keller says.

"What I've done is divide the campus into eight main sectors and position highly visible, paid students in each sector, working in conjunction with the campus police," he explains. "It's called 'Night Watch' and it's highly effective."

Sexual assaults fell nearly 100 percent in the first nine months of 1984 from the same period in 1983, although Keller adds the number may be misleading.

"Most incidents of rape concern people who know each other, 'date rape,' and consequently are never reported," Keller warns. "That 100 percent drop only represents 'stranger, forced rapes.'"

While volunteer escort services continue, many merge with other campus organizations or are swallowed by campus police departments.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis police took over the volunteer campus escort service three years ago, reports security chief William Karrabas.

The merger produced results. In three years "there's only been one reported rape," Karrabas adds. "That's lower than the three to four a year that used to occur."

Louisville's Keller says volunteer escort services will always be around in some form.

At Oregon State, for instance, Lambda Chi Alpha has tried to fill the void. But house member Jeff Arnston admits business is slowed by student apathy.

"At the beginning of the year, we used to get a few calls," he explains. "But things slack off. I'd say the average is one a night."

But the house plans to maintain the service "even," Arnston asserts, "if it's never used."

EKG, TB tests given

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Epileptic Society, Open Door for the Handicapped.

In a separate room, special testing included hearing, glaucoma and anemia, as well as EKG testing for heart problems.

"The testing went well... We did more screening this year than in the past," said Kresge.

According to Kresge, testing totaled 202 sugar screenings, 300 dental examinations, 139 EKG tests, 230 blood pressure checks and 140 fingerprinting and photographs done by the Campus Police Services. Free TB tests were given by the Lung Association, which Kresge noted as a great opportunity for campus students, since students must pay \$1 to have the test done at Capitol.

The cost of this event totaled approximately \$300, according to Health Services. The money was taken from the Health Service budget. The costs covered expenses for balloons and helium, coffee and donuts for the participants, and the printing involved in promoting the event.

Kresge added, "We cut our costs by doing the work ourselves, so we didn't have to pay a maintenance crew."

When asked why the Health Fair was held in the Multi-Purpose Building, Kresge replied, "Space...it is a much nicer place to have the fair. If the fair becomes any larger, we will have to set up in the gym."

The week before the fair, Campus students handed out and posted flyers in the local areas, and clowns distributed balloons to create more interest within the community.

Jar Royer, a graduate student, stated, "I liked all the free information that the fair offered."

The Health Fair received significant attention from Channel 15 who, according to Kresge, filmed a segment of the fair on Monday for the 6 p.m. newscast and the Harrisburg Patriot advertised the fair in their shopping segment, which Kresge credits as one reason the fair was such a success.

Phi Sigma Chi and Chi Gamma Iota members dressed up as clowns and distributed the balloons during the fair. The Lion Ambassadors served as the greeters at the fair.

The Health Fair was co-sponsored by Health Services, Phi Sigma Chi and Chi Gamma Iota.



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