

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER PUSHES FOR EXPOSURE

28TH ANNIVERSARY

BY ASHLEY CRAVEN
Contributing Writer

The Women's Resource Center at Truman State University will be celebrating its 28th year on campus this February.

However, unless you're a member of the WRC staff, you'll probably have to be pointed in the right direction when finding the small, glass-windowed office tucked into a corner of the Student Union Building.

WRC director senior Maggie Mortensen has been a member for three years and is finishing up her first semester as head executive.

"We started out in a closet," Mortensen said, referring to the location of the first WRC office in the main foyer of Ryle Hall. "Now we're in a slightly bigger closet."

Mortensen said the WRC has a hard time reaching out to students because their office is so hard to find and also because the mission of the center — education and awareness — is the same as it was when the center was first established on campus. Most of the information the WRC helped release at that time was not as accessible to students as it is now.

"Our purpose is to educate and serve the Truman community," Mortensen said. "However, a lot of the education can be done these days with Google, making our job a little more difficult."

This isn't to say the WRC is struggling to emphasize digital convergence in its outreach. It is active on Facebook and is finding new ways to reach out to the community through social media, Mortensen said.

"We're working on our [social media] impact but also on our peer support in the center," Mortensen said. "We want people to feel comfortable coming to the center when they just need someone to talk to."

Mortensen said the WRC staff offers free peer counseling for people with questions or concerns about sexual health, and they also help people find the resources they need. Additionally, the WRC staff offers several programs to students throughout the year.

Nikki Batinick, WRC public relations executive coordinator, is a second-year member of the center and helps organize some of the events the WRC hosts.

"We do a lot of cool projects on campus," Batinick said. "We educate students about sexual health, and we also have things like the self-defense class we teach, which is one of my favorites."

Batinick said every year, each executive member is in charge of planning their own event, and they can be as creative with those as possible.

For example, Batinick said the WRC hosted a showcase at the end of last semester with pictures and flyers from the center's years at Truman. Batinick said the event was also a fun excuse for students to dress up and eat fancy food.

While there are many interesting events sponsored by the WRC that take place on campus throughout the academic year, Batinick and Mortensen said they wish more people on campus knew about these programs.

Paige Wolkober, WRC executive assistant director, has been working for the WRC for the last academic year, and this is her first year in an executive position.

"We all feel like we're not as well-known as we can be," Wolkober said. "We're trying to figure out



Submitted photo

Senior Sydney Gosik and junior Nikki Batinick, Women's Resource Center public relations executive coordinator, table for the WRC at the Student Activity Fair, working to promote the center to students interested in getting more involved on campus. Junior Paige Wolkober, WRC executive assistant director, said this is how many students are recruited to work for the center.

"We started out in a closet. Now we're in a slightly bigger closet."

-Senior Maggie Mortensen, Women's Resource Center director

how we can be a better resource to the campus and better serve them by finding out what they need."

Wolkober knows about the struggles the center has experienced with public relations during the past and she said she is hoping to overcome this during upcoming semesters.

"We just switched to chalking for our PR outreach because we felt like our posters were ineffective, and we were spending a ton of money on them," Wolkober said.

In addition to this, Wolkober said, the WRC is collaborating with other organizations to get the word out.

"We do a lot with Active Minds, an organization involved with mental health on campus," Wolkober said. "One of our executive members is in that organization. We get people from those classes who care about these issues to come to our events."

Overall, the purpose of the organization is to be supportive of the Truman community, and it is finding better ways to do that.

"We have staffers in the center all the time who will listen and be supportive if people come in," Wolkober said. "I want to make sure people know what resources we have and also that people know where we're actually located."

SERVICES OFFERED BY TRUMAN'S WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

INFORMATION ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, SAFE SEX AND PREGNANCY OPTIONS

EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINMENT-BASED PROGRAMS

LITERATURE ABOUT A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS, INCLUDING SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND ISSUES OF RACISM AND SEXISM

PEER TO PEER COUNSELING

CONDOMS AND DENTAL DAMS

LOCATION:
THE WRC IS LOCATED IN THE SUB DOWN UNDER IN ROOM 1109C

Source: <http://wrc.truman.edu/>