

Self-defense seminar T.A.K.E. empowers female students

Michelle Flanagan | Staff Reporter | Posted: Sunday, January 18, 2015 4:29 pm

After 19-year-old Ali Kemp was murdered while working at a Johnson County, Kansas, pool in June of 2002, her parents made it their missions to prevent the lives of other young women from being taken. And with the help of self-defense instructors Bob and Jill Leiker, Kemps' parents established The Ali Kemp Educational Foundation.

Fully funded by donations, T.A.K.E. tours universities across the United States. The program came to the University of Cincinnati Saturday as a campus-wide Greek event, hosted by UC's chapter of Pi Beta Phi. The organization means a lot to the fraternity for women — Kemp was a member of the Pi Beta Phi chapter at Kansas State University.

The program is not about complicated moves or scary stories, the Leikers explained, but about education.

“This is about getting home,” Bob Leiker said.

Bob and Jill Leiker have been self-defense instructors since the late '70s. A few weeks after Kemp's murder, her father enrolled his other children in self-defense courses and asked the Leikers to begin a program that would focus on educating girls.

During Saturday's seminar, the Leikers shared stories of women who had taken their self-defense courses in the past and knew of additional ways to be safe. The couple encouraged students to take simple precautions, such as not leaving for extended periods of time without informing someone of their location.

The majority of the presentation was based on practicing defensive moves. Jill Leiker stressed the importance of making noise to garner attention from passersby. Being loud can make the criminal believe harming you will be too complicated, she said, causing him or her to go away.



T.A.K.E. hosted by Pi Beta Phi

UC's chapter of Pi Beta Phi hosted the university tour of T.A.K.E., a national-traveling self-defense program that teaches practical defense in their 2-hour long program, Saturday afternoon at the CRC. (The News Record/ Madison Schmidt)

It is also crucial to learn how to fight back, she said. Each girl in attendance found a partner, and the Leikers demonstrated useful self-defense moves and encouraged students to practice them.

The couple believes in this type of exercise because it allows mental images to form, so that if a dangerous situation is ever to arise, the practice will come to mind.

Students learned how to react to scenarios in which they were being grabbed from behind, by the hair, by the wrist, choked or on the ground with a perpetrator on top of them.

Self-defense seminar T.A.K.E. comes to UC

Knowing how to handle these types of situations increases the likelihood of reaching safety, the instructors said. Jill Leiker also emphasized the power of education as a method to prevent freezing up in the face of danger.

“You can’t even put your finger on the benefits of self-defense,” Bob Leiker said. “Unfortunately, it’s something everybody has to do now.”

Bob Leiker explained that young women are major targets for attacks. Having spoken to arrested sex offenders in the past, he gave students a general idea of what criminals usually look for and how they behave.

Typically, a criminal will stalk their victim six to 12 times and study their behavioral patterns before acting, Bob Leiker said. He then stressed the importance of being aware of one’s surroundings at all times.

Marissa Petrie, a third-year marketing and international business student, was one of the people involved in the process of bringing T.A.K.E.'s self-defense seminar to Cincinnati.

"I feel like it's important for girls on campus to know self-defense because we're not in the best area," Petrie said. "It's important for all the women to know how to protect themselves."

Petrie also said she has felt unsafe during her time at UC, and although nothing has ever come of those situations, she now feels more prepared if she ever needs to get away from an attacker.

Morgan Eberle, a second-year accounting student, said she particularly enjoyed the hands-on aspect of this program.

"It's easy to say, 'Oh I would be able to do this'," Eberle said. "But then, if you're actually doing it, it sticks in your brain."