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Fearless Friday: Sarah Van De Weert

Christina L. Bassler
Gettysburg College

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Fearless Friday: Sarah Van De Weert

Abstract

Sarah Van De Weert '16 has been fearlessly striving to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health disorders. As the current president of Active Minds, Secretary of APO, and a member of the Honor Commission Sarah works toward a more inclusive campus community, especially for those suffering from mental illnesses. Sarah also conducts research for Dr. Berenson and works for a non-profit called Libero Network. Sarah's participation in Active Minds on campus focuses on spreading awareness of mental illnesses and reducing the stigmas surrounding them, along with advocating for Gettysburg College to be a safe and open environment for discussions about such topics. With her resilience, courage, and compassion, Sarah hopes to enable greater visibility of the need for mental health education and resources on campus, along with creating a space where those who are in recovery can thrive. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Fearless Friday, social justice, Active Minds, APO, Honor Commission, mental illness, Libero Network, Women's Center, AAUW, Eating Disorder Awareness Week, fat talk, Mirrorless Monday

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement | Communication | Mental and Social Health

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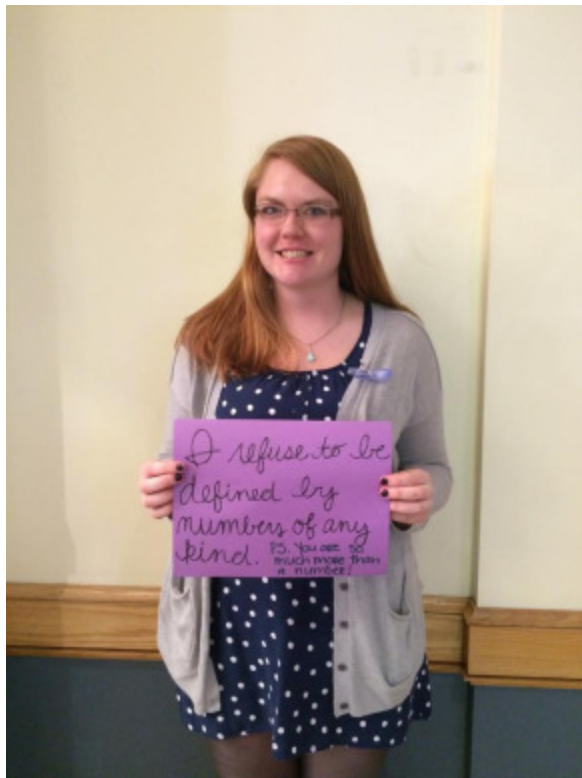
Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://www.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating 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 FRIDAY: SARAH VAN DE WEERT

March 27, 2015



Sarah Van De Weert '16 has been fearlessly striving to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health disorders. As the current president of Active Minds, Secretary of APO, and a member of the Honor Commission Sarah works toward a more inclusive campus community, especially for those suffering from mental illnesses. Sarah also conducts research for Dr. Berenson and works for a non-profit called Libero Network. Sarah's participation in Active Minds on campus focuses on spreading awareness of mental illnesses and reducing the stigmas surrounding them, along with advocating for Gettysburg College to be a safe and open environment for discussions about such topics. With her resilience, courage, and compassion, Sarah hopes to enable greater visibility of the need for mental health education and resources on campus, along with creating a space where those who are in recovery can thrive.

The week of the February 22nd, Sarah, along with the executive members and general members of Active

Minds, The Women's Center, and AAUW, facilitated programming for Eating Disorder Awareness Week. In addition to a week long CUB table that focused on ending "fat talk" and a body positive photo booth, one of the main events of the week was "Mirrorless Monday." Mirrorless Monday included the covering of all mirrors on campus either completely or partially with flyers stating the purpose of Mirrorless Monday: for one day, people should try to accept and love themselves regardless of external flaws.

Sarah and Active Minds members, with help from Lisa Rivoli of The Women's Center, also organized a panel featuring information about what eating disorders are and what resources are available if one is in need of help. In addition, five students recovering from eating disorders shared their stories to further

facilitate the discussion of such issues on campus. One of those students was Sarah herself. Sarah is recovering from an eating disorder that briefly required her to take time away from Gettysburg College last academic year. Despite her struggle, Sarah returned determined to make a difference and raise awareness for the prominence of eating disorders.

When speaking about her hope to bring education about what eating disorders are and the resources for treatment, Sarah informed me that only about twenty percent of those suffering from eating disorders receive treatment. It is Sarah's goal to help those suffering with eating disorders and other mental health issues and let them know that they are not alone and that recovery is possible. In addition to her major in Psychology and minor in writing, which she hopes to translate to a career in clinical psychology working to research and treat eating disorders, Sarah works for Libero Network, a non-profit organization that lends support to those in recovery from mental health issues including addiction, depression, anxiety, self-harm, and eating disorders. The organization also advocates for mental health and fosters self-acceptance.

Sarah's fearless approach to sharing her story, working with the [Libero Network](#), and utilizing her leadership positions on campus to help those suffering from mental health issues continues to foster change in the Gettysburg College community.

For those interested in attending an Active Minds meeting, they are held on Mondays at 6pm in McCreary 309.