

February 14, 2010

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## Women's Center Hosts "Sexvember"

**By Andrew Thompson**

This month, Haverford's campus is playing host to "Sexvember," an annual, month-long series of events sponsored by the Women's Center in order to raise awareness about sexuality and other related issues.

Sexvember is in its second year. "[In past years,] we had a 'Sexuality Week,' but last year Lauren [Finkel '09] thought of the term Sexvember," said Jessie Blumberg '09, a Women's Center staff member.

Karina Puttieva '11, another Women's Center staff member, said, "Sexuality is a pretty taboo subject in our culture, and the object [of Sexvember] is to debunk and demystify the subject of sex in general."

The Women's Center also sponsors a Rape and Sexuality Awareness month in the spring as part of a nationwide initiative, but Sexvember "[is meant to be] a little more fun," said Puttieva. Events this year include a Sex Toy Raffle, a Tantric Sex Workshop, "Sexpardy," and an Orgasmic Birth film screening.

That being said, "[there is] a more violent side [to sex] we can't turn our back on," said Blumberg.

Sexvember this year also has events concerning sexual assault and domestic violence, including an art exhibit by domestic violence survivors entitled "A View Through My Window," and the bi-annual SpeakOut event.

"SpeakOut [is a space] where people can come and talk about their experiences with sexual assault," explained Puttieva. She added that it is conducted in the "Quaker style," similar to Pluralism.

The Sex Toy Raffle took place on November 4 and 5 in the Sunken Lounge of the Dining Center. Raffle items included penis-shaped pasta, vibrators, and books on sensual and erotic massage.

"[It is] one of our biggest expenses, we had \$600 worth of stuff," Puttieva said. "[It] can be really uncomfortable, but [being exposed to the toys] kind of makes you less abrasive toward it."

The Tantric Sex Workshop was held November 6 on the top floor of the Campus Center. Sexologist Dr. Susan Kay facilitated the workshop, and spoke about the practice of tantra and tantric sex.

In the workshop, Kay dispelled the common myth that tantra is a religion, and spoke on the importance of breathing, meditation, focus, and communication between partners.

"In our culture, we don't speak about sex... [but] everyone has their own ways they like, and communication is actually a turn-on," said Kay.

The workshop was very well attended.

"We had more people than we expected," said Puttieva. "[I] liked the workshop, [it was] more genuine and less of a

spectacle.”

On Sexvember as a whole, Puttieva said that she saw “generally positive reactions” from the campus. “Things have become a tradition [by now],” she said.

Events still to occur include the Orgasmic Birth film screening on Wednesday, November 12 in the Women's Center at 8:00 p.m.; the domestic violence art show “A View Through My Window” from 4:00 p.m. November 18 through November 20 in Founders Great Hall; and SpeakOut, November 20 at 9:00 p.m. in the Founders Common Room.

Puttieva said she was looking forward to SpeakOut.

“It's really powerful...we have a rape hotline on campus that is underutilized...rape is underreported on campus. SpeakOut is a safe space, it's nice to see a forum for [these issues],” she said.

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