

# CAMPUS & COMMUNITY

## Unshackled: Raising Voices Against Human Trafficking

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The month of January is designated as Human Trafficking Awareness Prevention Month (HTAP), a recognition that started in 2010 when President Barack Obama made the designation. One motto is prevention is protection, but what does prevention look like?

The University of Wisconsin-Superior students learned there was a tabling event for just this thing last Thursday, Jan 30, at the Yellowjacket Union. Samantha Rawn, the Anit Human Trafficking Coordinator from the Human Development Center (HDC) in Douglas County, and Desiree Tody, the Ashland and Bayfield County Outreach Program Coordinator from the Center Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (CASDA), presented students with prevention methods for HTAP and the connection between Indigenous communities and their missing relatives.

Tody said from the table Thursday afternoon, “In 2020, the FBI’s National Crime Information Center reported that 5,295 Indigenous women and 4,276 Indigenous men were reported missing.” From these numbers, only 1,631 cases were reported as active. The question is how UWS students or anyone can become more aware.

Rawn said, “The big-



Yellowjacket Union tabling for HDC and CASDA for Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month  
Photo by Maddie Schaffer | The Promethean

gest prevention thing you can do is making sure you’re being aware of what trafficking is and making sure you’re doing your research. I feel like there’s a lot of different myths that go around online and in like just general media on what trafficking is, and a lot of those myths that get spread draw attention away from what trafficking actually looks like. So making sure you’re being aware of those things and spreading that information is really, really huge because it makes it so that survivors then are able to recognize what trafficking looks like and then the resources themselves are able to know and learn better.”

CASDA and HDC provide many resources, including a 24-hour helpline, advocacy services, peer counseling, virtual support groups, legal services, community training, clothing programs, and more. Prevention is protection.

Rawn said, “Another huge one is making sure you, in general, have a safety plan. Potentially unsafe situations can come up,

irrelevant to trafficking. So having, a person you can call if you’re like, ooh, there’s some weird things going on here. Or knowing what resources you can reach out to. All these things can help you to build a safety plan and make sure that you have the ability to keep yourself and the people around you safe.”

Tody continued with this theme and said, “College students are (the) at most, at risk age group, especially the Indigenous relatives that are coming in concept with the most people that can put them at risk. We’re just at an age where we’re trying new things and taking risks. It’s a risk-taking age. And people of what those risks are. They need to be aware of their rights. They need to be aware of resources so that if they do find themselves in a situation where they could end up being trafficked that, they know who to call for help. And it’s really important that Indigenous folks have Indigenous resources.”

HTAP month serves as a crucial reminder of the ongoing issues surrounding trafficking, particularly within Indigenous communities. The insights shared by Rawn and Tody highlight the importance of education, awareness, and the availability of resources to combat this issue effectively. Understanding what trafficking looks like and encouraging individuals to develop safety plans empowers oneself and those around us to recognize and respond to potential dangers.

As college students and community members, staying informed and connected to appropriate resources is essential in creating a safer environment for everyone.

Resources:  
<https://casda.org/> and <https://hdcnorth.org/locations/douglas-county/>.

## Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of Wisconsin-Superior

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The University of Wisconsin-Superior is a richly diverse campus. Walking around the school, everyone you meet will indeed have a different background and lived experience. UW-Superior’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) programs highlight these differences and showcase their beauty.

“Everyone has, you know, different identities,” said Karen Valdez, UWS’ Multicultural Initiatives Assistant Director. “We don’t all have the same backgrounds... we don’t come from the same places. So I think it’s really important to acknowledge those things, and I think that EDI work does that and helps to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds that are coming into these spaces are able to feel seen [and]heard.”

The Gender Equity Resource Center, Indigenous Cultures Resource Center, Office of Intercultural Student Success, and Veteran and Nontraditional Student Center are all part of UW-Superior’s EDI department.

UWS also has a myriad of identity-based, student-led organizations such as Black Student Union, Native Nations Student Organization (NNSO), UWS Alliance, and World Student Association. EDI programming organizes many exciting events through-

out the school year; the Fall 2024 semester highlighted that. Last semester, UWS celebrated Dia de los Muertos, Diwali, and Indigenous Peoples’ Day. The Gender Equity Resource Center hosted a welcome back dinner in September, their annual drag show in October, and a panel for Transgender Day of Remembrance and Resilience in November.

The EDI department held several September events to honor Hispanic Heritage Month. These only scratch the surface of EDI programming at UWS.

EDI programs are sometimes a disputed topic, and elections can potentially change their role in higher education. T Wainman, UWS’ Gender and Sexuality Programs coordinator, reflected on potential changes. “Changes could happen at any point, any year,” Wainman said. “I think it’s more about just, how do we adapt and how do we continue moving forward if changes happen or as things change, because change is inevitable.”

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are alive and well at UW-Superior. Students and staff alike organize and attend EDI events. For more information about upcoming EDI events at UWS, visit the campus calendar at [uwsuper.edu](http://uwsuper.edu).



Presentation of some prevention methods and statistics about HTAP.  
by Maddie Schaffer | The Promethean



A painted portrait by CASDA team member Desiree Tody 16 year old daughter representing the silent injustice in the Indigenous communities.  
Photo by Aiyanna Hellmann



Photo of Indigenous People’s Day hosted last October in the Yellowjacket Union.  
File photo from Carter Lansdale | The Promethean



Photo of the Soul Food Dinner hosted this February in the Yellowjacket Union.  
Photo by : Maddie Schaffer | The Promethean