April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

(Green Bay, Wis.) – April has been designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in the United States, recognized in many communities across the nation. This month was established to raise awareness of sexual violence and to honor survivors and their supporters. It is a way to emphasize the need for community involvement and to increase support for agencies providing sexual assault crisis services.

Sexual assault is a complicated issue that impacts one in three females and one in six males at some time during their life. In 2013, the Sexual Assault Center of Family Services served 1,111 victims of sexual abuse (787 primary; 324 secondary) and responded to 674 crisis calls throughout Brown, Door, Oconto and Marinette Counties. 67% of victims served by the Sexual Assault Center last year were under the age of 18.

The Sexual Assault Center of Family Services also places a strong emphasis on the prevention of sexual abuse in our communities. Presentations are held throughout the year, reaching more than 10,000 pre-school through high school kids with messages of how to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an opportunity for communities to break the silence that surrounds issues of sexual assault. By addressing sexual violence issues and providing education and awareness, we can each contribute to creating a safer environment for all individuals.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the Sexual Assault Center of Family Services. The program began in 1974 as an unfunded, grassroots operation serving primarily adult women. Today the Sexual Assault Center responds to victims of any age, gender, race or ethnic group, ability, or sexual identity. All services are still free and confidential. Over the last 40 years, the partnerships that have been
built with law enforcement and other community agencies have contributed to an environment of increased sensitivity to victims and higher prosecution rates for offenders.

To celebrate Sexual Assault Awareness Month this April, a Jeans for Justice exhibit will be on display at Harmony Café in Green Bay beginning April 1. The Sexual Assault Center will also be hosting a number of Unheard Voices presentations at area high schools that are also open to the public. For additional information, call the Sexual Assault Center of Family Services at (920) 436-8899 or visit www.familyservicesnew.org/sac.

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FOR THE EDITOR:
The Sexual Assault Center of Family Services provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for victims of sexual violence and their families and friends. Services include crisis intervention, supportive counseling, medical advocacy, follow-up assistance, support groups, legal advocacy, and community education. Services are available for men, women and children throughout Brown, Door, Oconto and Marinette Counties.

Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin, Inc.
www.familyservicesnew.org