

## UNITED WAY OF THE OHIO VALLEY

### UNION COUNTY

#### PARTNER AGENCY: NEW BEGINNINGS SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT SERVICES, INC.

I'm just your typical small town raised, twenty-something, goal oriented, fast paced to achieve my dreams in life kind of girl. I've always known where I was going, what I wanted to do, what my convictions were, and who I was. I attend college just a few towns over from home, close enough for my family, far enough away to gain even more independence. As most college age kids do, I attended "get-togethers" regularly. I never partied enough to keep me from being a successful functional college student, but just enough to release stress and have a great time with my friends, friends that were in my age range. My idea of college parties changed last fall. Long story short, a man several decades older than me also attended. While one or two drinks are typically my limit, this man had a goal. The goal apparently was to render me incapable of decision making, incapable of consent. And that is exactly what happened. I did not consent to what he did, I couldn't have. And I definitely didn't want it. When I awoke the next morning, my first thought was NO, I will not allow this to be something that happened to me. I've heard so much about victim blaming, slut shaming. This was not going to be me. As much as I tried to convince myself that was true, the emotional toll was evident. But, like a disease, sexual assault will not go away, unless you treat it, by sharing the story, no matter how difficult it is to talk about. I needed help, wanted help. But I had to test the waters first. The last thing I needed was judgment. I began to leak small tidbits of the night to a few friends. They were numb at first, not sure how to process their own anger and pain *for me, not towards me*. And then, SUPPORT. I received their support, validation, encouragement. So much so, that I slowly told my family. They didn't blame me either! And not only encouraged me, but found the phone number for New Beginnings and went with me to my first appointment. The family support was so strong, actually, they wanted to report to the police long before I did. I simply didn't want to go that route, not just yet. I needed time to digest this. I needed time to speak with my therapist and work through some of my feelings. My therapist at New Beginnings not only met with me, but my family, as well. She explained MY rights to my family. It was my choice whether or not to report. MY CHOICE. She helped my family understand what I was experiencing, and what my rights were, as well. After working with her over several months and coming to terms with what had happened, working through self-blame (had I not gone to the party, etc.) it was my therapist that supported me when the time came to report to the police on my own terms. I am now a survivor, and with my therapist's help, help not only to me but also my now educated & supportive family, I am a survivor heading to trial to convict the one whose actions are at fault.

#### WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL YOUR INVESTMENT MAKE?

With your investment of \$100 **New Beginnings** can:

- Provide sound boards for four offices
- Provide booklets we use in our Good Touch Bad Touch programs given to children K-6
- Provide laundry of love clothes for survivors at the hospital

