**VOICES OF HOPE PROMOTING**

 **SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Did you know that one in five women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime and two-thirds of those sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim; or that it is estimated that 60% of sexual assaults are never reported to police.

Staff members at Voices of Hope, Lincoln’s crisis center for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, are very aware of these facts and know that these crimes are occurring in our community. Voices of Hope advocates provide a variety of free and confidential services to survivors of sexual assault, including a 24-hour crisis line (402-475-7273), 24-hour advocacy for victims when they are in hospital emergency rooms, crisis counseling for survivors and their families, support groups, educational groups, assistance with protection orders, as well as legal advocacy.

Voices of Hope will be conducting a number of activities throughout the month of April to raise awareness about sexual assault and its impact on our community. The theme of this year’s month-long campaign is “BELIEVE SURVIVORS: #EndRapeCulture” Activities during the month include Voices of Hope’s 6th annual “Strike Out Sexual Assault” bowl-a-thon on Saturday, April 8 to help raise funding for its sexual assault services. Voices of Hope also is partnering with Lincoln’s Cultiva Coffee Shops, located near East Campus, across from the City/County Building and on 24th & Randolph, to promote awareness through posters on display, information on sexual assault, and the use of special “End Rape Culture” napkins.

Voices of Hope is also partnering with UNL's student group, PREVENT, for the 2nd annual “End Rape on Campus” march on the afternoon of Thursday, April 13th. The march will take place on the UNL campus starting and ending at the Nebraska Student Union. It will feature an appearance and speech by Brenda Tracy, a sexual assault survivor who is an activist and public speaker on behalf of ending sexual assault on campuses.

“Sexual Assault Awareness Month” presents an opportunity to raise awareness about sexual assault and its occurrence in our community as well as to let community members know about services for victims/survivors of sexual assault,” says Shelly DeBuhr, Sexual Assault Services Coordinator. “We know that sexual assault is under-reported, so we want people to know that Voices of Hope is a safe and confidential place where they can turn for assistance and support.”

Voices of Hope’ 24-hour crisis line number is: 402-475-7273. More information about Voices of Hope is available on their website: www.voicesofhopelincoln.org.