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Fearless: Kaleigh Sosa

Kathryn E. Bucolo
Gettysburg College

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Fearless: Kaleigh Sosa

Abstract

Fearlessly organizing events on campus addressing issues of sexual assault, serving the campus community by raising awareness of gender, bias, and violence issues, and helping first-years and sophomores as part of Residence Life staff, Kaleigh Sosa '14 passionately leads her peers toward understanding. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, sexuality, gender, bias, bisexual, sexual assault, ALLIES

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Gender and Sexuality

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS: KALEIGH SOSA

November 15, 2013

Fearlessly organizing events on campus addressing issues of sexual assault, serving the campus community by raising awareness of gender, bias, and violence issues, and helping first-years and sophomores as part of Residence Life staff, Kaleigh Sosa '14 passionately leads her peers toward understanding.

While Kaleigh participates in several different groups and organizations on campus such as APO and Res Life, over the past 14 days she has probably been the most involved with her role as president of the college's Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) club. The group, headed by Kaleigh, ran different programs, events, and activities every day for the past two weeks to raise awareness about sexual assault both on campus and in the greater context of rape culture in our society.

"Especially as a Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Psychology double major," says Kaleigh, "I think educating people about sexual assault is an integral part of making a better society since, right now, equality is so jeopardized with 1 in 3 women having been sexually assaulted.



Kaleigh only officially started getting involved with the group the fall of her junior year, but she had always held high ideals about preventing and raising awareness about sexual assault and injustices. This year, those passions have been channeled into her roles in SASA, Res Life, and Cheers. “What I’ve come to realize,” says Kaleigh, “is that the work I do with SASA isn’t about giving people something to fight for or something to end—it’s about giving support to survivors and friends, and telling them that I stand by them.”

The same kind of passion that leads Kaleigh to raise awareness about rape culture on campus has influenced her decisions to be involved in Res Life and Cheers. What excites her most about Res Life is the abundance of opportunities to meet, help, and support people she might not otherwise know. “It’s amazing to realize that, as an RC or RA, I can have such an impact on these students. What’s also great is that I can take the things I’m passionate about, like SASA, and spread that information to this captive audience.”

Kaleigh is looking at pursuing higher education in student affairs. “Basically,” she says, “I want to go into Res Life. The thing I’ve learned over the past few years here is that it’s crucial to know how to be a support for someone who has been the victim of sexual assault—a lot of people don’t know what they can do, and a lot feel helpless and powerless. And I think my experiences on Res Life and with SASA have helped me to develop the skills to do that.”

The past two weeks of SASA’s [14 Days to End Sexual Violence](#) initiative have been successful in raising awareness of different issues related to sexual assault through activities like the 100 Men Rising video, the Slut Walk, and discussion groups for important topics. However, as Kaleigh knows, it takes more than two weeks to change a cultural mentality.

“The main thing this campus lacks, in my opinion, is education on sexual assault,” says Kaleigh. “But I think that it’s the little things—individuals educating individuals—that can also help to create real change. I mean, one of the reasons I am pushing so much for change here is because I have two younger sisters who are 12 and 10 years old. I know that, right now, they have grown up and will continue to grow up in this society of rape culture, and someone needs to change it. Of course, I don’t think I alone can change all of it, but I think changing some of it can make all the difference.”

Kathryn Bucolo '14
Fearless Coordinator

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