

REACH

News and Events

Read about...

- **Summer Extravaganza Yard Sales!**
- **REACH Benefit Softball Game — Police vs. Firefighters**
- *Reporting Sexual Assaults, Reprinted from REACH Newsletter.*

Continued...



R.E.A.C.H.

Summer Extravaganza

YARD SALES!

JULY 19 & 26, 2008

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

(We're taking donated items now!)

**Proceeds to
benefit REACH
Programs**

**One E. Main St.
S. Paris**

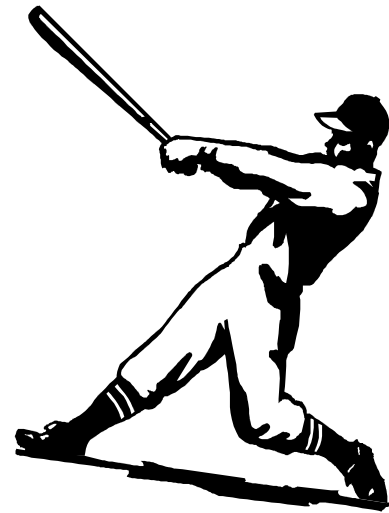
▲ Please allow REACH
■ to offer more pro-
■ grams in our schools
■ and encourage
■ children to find their
■ voices and be safer!
■

For more information please call REACH
(Rape Education and Crisis Hotline) at 743-9777,
email: director@reachmaine.org or visit our website:
www.reachmaine.org



Second annual!

**POLICE
VS.
FIREFIGHTERS**



**Slow Pitch
Softball Game**

Why drive to Boston? Enjoy a good old fashioned ball game right here between the Oxford Hills Police and Firefighters! Proceeds to benefit REACH programs. Fun activities, 50/50, and refreshments.



When: Saturday,
August 16, 2008,
5:00 p.m.

Where: Gouin Athletic
Complex, South Paris
\$3 per person, children
under 12, free.
(Rain date Aug. 23)

REACH (Rape Education and Crisis Hotline) is once again teaming up with the Police and Fire Departments from Oxford Hills; and law enforcement from the Sheriff's Department and the State Police. The Police won last year's game — the Firefighters are up for the challenge and vow to win this year's game! Tickets are available at the Norway, S. Paris and Oxford Police and Fire Departments, the REACH Office, or at the game.

For more information please call 743-9777, or send email to director@reachmaine.org

REACH.
1 East Main St., PO Box 300
S. Paris, ME 04281



From the Director, Reporting Sexual Assaults

Reprinted from the June issue of the REACH newsletter REACHing Out

The Maine Department of Public Safety recently released their “Crime in Maine” report for 2007. For the third year in a row, there was an increase in the number of rapes to women, age 18 and older, reported to police in Maine. For 2007, there was an increase of 15% (393 reports) over 2006, which were 340 reports.

Years ago, it was generally held that only about 15% of sexual assaults were reported to law enforcement. Today, it is estimated that about 40% of sexual assaults may be reported. The increase in the number of reported cases in Maine does not necessarily mean an increase in sexual assaults, but may reflect an increase in the number of victims choosing to report.

What has contributed to the increase in reporting? Sexual Assault Centers across Maine have been educating communities about reporting options and supporting victims through the medical and legal process for over 25 years. There has been training of medical and law enforcement personnel about the needs of victims, interviewing and the collection of evidence specifically regarding those victimized by sexual assault. Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) – comprised of law enforcement, prosecution, health care and victim advocates - are working to promote sensitive, respectful, timely and effective responses to sexual assault.

In order to continue to foster reporting of sexual assaults, it must be evident to community members that reporting will likely result in reasonable accountability of an offender. Today, a limited number of sexual assault cases are fully prosecuted through the court system. Many reported cases are not pursued through the court system, or, are pled down to non sexual assault charges and/or deferred dispositions (we’ll see how you behave now, and then decide what to do).

Sexual assault cases are not easy cases to prove. There are often no witnesses, lack of physical evidence, and a victim’s recollection of events may not be specific and sequential – which is a result of having experienced a traumatic event. In spite of these challenges, more victims are taking the courageous step of coming forward, cooperating with forensic evidence collection procedures, and reporting the crime of sexual assault.

The court system must take these reports seriously by proceeding with the number one right granted to victims of crime in the State of Maine: to be treated with dignity and respect. The court system needs to consider the willingness of those who are victimized to go through a grueling legal process to try and obtain some reasonable justice. Not a glimpse of justice, or no justice – reasonable justice.

Sexual assault robs those who are victimized of a sense of safety, trust and their sense of self. If given the opportunity, and adequate support, victims/survivors can endure the court process, especially if they have some assurance that a best effort will be given to obtain justice. Our criminal justice system exists for several reasons: to uphold the law, to hold offenders accountable and to give back to victims of sexual assault a measure of control over their lives. We need to put these things into practice more frequently.

Debbie Dembski

REACH Executive Director

Member Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault