We just completed our 19th year providing this sexual abuse prevention education to the 2nd graders in Mower County. The goal of the program is to help the students identify and prevent sexual abuse.

Tori Miller, Crime Victims Resource Center director, says the sexual abuse prevention education is an effective tool to ensure children have a voice. “We explain what inappropriate and appropriate touches are, we identify adults they trust and discuss telling that adult if something is happening to them. The goal is to empower children and keep them safe.” “Having the opportunity to teach these young children has been so rewarding for me personally, if this program helps even one child escape the trauma of child sexual abuse, we have made a difference,” adds Miller.

Miller adds, “We are so grateful to The Hormel Foundation and United Way of Mower County for funding this invaluable program.”
Crime Victims Resource Center is partnering with the Mower County Jail in providing a Women’s Support and Education Group.

The group meets weekly, and focuses on a variety of topics. Topics include: healthy and unhealthy relationships, domestic violence, self-esteem, and self-empowerment. The goal is to increase self-awareness, promote education, and address any victimization that an individual may have experienced.

Inmates who attend the Women’s Support and Education Group have the ability to continue these services once they are released. Crime Victims Resource Center provides a weekly support and education group that is open to the public. This group covers similar topics and provides ongoing support. For more information, please call 507-437-6680.

The truth about sexting

Sexting is a term used to describe creating, sending, and receiving sexually suggestive, semi-nude, nude images or text messages. It can be sent via text, email, webcam, or even social media sites such as Snapchat, Facebook, and KiK. Statistics show that 24% of high school aged students (ages 14-17) and 33% of college students (ages 18-24) have sent a nude or semi-nude picture at one time or another.*

Many feel that it is a fun and discrete form of “flirting” however, the transmission of sexually explicit texts can be extremely risky. Sexts have no geographical boundaries. Internet accounts can be “hacked” and those private images can be stolen and published. They can be leaked into cyberspace (by accident or on purpose) and live there for years without you even knowing about it. It can affect your future with potential employers or significant others seeing these images with a simple Google search. Not to mention the potential for sex offenders and pedophiles having access to these images. Along with possible social embarrassment, sexting also has legal consequences. In Minnesota, along with other states, taking or forwarding nude photos can constitute child pornography. This is considered a felony and could mean that you would have to register as a sex offender for the rest of your life.

The best way to prevent sexting is communication. Talk about the consequences, both legal and social. Know the warning signs and observe differences in behavior. If you have any questions or suspect someone you care about maybe involved in sexting, we’re here to help.

* nobullying.com/why-sexting-should-be-a-strong-concern/
8 WAYS
Community Members Can Prevent Sexual Violence

1. Check out Project Unspoken, a powerful video that seeks to end the prominent silence surrounding the issues of rape, sexual assault, and relationship violence. Share this video with others to promote awareness of sexual violence.

2. If you see something, say something. You have the power to stop a sexual assault from happening, just by stepping in and asking a simple question. Watch Who Are You, a video that depicts a night leading to a sexual assault, then rewinds that same night showing how speaking up can prevent a sexual assault.

3. Think back over situations of harassment or bullying that you have witnessed. What did you do? What could you have done? What will you do in the future? Say something. Do something.

4. Be a caring adult in the lives of your child’s friends. Let them know you are a sounding board if they need to talk. It’s important for kids to have adults in their lives that they can trust.

5. Ask your representatives for increased state and federal funding for rape crisis centers and sexual violence prevention.

6. If you think that someone close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, ask if you can help. The Start by Believing Campaign provides tips on how to address a sexual assault victim. Keywords: Believe them, be supportive, and avoid the ‘why’ questions. Help victims talk about their assault and seek justice and healing.

7. Refuse to tell or laugh at sexist jokes and speak up to a friend who behaves in a sexist, racist, or homophobic way. When people are made aware that these jokes or actions are not viewed as funny, they will begin to examine their behavior, and deconstruct the idea that sexist, racist, or homophobic jokes or actions are commonplace.

8. Report suspicious activity in your neighborhood. If you see something out of the ordinary, or see someone behaving in an erratic way, notify law enforcement right away.
Crime Victims Resource Center (CVRC) is a non-profit organization assisting victims of crime regardless of age, gender or ethnic background. In 1977 we were established as Victim’s Crisis Center, initially focused on female victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. As needs grew, the center expanded its focus on all crimes and all victims including; men, women, and children. In 1996 we changed our name to Crime Victims Resource Center. CVRC is a program within Mayo Clinic Health System (Austin West Building) and is grant funded by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety – Office of Justice Programs, The Hormel Foundation, and United Way of Mower County.

We have three staff members and are always looking for volunteers to assist us with victim services as well as outreach projects. Crime Victims Resource Center is the only agency in Mower County providing direct advocacy services to victims. All services we provide are free of charge. In 2016, we provided 1,951 services to 361 victims. We also provided sexual abuse prevention education to 555 2nd graders in Mower County.