

Sexual assault is an ordeal no one should have to face. Often these crimes go unreported. It is an alarming statistic that people with disabilities are victimized at a higher rate of this crime, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey. There are various reasons why sexual assault may go unreported. However, living with a disability can provide unique or further challenges in reporting crimes to the authorities or a trusted companion.

With the permission of her family, we share the story of 16-year-old Hannah who was the victim of sexual assault on her school bus. Hannah has a genetic disease called cri du chat and is non-verbal. The assault was reported by a witness as Hannah faced obstacles in reporting the activity herself. There was no monitoring equipment, camera, or aide on Hannah's bus.

We at, The Woodlands, are saddened and appalled to hear of the trauma that this young woman endured in silence. We urge you to take action in creating change to help protect Hannah and her peers. Hannah's mother, Patty, has composed a letter to pass a bill at the Senate that requires cameras on every school bus in the state of Pennsylvania. Prepared letters addressed to Senator Jim Brewster and Senator Jay Costa are available at Studio RAW, Flowerama Pittsburgh, and The Woodlands as well as the Facebook Group Page, Stand for Hannah.

Resources are available for all victims of sexual assault and those who care for them. For those who are seeking a place to turn due to sexual assault or violent crime we recommend the following local resources:

- Blackburn Center (www.blackburncenter.org/724-836-1122)
- Crisis Center North (www.crisiscenternorth.org/412-364-5556)
- Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (www.paar.net/1-866-363-7273)
- Arc Human Services/Arc of Washington (www.aadvantageinc.org/724-745-3010)

The Woodlands is dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with disability and chronic illness. It is among our Core Values that all people with disability and chronic illness deserve the very best opportunities to fulfill their lives. This includes the right to safety, regardless of one's abilities. Please join us as we *Stand for Hannah*, a voice demanding safety for all abilities.

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