

THE ERIN LEVITAS INITIATIVE FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AT MARYLAND CAREY LAW

Erin's Legacy

Erin Levitas was poised to join the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law community and bring her many talents to the legal profession. She hoped her education at the law school would enable her to pursue her passion for education and women's rights by working to help all women feel welcome and thrive. Although Erin left us before she could pursue her law school degree to help others, we aim to create a new and ambitious program focused primarily on prevention and support to empower survivors of sexual assault.

Why Sexual Assault Prevention?

A personal experience made Erin passionate about this cause. After her attack, she explored what programs existed to provide support and education. She was shocked at the epidemic occurring in schools and communities across the country. Many individuals had similar experiences, but did not have the outlet or the skills to move past the assault.

The Erin Levitas Initiative for Sexual Assault Prevention will focus on education as a means of prevention, but it will also work to clear stigmas and give individuals the tools to speak openly and move past their assault.

The Erin Levitas Initiative for Sexual Assault Prevention aims to carry on the work Erin would do if she were here. We strive to serve as an example in Maryland and around the country, to share our expertise, and to provide a successful example of prevention that can be scaled nationally.



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Donations may be made directly to the Erin Levitas Foundation or the University of Maryland Baltimore Foundation (law school.) Please contact for additional details.

Our Solution

Two programs at Maryland Carey Law are coming together to make this initiative a reality. The Gender Violence Clinic explores the ways in which gender and violence intersect. The Center for Dispute Resolution (C-DRUM) promotes the effective resolution of conflict to empower and transform.

The Erin Levitas Initiative for Sexual Assault Prevention will engage young men and women in educational activities designed to help them identify, question, and reject the destructive ideas that give rise to sexual violence and may help us to undo the damage such attitudes cause, from middle school through high school.

We will address this problem by hiring an expert in the field to work within and alongside the Gender Violence Clinic and C-DRUM. This expert will develop and articulate a new curriculum that will introduce students to the concept of addressing conflict through open dialogue. Our goal is to facilitate a safe conversation around sexual violence in an attempt to change the current culture.

We will do this by:

- **Conducting outreach to the schools.** Before we can deliver the message, we must get in front of our audience. A key function of this initiative is building and maintaining relationships with area elementary and middle schools. The law school is fortunate to have a foundation of trust with many of these institutions. Using that foundation gives the Initiative a unique opportunity to be present where our mission requires us to be.
- **Coordinating presentations at the schools.** Our goal is to change the way that boys and young men think about women by addressing the attitudes that drive violence. By changing attitudes early, we hope to transform the culture in the long-term. Through presenting to schools, we can open a dialogue and start planting the seeds of change.
- **Training law students on the curriculum.** Law school clinic students have done amazing work when given the training and opportunity to mediate conflicts in the schools. The curriculum to support the Initiative would include a two-step process: basic training on sexual violence followed by restorative justice training to address situations as they arise. Clinic students would take this training and work within the schools, acting as the conduits of change.
- **Training teachers, principals, administrators, and parents.** Students and staff cannot act alone if we hope to make a sustainable change in attitudes. To help ensure that the program is accomplishing its goals, the Initiative will work with the people that the students interact with on a daily basis. This includes training in restorative methods of conflict resolution, educating them on their legal rights and responsibilities, and spreading awareness of when and how to intervene.