

## Assistance League of the Eastside to hold fashion show benefit for philanthropic programs, including Assault Survivor Kits

Apr 11, 2016 at 1:30PM

Assault Survivor Kits is one of four philanthropic programs that will benefit from Assistance League of the Eastside's Step Into Style: An Afternoon of Friends, Fashion and Philanthropy from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 15 at the Westin Bellevue, 600 Bellevue Way in downtown Bellevue. Tickets for the fashion show and luncheon are \$55 plus \$3 handling at [eastside.assistanceleague.org](http://eastside.assistanceleague.org).

In 2014-15, Assistance League of the Eastside distributed Assault Survivor Kits to 1,737 individuals at hospitals throughout Washington, including Evergreen Health Medical Centers in Kirkland and Redmond, Group Health's Bellevue Medical Center and Bellevue's Overlake Hospital Medical Center.

The kits include a change of clothing, hygiene supplies, a note of encouragement signed by Assistance League of the Eastside members and comfort items such as small games or books. When assault survivors come to hospitals to report the crimes, the clothes they are wearing are retained as evidence. Providing something for them to wear and diversionary items helps to restore dignity and decrease anxiety at a time of crisis.

"You are making a difference in their lives every day — we know that they feel supported by you," Mary Ellen Stone, executive director of the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center told Assistance League of the Eastside members at their January 2016 chapter meeting.

According to Stone, about half of the assault survivors who go through the criminal justice process are children or teens. One out of three girls and one out of five boys are sexually assaulted by age 18. A growing trend is linked to youth homelessness. Stone said that 40-60 percent of young people living on the streets were sexually assaulted before they became homeless and are running away from abuse. Campus sexual assault is another problem on the rise.

"We want to help (these young people) manage their trauma and anxiety so that the symptoms are not driving them," Stone explained. "We can't erase the memory but can help them to rebuild their lives. So thank you for what you do," Stone added.

Assistance League of the Eastside also receives tributes from hospital staff members who have witnessed the impact of Assault Survivor Kits.

Richard Dickson, the emergency services manager at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Enumclaw sent Assistance League of the Eastside a letter signed by multiple staff members. Dickson stated, "Tonight at our staff meeting we discussed the great work your group is doing to assist assault victims right at the time they feel most vulnerable. We greatly appreciate your delivering the multiple sets of clothing in varying sizes to fit the needs of these people. Most likely you will never receive a thank you from the person who gets this needed help so we want to do that now and say a big THANK YOU for providing this service to people who need it so badly."

Susan Johnson, a sexual assault nurse examiner at Evergreen Hospital wrote to Assistance League of the Eastside: "I had an 18-year-old that was seen for a sexual assault today. She was getting dressed into one of your kits and had a few comments. 'What kind people to do this for people like me. That is so sweet that they wrap it in a pretty bow.'"

In addition to Assault Survivor Kits, Assistance League of the Eastside philanthropic programs called Operation School Bell, Starting Over Support and Help4Homeless will be supported through the Step Into Style event at the Westin Bellevue.

Assistance League of the Eastside is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that makes a positive difference in the lives of children and adults touched by hardship or violence. For more information, visit [eastside.assistanceleague.org](http://eastside.assistanceleague.org).