

NEWS RELEASE



United Way  
of Greater Stark County

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **United Way of Greater Stark County supporting survivors of sexual assault with Denim Day event**

*(Canton, OH) April 23, 2018* – United Way of Greater Stark County will be showing support for survivors of sexual assault by participating in the annual Denim Day campaign on Wednesday, April 25th. For the past 19 years, Peace Over Violence has promoted its Denim Day campaign on a Wednesday in April to recognize Sexual Violence Awareness Month. The movement was originally triggered when a rape conviction in Italy was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans she must have helped her rapist remove her jeans, thereby implying consent. The following day, women in the Italian Parliament wore jeans to work in solidarity and protest. Since then, wearing jeans on Denim Day has become a widespread national and international awareness movement.

United Way of Greater Stark County recognizes that sexual assault is a violent crime that impacts people regardless of age, gender identity or socio-economic situation. The organization allocates funding to many local agencies that address the issue and support survivors. These include CommQuest's Alliance Rape Crisis Program, COMPASS, Inc. Crisis Intervention and Recovery Center and Domestic Violence Project, Inc.

"We all have a responsibility to advocate for change, and participating in Denim Days is one way to raise awareness about the issue," explains United Way of Greater Stark County President & CEO Maria Heege. "If someone asks me why I'm wearing jeans to work, it's an opportunity to have a conversation about a serious topic that is often considered taboo."

United Way Worldwide encourages its staff to participate in this event to make a social statement and protest against the misconceptions surrounding sexual assault. Community members, elected officials, businesses and students are invited to wear jeans on this day. Employers can host a "Dollars for Denim" event; asking employees to make a small monetary donation, with funds collected going to Peace Over Violence or a local rape crisis center.

"This is more than just letting staff wear jeans to work for a day," says Adrienne Price, United Way of Greater Stark County Health Impact Council Director. "It's a way to send a simple, yet powerful, message of support to survivors of sexual harassment, abuse or assault."

For more information about how you or your organization can get involved, contact Cynthia Vignos, United Way of Greater Stark County Vice President of Marketing & Strategic Communications at 330-491-9954 or [cynthia.vignos@uwstark.org](mailto:cynthia.vignos@uwstark.org), or visit [www.denimdayinfo.org](http://www.denimdayinfo.org).

**About United Way of Greater Stark County**

United Way of Greater Stark County fights for the Health, Education and Financial Stability of every person in every community. The agency collaborates, convenes, and partners to support programs and initiatives that break the cycle of poverty, promote a healthy community where children are successful from kindergarten through graduation to a career, and where families have the tools, skills, and support they need to become financially independent. We win by living United. For more information about United Way of Greater Stark County visit [www.uwstark.org](http://www.uwstark.org). Offices are at 401 Market Avenue North, Suite 300, Canton, Ohio 44702. (330) 491-0445.

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