



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **National award honors Lawrence advocate as leader in sexual violence prevention**

TOPEKA, KS, April 2, 2015 — April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In observance, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's (NSVRC) annual Visionary Voice Award recognizes the creativity and hard work of individuals around the country who have demonstrated outstanding efforts to end sexual violence.

Jared Konecny of Lawrence was honored as the recipient of the 2015 Visionary Voice Award by NSVRC in partnership with the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV). Mr. Konecny was one of 30 individuals across the country recognized for their efforts to address sexual violence and promote safe, healthy communities. Mr. Konecny, Community Advocate at GaDuGi SafeCenter, has advocated on behalf of survivors and to end sexual violence for numerous years.

"Jared is a natural advocate. His compassion and level of support for survivors is exemplary and his impression on others is powerful," said Chrissy Heikkila, GaDuGi SafeCenter executive director. "I am so proud of his accomplishments and I am honored to learn from his skills every day."

When he started working at GaDuGi SafeCenter, Jared was the Outreach Advocate to rural and underserved communities. Jared worked with LGBT survivors, people living with disabilities who had been sexually assaulted, as well as other isolated survivors living in rural areas. While working with these communities, Jared presented information to families, groups, organizations, and survivors on an array of topics including healthy relationships, understanding consent, and how to respect one's sexual and emotional boundaries. Currently, Jared works directly with victim-survivors as a community advocate through ongoing personal, court and hospital advocacy. Jared is a graduate from the University of Kansas where he received his bachelor's degree in American Studies.

"We are thrilled to have an advocate from Kansas being recognized nationally," said Joyce Grover, executive director of KCSDV. "Advocates like Jared are the heart and soul of this work to end sexual violence. I am confident Jared has positively impacted the lives of many survivors and we are so thankful for his dedication," said Grover. KCSDV nominated Mr. Konecny for this year's Visionary Voice Award.

Mr. Konecny will be presented with the award at GaDuGi SafeCenter's Sexual Assault Awareness Month 2015 Kickoff Party event on April 2 from 11:30-12:30 at the Cider Gallery in Lawrence.

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*Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at [kcsdv.org](http://kcsdv.org).*

*The GaDuGi SafeCenter is a member of KCSDV and provides services to victims of sexual violence in Douglas, Franklin, and Jefferson county. Learn more at [www.gadugisafecenter.org](http://www.gadugisafecenter.org).*