

CSP Sexual Assault Victim Services



Imagine yourself entering a long courtyard filled with rows and rows of t-shirts hanging from what seems like an endless clothesline. Now imagine that each of these t-shirts represents a person – a survivor of violence. This spring, CSP Sexual Assault Victim Services and Victim Assistance Programs are pleased to give our clients and their loved ones the opportunity to break the silence about violence by creating a shirt to represent them on “The Clothesline Project,” a visual tribute to honor survivors of violence.

The Clothesline Project is a national movement begun in the 1980’s whereby victims of violence are given the chance to break the silence and “air their dirty laundry.” Different colors represent different violent crimes (i.e., red = rape , white = homicide, yellow = domestic violence, etc.) The decision to make a shirt, the act of designing and creating it, and finally contributing it to the project is an emotional and empowering process. It allows survivors to speak out against violence, to tell their story, and bring feelings to the surface that may still be painful.

Our project, named the Orange County Clothesline Project, was started in 2001 with 8 shirts painted by rape survivors. As of 2008, we now count over 600 shirts, all made by Orange County crime victims. The project has been displayed at all of the major universities in Orange County as well as at the Plaza of the Flags by Central Court. It is painful yet beautiful, a moving testament to courage and survival.