PROCLAMATION

Annual Start by Believing Day

Whereas, the City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota shares a critical concern for victims of sexual violence and a desire to support their needs for justice and healing; and

Whereas, in 2021, the Grand Rapids Police Department received a total of 35 reports of sexual assault and Support Within Reach, The Sexual Violence Resource Center, served 38 new clients and 14 ongoing clients who received a total of 3,864 service types, including: 24-hour crisis hotline assistance, basic one-to-one peer counseling, follow-up support, assistance filing protective orders, general information and referrals, medical accompaniment and support during evidentiary exams, and the full continuum of medical, legal and prosecutorial advocacy services; 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 City Council for the City of Grand Rapids that they 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** throughout the City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto subscribed my name and the seal of the City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, this 28th day of March, Two thousand twenty-two.

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Dale Christy, Mayor
City of Grand Rapids