



16 Days of Activism – Day 7

Zonta International’s Vision

Zonta International envisions a world in which women’s rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential.

In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision making positions on an equal basis with men.

In such a world, no woman lives in fear of violence.

We have not yet reached our goal. Unfortunately, at least 80% of women worldwide and many men, especially men in the LGBTQT community, experience street harassment -- unwelcome words and actions by unknown persons in public which are motivated by gender and invade a person’s physical and emotional space in a disrespectful, creepy, startling, scary, or insulting way. Street harassment can cause someone to feel sexualized, intimidated, embarrassed, humiliated, objectified, angry or unsafe. It includes unwanted leering and whistling; “catcalls;” sexually explicit comments; demands for a smile; persistent demands for a date or telephone number after being told no; or calling someone a bitch, dyke or fag, and it can escalate into groping, indecent exposure, and even sexual assault. Street harassment – or the threat of it – may make women and girls feel unsafe in public spaces and may limit the places they feel they can go. It is a human rights violation. It needs to STOP!



WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. Set a good example -- be respectful.
2. Share our stories. Help make visible the experiences that are too often invisible and normalized.
3. Call out harassers. “Hey, man. That’s not cool.” “Cut it out.” “Stop, that’s harassment.” If you feel safe, ask them, “Can you please repeat yourself?” or “Would you want your mother to see you saying that?”
4. Report indecent exposure or physical harassment to the police. Note what the person looks like or take a photo to submit with the report.
5. Stand up for others when we see them being harassed. Ask them if they are okay or need help. We can also cause a distraction, interruption or pretend to know the person being harassed and lead them out of the situation.

We can also organize community action or start an anti-street harassment campaign. Such campaigns can raise public awareness that street harassment is a problem and can educate people about why it occurs. A campaign can also lead to concrete changes, like anti-harassment public service announcements on television, radio or public transportation. Education can be accomplished through social media or even posters placed throughout the community. Tell business owners when men are loitering outside the business and making women feel uncomfortable. As the business owner to post signs about respect. We can hand out fliers, hold an event, write pro-respect messages on sidewalks with chalk (where legal), talk to city council members and transit workers and mentor youth. There is a lot that we can do. Take action now. We all have the power to say “no” to casual sexism and to stand up for women and girls. **SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.**

