Red flags with K9 Jules and VPAS

By Lexi White
Features Editor

Flags have populated the Residence Quad; green flags to share positive experiences in relationships and red to shed light on negative relationship experiences.

The Violence Prevention, Victim Advocacy and Support Center, VPAS, hosted this red flag campaign on Thursday, Sept. 26 to help students gain awareness of what is harmful in romantic connections.

VPAS is a resource that students can utilize concerning sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking.

Since the beginning of the fall semester until Thanksgiving is considered the 'red zone,' where there is an increase in assault cases on college campuses, VPAS wanted to make sure that their message was heard during this time.

Police Sgt. Cynthia Torres attended the event with K9 Jules. Torres said that relationship misconduct is important to discuss on college campuses due to the number of cases she has seen each semester.

"Jules and I predominantly work with survivors of violence, so teaching students about what healthy relationships are supposed to look like is our main mission," Torres said.

Some think that they are immune to the unhealthy behaviors that can be presented in relationships, but it can happen to anyone at any age.

"I myself am a survivor of domestic violence, and I didn't talk about it much when it happened 30 years ago in my first big relationship," Torres said, "but I do believe that it has helped me in my career to have extra empathy for survivors and to support them by truly hearing their stories."

One of the student workers for VPAS who assisted with this event was special education major Taylor Wasilewski, a senior. She said that she uses their yearly event as a form of therapy and writing down the things she has experienced has helped her significantly.

"We do this event so students can realize what they have gone through and to cope with it in a healthy way," Wasilewski said. "Even if the rates of sexual assault and violence don't come down, at least people will learn how to be a good bystander by stepping in and helping their friends."

Another VPAS student worker running the event was nursing major Gabriella Jordan, a junior. She said that her favorite part of the event was helping spread awareness about unhealthy relationships and educating people on the signs of mistreatment.

Jordan said, "People don't realize the healthy and unhealthy signs in relationships, and a lot of times they think that what they're going through is normal, but we want to change that."

The mission Jordan and the other VPAS workers had was to enlighten others about what is not acceptable in any kind of personal connection.

"You may think your relationship is healthy and normal, but I promise you, it's not normal to feel like that in your relationship, and you can go out there and find better," Jordan said.

Psychology major Myesha Mapp, a senior, was one of the students to stop by the VPAS table. She said that this event is great in terms of learning to build boundaries.

"The red flags help people to learn more about their boundaries and just enlighten them a little bit more on the dangers of certain aspects in relationships," Mapp said.

VPAS has a club called Peer Educators Advocating for Campus Empowerment that is open for all students to join.

They offer workshops that inform students about the skills that can be used in interpersonal violence situations. Students can learn more information about their meetings on OwlConnect.

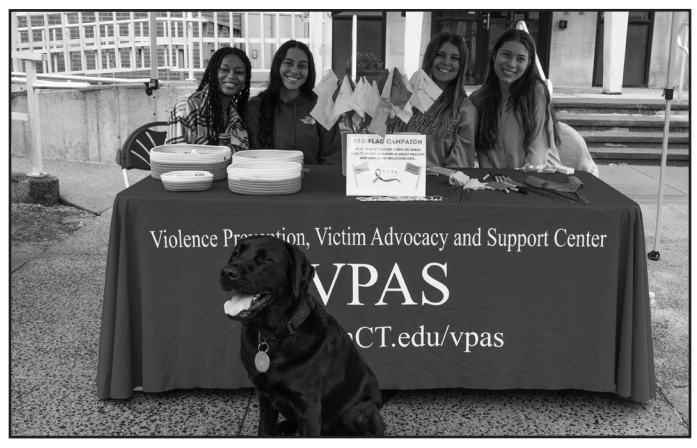


PHOTO |CARLY RUSSELL

Biology major Clarisse Aminawung, nursing major Gabriella Jordan, special education major Taylor Wasilewski and psychology major Jillian Haggerty, seniors, hosting the red flag event.

The green and red flags to represent positive and negative factors in relationships set up in the Residence Quad.

Owls Decide: Do you prefer Xbox or PlayStation?

