



2101 N. Front Street
Governor's Plaza North, Bldg #2
Harrisburg, PA 17110

April 11, 2018

Laura Palumbo, Communications Director
National Sexual Violence Resource Center
877-739-3895, ext. 128; lpalumbo@nsvrc.org

Toll Free: (877) 739-3895
Phone: (717) 909-0710
Fax: (717) 909-0714
TTY: (717) 909-0715

www.nsvrc.org

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Sexual Violence Resource Center Recognizes Leaders in Sexual Violence Prevention With 2018 Visionary Voice Awards

Recipients include #MeToo creator Tarana Burke, Nevada State Senator Patricia Spearman, Connecticut State Senator Mae Flexer

Harrisburg, PA – The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) announced today 35 recipients of its 2018 Visionary Voice Awards — a multidisciplinary group of honorees from across the nation selected for their outstanding work toward ending sexual violence.

This year's recipients include social justice activist Tarana Burke, who first started the #MeToo movement that has gripped the world and reshaped the national conversation about sexual violence; Nevada State Senator Patricia Spearman, who has been a tireless advocate for victims of sexual violence and marginalized populations in the Nevada Senate, including sponsoring legislation to add gender identity and expression to the list of protected abuse victims and to expand the crime of luring a child to include those who solicit minors for commercial sex; and Connecticut State Senator Mae Flexer, who has lead successful efforts to improve the response to sexual violence on college campuses and in the criminal justice system and is currently leading the legislative effort to remove the statute of limitations for sexual assault crimes in Connecticut.

The Visionary Voice Awards are presented annually by NSVRC, the leading nonprofit in providing information and tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence, in conjunction with [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#) (SAAM). SAAM is a national campaign held each April to raise awareness about preventing sexual violence. This year's SAAM theme, "Embrace Your Voice," encourages everyone to become agents for change by using their voices to shift how others think about and react to the critical issue of sexual violence prevention and response.

"We're thrilled to honor this incredibly deserving group for their tireless efforts to support survivors of sexual violence and change the culture in their communities," said NSVRC Chief Executive Officer Karen Baker. "Collectively, these 35 recipients have embraced their voices in a way that will lead to lasting change and help end sexual violence once and for all."

— MORE —

Nominated by state, territory and tribal sexual violence coalitions across the U.S, the following is a complete list of this year's Visionary Voice Award recipients:

- Rana Alexander (nominated by Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Megan Blomquist (nominated by Rape Victim Advocates)
- Tarana Burke (nominated by New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Rev. Michael J. Byrnes (nominated by Guam Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence)
- dee Clarke (nominated by Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Rebecca Crane (nominated by Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence)
- Dr. Tyffani Monford Dent (nominated by Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence)
- Leigh Ana Eugene (nominated by New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Inc.)
- Sen. Mae Flexer (nominated by Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence)
- Yolanda Francisco-Nez (nominated by Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Koren Garcia (nominated by Day One)
- Wes Gibson (nominated by West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services)
- Taylor Hirth (nominated by Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence)
- Tammi Hogan (nominated by DC Rape Crisis Center)
- Honolulu Theatre for Youth (nominated by Hawaii Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Michele J. Hughes (nominated by Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Cynthia Keys (nominated by Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)
- Jessie Mindlin (nominated by Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence)
- Karen Moldovan (nominated by Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Alva Moreno (nominated by California Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Tina Mulleavey (nominated by New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence)
- Stefanie Murray (nominated by New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Alex Panagotacos (nominated by Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs)
- Karla Payne (nominated by Texas Association Against Sexual Assault)
- Candace Rice (nominated by Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
- Dr. Gilda Rodríguez-Díaz (nominated by Paz Para La Mujer)
- Perla Rodriguez (nominated by Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence)
- Alanna Sherstad (nominated by Montana Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence)
- Shirlene "Shir" Smith (nominated by The Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence)
- Sen. Patricia Spearman (nominated by Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence)
- Hollie Strand (nominated by South Dakota Network Against Family and Sexual Assault)
- Monica Taylor (nominated by Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault)
- Carol E. Tracy (nominated by Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape)
- Sharon Travis (nominated by Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence)
- Bob Vines (nominated by Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)

To learn more about the 2018 Visionary Voice Award recipients, visit: <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/visionary-voice-awards>.

— MORE —

ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an awareness and prevention campaign observed every April. This year's theme is "Embrace Your Voice." Join the campaign by accessing free resources at nsvrc.org/saam. Resources are available in Spanish at nsvrc.org/es/saam.

ABOUT NSVRC

NSVRC is the leading nonprofit in providing information and tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence. NSVRC translates research and trends into best practices that help individuals, communities and service providers achieve real and lasting change. The center also works with the media to promote informed reporting. Every April, NSVRC leads Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), a campaign to educate and engage the public in addressing this widespread issue. NSVRC is also one of the three founding organizations of Raliance, a national, collaborative initiative dedicated to ending sexual violence in one generation.

###