



A program of **End Violence Against Women International**

During Tuesday Night's Huntington Beach City Council Meeting, Mayor Matthew Harper and Police Chief Robert Handy publicly announced their support for a unique public awareness campaign which focuses on improving the public's response to sexual assault.

The campaign is called *Start by Believing* and was developed by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI). The campaign sheds light on the importance of how friends and family members respond when a victim of sexual assault confides in them. All too often the response can be negative, demeaning or infer the victim brought the attack on themselves. A negative response can worsen the trauma, decrease the likelihood the victim will report the assault to the police, and foster an environment where sexual assault predators face zero consequences for their crimes.

Research documents that rapists attack an average of six times, which means one failed response can equal five more victims. *Start by Believing* will lead the way toward stopping this cycle by creating a positive community response. The campaign's goal is to educate the community and encourages a proper response when learning about a sexual assault.

The Huntington Beach Police Department wants to end the stigmas that can sometimes be attached to sexual assault and encourage victims to come forward. Through a caring and supportive response, we can start the healing process and hold sexual predators responsible for their actions.

For additional information, please visit the *Start by Believing* website at: [www.startbybelieving.org](http://www.startbybelieving.org) or the End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) website at: [www.evawintl.org](http://www.evawintl.org)