

Who Says College Campuses Are Safe?

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by Marie Hodge and Jeff Blyskal

Jeanne Clery, Lehigh University Class of '89, would have graduated last June 4. Instead, her dreams and her parents' hopes for her ended forever on April 5, 1986. At 5 a.m. that day, the 19-year-old freshman awoke to find fellow student Joseph Henry burglarizing her dorm room. Henry raped and beat Jeanne savagely. Then he strangled her.

At the University of California at Berkeley in 1987, a gang of teens police call a "rat pack" followed three students to their dormitory. Words were exchanged, and a pack member suddenly smashed the face of a female student with a brick.

Despite the idyllic images college brochures present, violence is a fact of life on the nation's campuses. Last year colleges reported to the FBI a total of 1990 violent crimes - robbery, aggravated assault, rape and murder. This is a startling number, considering the fact that almost 90 percent of U.S. colleges do not report crime statistics. The incidence of property crime was even greater - more than 107,000 cases of burglary, larceny, arson and motor-vehicle theft at reporting schools alone. Shockingly, 78 percent of the violent crimes were committed by students, according to the Center for the Study and Prevention of Campus Violence, at Towson State University in Maryland.

Traditionally most colleges have kept quiet about crime. Fearing adverse publicity, they have intended to deal with offenders internally instead of referring them for prosecution.

The Clerys were a major force behind a new Pennsylvania law that requires all colleges in the state to disclose crime statistics. They also advocate federal legislation requiring such disclosure.

The failure of colleges to warn about crime has created a dangerous situation. Too often, parents and students are unaware of the hazards of life on campus. But concerned parents, students and college administrators are taking action around the country and setting examples for others to follow.

Here's what every college should do to control violence on campus.

Start a campus-watch program. Security experts agree that any community can reduce crime simply by remaining alert. Colleges are no exception. The proof can be found at Drexel University in the tough neighborhood of West Philadelphia.

Crime used to be rampant near campus. "Every night cars were stolen, apartments burglarized, windows smashed," recalls Hank Margolis, a 1988 graduate of Drexel. One evening in October 1987, Margolis heard a scream outside his window. When he investigated, he found a woman lying on the sidewalk, her face bloody. Later the same night, two University students were jumped and beaten by neighborhood thugs.

Determined to fight back, Margolis called a meeting of Drexel's Interfraternity Association and formed Town Watch. Fraternity volunteers now patrol the campus and its surroundings from evening until the early-morning hours. Traveling in pairs, they report suspicious activity via walkie-talkie to a central radio post staffed by sorority volunteers, who then contact Philadelphia police. "There's no doubt the program has reduced crime in the Town Watch area," says John Hood, crime prevention officer in the police department's 16th district.

Lock and monitor doors. The night Jeanne Clery was murdered, dorm residents had propped open a locked door, as was frequently done to permit late-night pizza deliveries. Jeanne may also have left her own door unlocked, in anticipation of her roommate's return.

Lehigh was aware of its door problem. Security patrols kept records, and relocked propped doors. "In the six and a half months Jeanne was at Lehigh, there were 2,000 incidents of propped doors," says her father, Howard Clery. "In Jeanne's dorm alone there were 180 proppings."

Although Lehigh has a policy of disciplining door proppers, "no one has ever been caught," admits Marsha Duncan, vice president of student affairs.

Now, as part of an out-of-court settlement with the Clerys, Lehigh has agreed to try a pilot door-alarm program. In this, keys are replaced with plastic cards; a machine records the time and the identity of each card user; and a building-wide alarm sounds in case of intrusion. Also, exterior doors

are wired to notify police if they are propped open, a simple measure that may be the obstacle preventing another burglary, rape or murder.

Improve lighting and install emergency phones. At night, beautifully landscaped campuses offer shadowy hiding places for muggers, rapists and robbers. One solution to this problem is improved lighting.

After the University of Virginia in Charlottesville instituted a campus watch, trimming back bushes and installed lighting and emergency telephone call boxes, violent crime on campus dropped 38 percent, and property crime 47 percent.

At any call box, a student in trouble can reach campus police without dialing. If he or she cannot talk, the system tells police which phone was activated, and an officer is immediately dispatched to the scene.

Use escort and van services. Students at the University of California at Los Angeles don't have to worry about walking home alone at night. They can use U.C.L.A.'s campus escort service. Started with just seven volunteers in 1977, it now has 200 part-time student employees who shepherd more than 100 students a night around the 411 acre campus. In addition, vans provide nearly 385,000 rides a year.

Thanks to escort and van services, says John Barber, chief of U.C.L.A.'s police, violent crime is five to six times lower on campus than in surrounding communities.

Curb alcohol abuse. According to studies by Towson State University, alcohol is involved in 80 percent of rapes, assaults and acts of vandalism on campus. Most states have raised their legal drinking age to 21, disqualifying roughly three-fourths of undergraduates. But the laws are useless unless schools enforce them.

Since Texas raised the drinking age in 1986, alcohol consumption at Rice University in Houston has dropped markedly. "Alcohol-related crimes at Rice - assaults, criminal mischief and public intoxication - are tending downward too," says Mary Voswinkel, chief of the Rice police.

A key factor has been the involvement of Rice students in designing the school's policies. Any campus party where alcohol is served must have a student bartender trained by Rice's police to know when to cut off an

intoxicated person's liquor before trouble starts. Parties that last more than two hours and have more than 200 people must have two university police officers in attendance. And trained student "drunk sitters" stay with intoxicated party-goers until they sober up.

At first, attendance at on-campus parties was down, but no longer. "Before the law changed in 1986, the main draw was all the alcohol you wanted for only a dollar," says Scott Wiggers, a recent graduate. "Now alcohol is secondary, and people are having fun just dancing and socializing."

Even Rice students out on the town are protected, thanks to a transportation service that picks up those who have had too much to drink at area bars. The school also has a counseling center to help students deal with alcohol abuse, stress, depression and other problems.

Fight rape with education. The chances of a woman's being raped at college are astonishingly high. "Some 25 percent of the female college population have been victims of rape or attempted rape," says Claire Walsh, director of the Sexual Assault Recovery Service at the University of Florida. In most cases, the rapist is an acquaintance or date.

Gang rapes, which typically occur at fraternity parties, "are all too common on many campuses," report Julie Ehrhart and Bernice Sandler, who studied the subject for the Association of American Colleges. They've documented 100 such cases at colleges of every type public, private, big, small, religiously affiliated and Ivy League.

Determined to reduce rape, Claire Walsh established Campus Organized Against Rape (COAR) in 1982. Her research shows that women who recognize potential danger are better able to avoid an attack. So COAR runs awareness seminars, which are attended by men as well as women. Walsh stresses that men need to take responsibility for stopping rape and that most men are allies of women in the war against rape; they have an interest in protecting their mothers, sisters and girlfriends.

Walsh's advice to women for avoiding rape: Date in groups until you get to know your dates. Avoid being in any isolated situation. Don't drink with people you don't

cont. on page 9 - Safety