

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil Web: sd.ng.mil



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SD National Guard shoe drive shows support for survivors of sexual violence

RAPID CITY, S.D. – As part of a month-long campaign to raise awareness about sexual assault and educate Soldiers and Airmen on preventing sexual violence, the South Dakota National Guard is launching an “In Their Shoes” drive.

The drive will collect new or gently used shoes of any size, color or “gender” throughout the month of April, recognized nationally as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Shoes will be displayed representing how sexual violence can happen to anyone at any age, regardless of race, gender or ethnicity.

“We will display these shoes to show our support for survivors of sexual violence and to speak out against such violence,” said Patricia Fordyce, SDNG sexual assault response coordinator. “At the end of the month, shoes will be donated to local shelters to benefit those less fortunate.”

Every two minutes, someone in America is sexually assaulted. One in five females; one in six males.

“It is critical to open communication about sexual violence,” Fordyce said. “While hidden away, sexual violence is immune to cure. People unfamiliar with the problem of sexual violence don’t want to know it exists. It is ugly. People who have experienced sexual violence themselves want to forget about it.”

Members of the National Guard and community member alike who would like to participate in the drive can drop off shoes at their local National Guard armory.

“This drive is a way to open lines of communication and begin the discussion necessary to end sexual violence against all victims: men, women, children,” said Fordyce.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION contact Patricia D. Fordyce at (605) 737-6294 or e-mail Patricia.a.davis-fordyce.civ@mail.mil