

Chiricahua and Mexican Consulate bring “Kaity’s Way” to Willcox



WILLCOX, AZ – Students at Willcox High School and Willcox Middle School had the opportunity to learn the warning signs of an abusive relationship and the elements and importance of a healthy relationship during a presentation by Bobbi Sudberry, the Executive Director of Kaity’s Way. This nonprofit organization shares the true, impactful story of Kaity Sudberry in order to bring to light the warning signs of Teen Dating

Violence and what lessons can be learned in order to prevent such a tragedy from happening to others.

Kaity's Law was enacted Sept. 30, 2009, amended Arizona Revised Statutes 13-3601 relating to domestic violence to allow those in dating relationships, relationships that are romantic or sexual in nature, protection under the law. Kaity Sudberry was denied an order of protection from her abusive ex-boyfriend in 2008, despite being assaulted by her ex-boyfriend on two occasions and there being a report of him threatening to kill himself and Kaity. Because the laws regarding domestic violence did not extend to teenagers in Arizona at that time, the order of protection was denied. Five days later, Kaity Sudberry was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Since that time, Kaity's parents Ric and Bobbi Sudberry have worked to break the cycle of abuse in teenage dating relationships.

Rosie Mendoza, Domestic Violence Advocate for Chiricahua Community Health Centers Inc. had worked to bring the presentation to Willcox and had previously arranged for the Kaity's Way presentation to be given at Douglas High School. She hopes to bring this presentation to all of the high schools in Cochise County. She said, "For me, this is prevention. Education is prevention. As an advocate, our job is intervention, but if

we educate we may be able to stop some of it from happening.”

The Consulate of Mexico in Douglas sponsored the presentation and Agustín Alberdi Ángeles Rivera, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores said “We partner with organizations to bring programs that will help our community.” He later added “Domestic Violence is rooted in our society and we need to address the issue no matter the nationality.”

Bobbi Sudberry had reminded the students, “The victim is never ever to blame for being in an abusive relationship because they aren’t the one abusing.”

She encouraged the students to “never be a bystander, be an upstander” and had told them they didn’t have to intervene directly in a violent or intense situation, but could distract the situation by “busting a move” or “singing a song.”

She wanted them to know that there are resources and trusted adults around them. Rosie Mendoza asked the students if they knew their school counselor or nurse and whether they knew of the big blue Mobile Medical Unit. She reminded the students they could approach

these trusted adults or visit the Mobile Medical Unit if they ever needed help.

One female student who is a junior at Willcox High School said, "I thought this was worth going to because there are students out there having these problems and now they know where that can get help. And they will know they don't have to go it alone."

Jeff Thompson, principal of Willcox High School said, "We are trying to make a huge change here culturally. Once students walk into these doors we are family and we need to take care of each other." He added as to why he had accepted the invitation to have this presentation brought to his school, "We won't turn down anything that is positive and can save lives. Hopefully with this presentation we can save one or two who may need help. We want our students to know that school is a safe place and they can turn here for help."

For more information on Kaity's Way visit kaitysway.org or call (602) 740-2734.

Chiricahua Community Health Centers, Inc. is a mission-driven Federally Qualified Health Center and is a tax exempt not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It was founded as a grassroots community effort in 1996 as

makeshift clinic in Elfrida's small community center and has since grown to be the largest primary care organization in southeastern Arizona. Chiricahua Community Health Centers currently has seven clinics in Bisbee, Douglas, Elfrida and Sierra Vista and three mobile medical units that serve all of Cochise County.