



PROCLAMATION *Annual Start by Believing Day*

Whereas, More than half of all women and nearly one-third of all men in America have experienced sexual violence; and

Whereas, the President of these United States has proclaimed April 2024 as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, calling on us to stand with survivors by holding perpetrators accountable, and bringing an end to a culture that has allowed sexual assault to occur for far too long; and

Whereas, the County of San Juan, Washington shares a critical concern for victims of sexual violence and a desire to support their needs for justice and healing; and


Whereas, in 2023 the San Juan County Sheriff's Office received and investigated a total of 179 reports of sexual assault, domestic/dating violence and stalking; and

Whereas, current estimates suggest as few as 1 in 5 sexual assaults will be reported to law enforcement and less than 3 percent will result in the conviction and incarceration of the perpetrator; and

Whereas, research documents that victims are far more likely to disclose their sexual assault to a friend or family member, and when these loved ones respond with doubt, shame, or blame, victims suffer additional negative effects on their physical and psychological well-being; and

Whereas, the Start by Believing public awareness campaign (a program of End Violence Against Women International) is designed to improve the responses of friends, family members, and community professionals, so they can help victims to access supportive resources and engage the criminal justice system;

Now Therefore, Be it Proclaimed by all members of the San Juan County Council that we support the **Start by Believing** public awareness campaign and do hereby declare the first Wednesday of April each year to be **Start by Believing Day** in San Juan County.


Jane Fuller, Chair
District 3


Christine Minney, Vice Chair
District 1


Cindy Wolf, Member
District 2