

# How to Start Take Back the Night

By Samantha Gray

*Take Back the Night* is an event held on campuses to break the silence and try to end domestic and sexual violence. Victims of rape and domestic violence are called the 'silent victims' because they are less likely to report crimes than any other group of victims. *Take Back the Night* is an event held to give a voice to those people and spread the word in an attempt to end violence against women.

The first part of starting *Take Back the Night* on your campus is to get the support of your faculty and staff. Talk to your professors or the president of your school to get their permission and support for the event. Speak with your Women Studies or Sociology departments, local sororities or various campus organizations to spread the word and gain support for the event.

Next, one should create a planning committee. Your planning committee will be there to help with advertising, fundraising, finding a location and setting up the event. Usually your school's Student Affairs or Women Studies Department would be a good place to look for people to be on your committee.

Next, one should try to look for a speaker for the event. Your keynote speaker will give a speech during the ceremony so this is a crucial part – You want to have someone who can deliver a powerful speech. A good place to look for a speaker would be to ask around at different local domestic violence shelters, or there is also a list on the *Take Back the Night* website.

Advertising is one of the most important aspects of planning the event. *Take Back the Night* is very powerful but if no one knows it is going on, then what was the point of all your hard work?

Word of mouth is one of the best ways to spread the news. Tell your friends and classmates all about it – This event is not just for survivors of domestic violence; it is in support of ending the violence. Posters, flyers and banners are also good ways to spread the news – Hang them up all around campus so people know what this is all about. If you can get a spot on your campus radio or television station, that would also be a great way to let people know what *Take Back the Night* really is.

*Take Back the Night* is a powerful event for all of those who attend. It is intended to support women all across the world in our attempt to end violence against women. We should not have to be scared to walk across a campus parking lot alone at night or feel we have to carry mace on our key chains any longer.



Your final task is to create your order of events.

## Order of Events

1. There is usually an opening ceremony.
2. Your keynote speaker will then deliver her speech.
3. Then there is a candlelight vigil for all of the survivors and victims of domestic and sexual violence.
4. After that, the audience should be given the chance to say something.
5. Then there is a closing ceremony.

### Author's note:

*My name is Samantha Gray. I am an English major with an Environmental Studies minor at Otterbein College. I have worked with Take Back the Night for two years now and enjoy participating in different campus events around Otterbein. After I graduate I would like to go into non-profit organization work and perhaps work in a position where I could travel. Right now, some of my favorite activities are reading and running when I have the time and can motivate myself.*