

# **Ramsey County: A Start by Believing Community**

**Whereas,** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men in the United States experience rape or attempted rape, at some point in their lives, and data from other sources report the rate for women is as high as 1 in 4; and

**Whereas,** according to a study by the University of Minnesota, the number of Minnesota women reporting a date-related sexual assault rises from 12 percent by the time they graduate from high school, 29 percent by age 23, to 33 percent by mid-life; and

**Whereas,** an analysis of the Minnesota Student Survey data by the University of Minnesota estimated 60 percent of teen first pregnancies in Minnesota are preceded by experiences of molestation, rape, or attempted rape; and

**Whereas,** 188 cases of child sexual abuse in Ramsey County were identified among reported cases of maltreatment in 2011; and

**Whereas,** current estimates suggest no more than 20 percent of sexual assaults will be reported to law enforcement and less than 3 percent will result in the conviction and incarceration of the perpetrator; and

**Whereas,** research documents that victims are far more likely to disclose their sexual assault to a friend or family member, and when these loved ones respond with disbelief, shame, or blame, victims suffer additional negative effects on their physical and psychological well-being and do not report their assault to law enforcement; and

**Whereas,** the national public awareness campaign "Start by Believing" is designed to improve the initial responses of friends, family members, and community professionals, including law enforcement and prosecutors, so they can help victims to access supportive resources and report their assaults; and

**Whereas,** Ramsey County has worked collaboratively across departments and with community partners for many years to prevent and respond to sexual violence in the community; and

**Whereas,** public health and the criminal justice system have different roles and responsibilities, but are united in the goals to prevent and reduce sexual violence in our community, from children to vulnerable adults;

**Now Therefore, Be it Resolved** by the City Council of the City of Vadnais Heights, that the City re-dedicate itself to addressing the continuing problem of sexual violence through its support of the Ramsey County: A Start by Believing Community Initiative and its goal for everyone to believe victims upon report.

**Now Therefore, Be it Resolved** by the City Council of the City of Vadnais Heights that Vadnais Heights and its community partners will expand support for sexual violence survivors through training, education and outreach.

  
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Gerald J. Auge, Acting Mayor

Attest:

  
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Kevin Watson, City Administrator