



The Yellow Dress April 12, 2012

The Akwesasne Coalition for Community Empowerment brought to the community a one-woman play called The Yellow Dress. It is a dramatic telling based on stories of young women who were victims of dating violence.



The play begins when 'Anna' comes onto stage and begins to tell the story of how she fell in love. She engages the audience by asking them to help her pick out a dress for prom. The first was a beautiful mid-length black dress with flowers down the side. She then starts to tell how things were going great between her and her boyfriend Rick. After a year of dating, things started to go downhill as Rick begins to emotionally abuse her. He started to make her feel worthless; telling her that she was lucky that he was dating her because no one else would.

After two years of taking the abuse and forgiving him just as quickly, Anna finally comes to her senses after almost losing her life. After a friend unknowingly enrages a jealous Rick by talking to Anna, Rick takes her home after beating and then choking her out after the party. What comes next is inevitable. She ends the poisonous relationship.

Months go by as Rick tries to manipulate his way back into Anna's life by being nice and reminding her of how it was when they were first dating. She sees through this facade and heeds the advice of her friends and family to stay away.

He shows up at her house the night before prom to talk and to apologize for what he has put her through. She goes against her better judgement and gets into his car. He drives to a secluded area.

At this time, Anna exits the stage to change into her second choice of dress. This was another mid-length dress. A yellow dress. When the lights came back on, audience members see the dress covered in blood. Anna explains that was the dress she wore when Rick grabbed her head and slammed it into the dashboard. That was the dress she wore when Rick dragged her lifeless body out of his car and left it in a ditch by the side of the road. Anna watches him drive away. She knows that her family and friends know something is wrong. She's not going to the police because they'll just put her in the morgue, and she wasn't going to "miss this prom for the world."

Rydia Vielehr, who plays Anna, exited the stage and came back shortly after for a discussion with the audience. She introduced herself and the theater company that she works for, Deana's Educational Theater and describes the different presentations that DET does for middle school, high school, college and military audiences. Topics that are covered include respect, bullying and other abuse stories, and show one can identify different behaviors.

It's unfortunate that many of our own women experience these kinds of things everyday. There are many resources here in Akwesasne that will help when you need it. Gathering up the courage to ask for help can be one of the most difficult things to do. Know this, you are not alone.

By [Tekonwakwenni Nanticoke](#).