

2008 WALK TO STOP THE SILENCE

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Survivors Healing Center, Bikers Against Child Abuse and Stop The Silence, Inc. held 2nd Annual Walk and Rally in Watsonville on Saturday, April 12, calling for an end to child sexual abuse

Survivors Healing Center (SHC), Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA), and Stop The Silence, Inc. presented the 2nd Annual Walk To Stop The Silence in Watsonville on Saturday, April 12th from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm, in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Walk was an opportunity to speak out against child sexual abuse in our local and world community.

Over three hundred people in Santa Cruz County “joined” thousands of others in this world-wide movement. Our event coincided with the 5th Annual International Pepsi Race To Stop The Silence in Washington, D.C. on April 13. <http://www.stopcsa.org/Race/>.

The community gathered at St. Patrick's Church at 11:00 am and walked through downtown to the Plaza. Kimberly Petersen, Mayor of Watsonville, proclaimed the event “our community's commitment ... to end the sexual abuse, violence, and neglect of our children in our local community and world community.” She added, “Together We Can Stop This Silent Worldwide Epidemic Of Child Sexual Abuse.”

Other speakers included Antonio Rivas, Mayor Pro Tem; Ari Symons, then Assistant D.A. for SC County; Monica Herrera, Watsonville Police Detective; Josefina Flores, Parent; Mark Kastner, B.A.C.A.; and Kathy Agnone, Commission

For The Prevention Of Violence Against Women. Maria Rodriguez–Castillo, Board Member of SHC, welcomed everyone to the event.

Bonita Mugnani, Executive Director, SHC thanked everyone for participating. She said, “When we wonder what we can do about a world issue that is pandemic, here is something we can do. We are, literally, taking steps together to stop the silence about child sexual abuse, standing up with others in support of children who have been abused, and walking as a community with families that are healing. This is one way to create social change.”

Over fifteen local organizations, protection agencies and schools provided information and activities, including face painting, mural art, and “Messages Of Hope And Inspiration.” These groups were Girls Task Force, Si Se Puede, Child Abuse Prevention Council, Walnut Avenue Women’s Center, Women’s Crisis Support, Salud Para La Gente, SC County Sheriff’s Office/S.A.F.E. Task Force, Pajaro Valley Shelter, Santa Cruz Aids Project, Suenos, and New School.

Families enjoyed drinks, ice cream and berries as they listened to performers Ron Beutler, Rachel Pfeiffer, Jaqueline Flores, Alex Rodriguez–Castillo, and David Beaudry.

Our Second Annual Walk To Stop The Silence was an inspiring event for our community. We at SHC would like to acknowledge and thank the following for its outstanding success: Our Board Of Directors; Staff – Erin Wilkie and Ama Delevett; and volunteers Rosa Guerrero, Margarita Khayan, Team Samurai, and B.A.C.A. members.

Be sure to join us next April for our 2009 Walk To Stop The Silence.