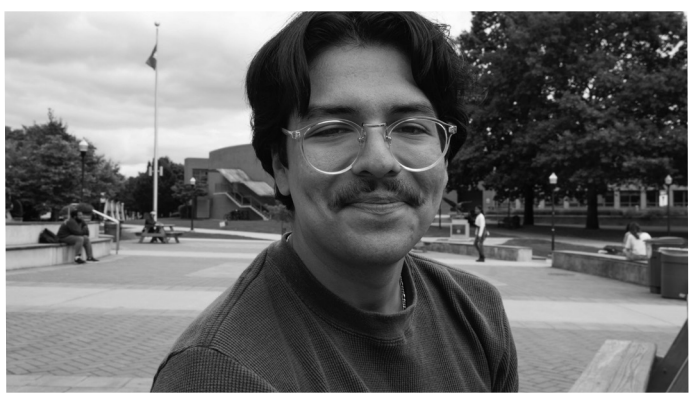
By Lexi White
Features Editor



PHOTO | CARLY RUSSELL

"Xbox because it was the first thing I bought when I was younger, and it's easier to keep all your stuff in one place."

-English major Carlos Lebron, a senior.



"I like the PlayStation 2 because I like wrestling, and there's a lot of wrestling games on there."

-English major Justin Ayora, a senior.



"PlayStation has been part of my life since I was a kid, and I've never really had Xbox experience."

-Computer science major Jonas Bezerra, a sophomore.



"Xbox because I think the PS5 is lacking in the game department because they have nothing new coming out. Xbox has so many fun games to choose from."

-English major Chris Durand, a senior.



"I prefer Xbox 360 because I used to play Minecraft and this other game called Viva Piñata. It was always so fun."

-Studio art major Aedy VanHouten, a senior.



"I used to play Plants vs. Zombies on my Xbox growing up, and I think the controls are a lot easier to play with than on a PlayStation."

-Psychology major Madison McPherson, a sophomore.

Mindful fidgeting with Farnham Hall



PHOTO | LEXI WHITE

Students going through the fidget toy bin provided by the Farnham Hall RAs.

By Lexi White
Features Editor

The university provides many mental health resources to students including CASAS, Counseling Services and the Wellbeing Center. On Sept. 23, the Farnham Hall resident advisers, RAs, put together an event to help their freshmen residents become acquainted with the help that is available to them on campus.

Students watched a slide show about mental health and the resources on campus that they can utilize. The display was educational in the sense that students realized that they were not alone in their troubles and that someone is always there for them at the university.

In addition, students grabbed snacks, picked out a fidget toy and played an interactive mental health resource game with their peers in hopes to win a $10 Target gift card.

One of the RAs that was helping to host this event was elementary education major Cheraynne Martin, a senior. Martin and the other RAs wanted to come up with a beneficial event for their first-year residents.

Martin said, "I think this helped to benefit student life since they learned about the different resources on campus because as first years, they needed to find ways to decrease stress and improve their mental health, especially while coming into a new environment."

Another Farnham Hall RA who helped to host the event was healthcare studies major Matthew Schmardel, a sophomore.

He said he wanted to host a mental health event because it is important to him, and he wanted to give his residents the ability to take initiative and ask for help if they need it.

"I use many of the on-campus resources because it is never good to suppress how you feel and taking care of yourself is so important," Schmardel said. "When something is upsetting someone, it can get in the way of their work, goals or even who they are."

Schmardel said that personal well-being should always come first; then all the other responsibilities should follow.

"If someone has something stressful on their mind or they are anxious about their living situation on campus, it will reflect in their schoolwork," Schmardel said.

During Schmardel's freshman year, he was extremely anxious about being in a new environment with unfamiliar people. He said he wants to help the students who feel the same way that he felt just a year prior.

"I hope this gives people a push to take care of themselves and to ask for help," Schmardel said. "This event is so students can learn something, carry it with them and maybe even help someone else by telling them about the resources that are available."

One of the students who came to this event was communication major Darin Talento, a freshman. He is a resident of Farnham Hall and said that he came to the event to learn skills to help with procrastination.

"They suggested to start using some kind of planner to help organize the tasks I need to get done so that I don't lose track of what I need to do," Talento said.

Marketing major Stephen Bellido, a freshman, was another resident of Farnham Hall who attended the event. Bellido said that he came to the event because he wanted to learn more about mindfulness.

"I became knowledgeable about the resources they have here, which was great, but getting a fidget toy was definitely my favorite part," Bellido said. "They really help me calm down when I'm anxious, so I'm happy I got one."