

**Town of Norwood Proclamation**

*Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) is a global effort that acknowledges sexual violence as an issue that impacts every community, and aims to raise public awareness about sexual abuse, harassment, and assault, and engage communities in the effort to prevent and end sexual violence, while supporting and elevating the voices of those who identify as victims or survivors of sexual violence.*

WHEREAS, approximately 433,648 Americans aged 12 and older, of all genders, races, and cultures are victims of rape or sexual assault every year, we must take action to change the culture;

WHEREAS, over 53% of women, 29% of men, and 47% of transgender people report experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime;

WHEREAS, every 73 seconds an American is sexually assaulted and alarmingly, every 9 minutes, that victim is a child;

WHEREAS, 80% of sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone the victim knows;

WHEREAS, sexual assault is the most underreported crime-- it is estimated that 63% of cases nationwide are not reported to the police and that number jumps to 70% in rural areas;

WHEREAS, 70% of sexual assault survivors experience moderate to severe mental distress following their victimization, a larger percentage than for any other violent crime;

NOW THEREFORE, we, Norwood Town Council, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2024 as

**Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

In Norwood, we are proud to join our local advocates and community members, and those around the world, in this effort to raise awareness of the individual and collective impacts of sexual violence. We commit to proactively working to end sexual violence in our community. The 2024 SAAM theme, **Building Connected Communities**, calls on each of us to work in solidarity with our neighbors to prevent sexual abuse, harassment, and assault. This theme highlights the impact on our community when any member experiences sexual violence and reminds us that to effectively address and prevent sexual violence, we must recognize that changing individual behaviors is not enough. We must work to build connected, respectful, and inclusive communities that enhance our collective well-being by helping to establish protective measures against sexual violence. While the past few years have brought more attention to the prevalence of sexual violence in our communities, we urge all Norwood residents to be an active part of changing the culture that allows sexual violence to persist; we must believe survivors, speak out against victim blaming, promote and practice everyday consent, empower bystander intervention, model healthy communication for our youth and hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable for their actions.

While today we proclaim April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Norwood, we know that every day presents an opportunity to improve the future of our beloved community and that every day we should promote kindness, equality, respect, and freedom from violence for all of us.

  
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Mayor

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Date