

From Bill Hart – Executive Director of the Arizona Sexual Assault Network (AzSAN)- April-2005

It has been a distinct pleasure to join the anti-sexual violence community in Arizona. I have been working for the Arizona Sexual Assault Network for just a couple of months, but I've been working with AzSAN for a couple of years as the lead lobbyist for the Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence on spousal rape legislation. And it is rewarding to report that as of this writing, the spousal sexual assault exemption in Arizona statutes looks to be headed to the scrap heap of archaic laws where it belongs.

As a representative of AzSAN, I serve on the Governor's Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women and its Sexual Assault Implementation Design Team, which is now focused on campus rape. We work with the Arizona League to End Regional Trafficking (ALERT), and I'm a Board member of Arizonans for the Protection of Exploited Children and Adults (APECA). Together with our anti-trafficking partners and Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Violence (CASA), we are sponsoring seminars on Human Trafficking on April 29 in Tucson and April 30 in Phoenix.

As you know, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. We are planning a variety of activities and multi-media efforts, including a statewide poster campaign, the annual *Denim Day* to raise awareness on sexual violence issues, newspaper columns and electronic media outreach.

Denim Day is on April 21, 2005. AzSAN will provide participants with "Why Denim?" stickers to engender conversation in the workplace and in effect, help to dispel harmful myths. We are currently reaching out to employers and corporations, encouraging participation in *Denim Day*.

The most significant aspect of our work will be fostering Regional Collaboration Councils across the state. We are anxious to receive feedback on the needs of those who work directly in the field. We want to involve survivors, prevention specialists, direct service providers, law enforcement, the judiciary, advocates, probation, prosecution, offender treatment, forensic nurse examiners- you name it. If they're involved in the issue, we want them to be involved in AzSAN. We want to build a network that is of, by and for the people who do this work. With this guidance, AzSAN can develop policy initiatives and respond to any training or technical assistance needs that arise. Other initiatives we have been working on

include: the "Show on the Road" - a community education program; a gender violence training program at Luke Air Force Base; and revamping our website to make it more effective and user-friendly.

More than anything, I want to thank the AzSAN Board for offering me this opportunity, and the people in the movement across the state and nation who have welcomed me with such open arms, taught me a great deal so far and who fight for victims and survivors their strength and determination that is truly impressive.