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Georgian College students stand against gender-based violence with ?Take Back the Night?

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Students at Georgian College in Orangeville took back the night on Sept. 27.

The annual Take Back the Night event was held on Georgian College campuses throughout Ontario. The Social Service Work program has been offered in Orangeville for the past four years and its students participated in the event.

This year was the second outing for students to reclaim the night and stand against gender-based violence, said Johanna Magee, an instructor at the Orangeville campus who organized the local event.

She said the Social Service Work program coordinator, who works out of Orillia, is an advocate for issues that impact the health and safety of people in the college's communities.

?She was inspirational last year as we organized our first annual Take Back the Night event at the campus,? Magee said. ?The local agency involvement and support is phenomenal and the messages from the speakers are worth a million dollars.?

She said the college will promote the event outside the campuses next year, and nursing students and those in the early childhood education program will be invited to take part.

Mayor Lisa Post, who is a part-time instructor at the campus, attended the event. She said the turnout for the event was comprised of Georgian faculty and students as well as local organizations who have roles in protecting and supporting women.

?This event is an important one,? Post said. ?The primary group targeted to attend are first-year college students, and many of them are international students who may not be aware of the local organizations that are here to support them.

?This year, Family Transition Place, Headwaters Hospital, the OPP, and WindyRidge Stables were there to talk about sexual assaults, including the data and the supports that are available.?

Take Back the Night brings awareness of the issue to an age group, many people of which may be away from home for the first time.

?The event helps to bring awareness to the issue, to share that it can happen to anyone and to remove the stigma associated with being a sexual assault survivor,? Post said.