

Indiana University Kokomo and Family Service Association work to Take Back the Night

How we got started...

The project was started two years ago by our American Democracy Project committee. We wanted to hold a Take Back the Night and the suggestion was made that we partner with Family Service Association (FSA). FSA is a local organization that hosts "Angel Walk", an event to raise money for the area's domestic violence shelter. After meeting together during the fall semester, we decided to hold Take Back the Night/Angel Walk in April.

What we did...

Take Back the Night/Angel Walk was a semester long event focusing on raising awareness about domestic/relationship violence and campus violence. Several faculty incorporated the theme of the event into their courses. As a result of the course integration, students gave poster presentations or had other work on display during the night of the event.

Classes and student clubs formed Angel Walk teams to raise money and walk during the event. Student groups held fundraisers on campus including a benefit concert put on by our Student Union Board. Other projects included selling paper hands and ribbons, and collecting kitchen supplies and board games for the shelter.

As we were finishing up last minute details for our event on April 24, we found out about the shootings on the Virginia Tech campus. Our students decided that they wanted to do something to honor their fellow students. We held a memorial during Take Back the Night to remember the students. Our Student Body President made a quilt and had our students, faculty and staff sign it. We sent it to the students at VT.

The event started at 5 p.m. on April 24th. We first held the VT memorial. Then we moved into our Take Back the Night order of events. Various people from FSA spoke about the topic of domestic violence and the local shelter. We had a domestic violence survivor tell her story. She is a faculty member on campus. After the survivor speech, 400 students, faculty, staff, and community members walked a mile course around the campus and community. When everyone returned, refreshments were served to the participants, and we had our student projects on display.

People who played a big role...

Key individuals included our ADP committee and Family Service Association. The ADP committee worked to get the students involved and FSA did most of the work to get the community excited about the event. These two groups also planned the details and logistics of the event. IU Kokomo's Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs gave the event their support and encouraged the faculty to incorporate it into their classrooms.

Successes...

This past April was our second annual Take Back the Night/Angel walk. We had around 400 participants, 15 courses involved the event in their syllabi, and the students and community

raised \$12,000 for the shelter. Our first year we had 10 classes that included the event in their syllabi, 80 participants in the walk, and we raised around \$12,000.

Problems we encountered...

Weather plays a huge factor in this event. We had beautiful weather so people were more apt to participate in the walk. The first year, when we had only 80 participants, it was cold and rainy.

We had a late start planning due to the fact we had staffing changes. The FSA director was brand new as was IU Kokomo's staff chair on the ADP committee. We would have had more course integration had we been able to meet with the academic departments prior to the start of the spring semester.

We didn't raise as much money as we had hoped. We found that this year our students put more time and resources into their projects than they did fundraising. It was a major plus for the university due to the quality and excitement generated with the projects. It was a significant negative for FSA since they were counting on this event to be a huge fundraiser.

What we learned...

Every time we do a project we always learn things that need to be tweaked and could be done a little differently. For example, next year we will be moving the registration tables due to the fact participants were blocking the exits.

We learned that our students really enjoy the opportunity to do hands on work that makes a difference. For example, our Computer Graphics Technology students put together marketing pieces as their class project. The faculty member was amazed at her students' enthusiasm about the project. Nine CGT students designed an entire marketing campaign which included t-shirt, poster, sticker, and flyer design. Participants in the event voted on their favorite design. The winner will have his/her design used as next year's Take Back the Night marketing materials.

Assessment...

Assessment and evaluation will be something that will change for next year. There was really not a good way to survey the participants at the event. This year we've gathered feedback from the faculty who incorporated the event. We will use their suggestions to make changes for next year. Also, the ADP staff chair and the FSA director have examined every detail of the program to determine where changes need to be made.

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