



# Speakers Bureau Newsletter

By Sara Snyder, Speakers Bureau Manager • Oct 31, 2023

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## Speakers Bureau Highlights

### Thank you, September Speakers!

**RAINN Speakers Bureau Speaking Opportunities**  
A number in each state representing how many opportunities we have had in that state.

For the month of September, there were a total of six opportunities. We had speaking opportunities in **Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Oklahoma.**

If you would like to see a full list of our speaking opportunities, please visit the [Speakers Bureau Portal](#).

## Share Spanish-language Resources

**NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH 2023 Survivor Summit**  
October 12, 2023  
7 PM ET / 4 PM PT  
LIVE STREAMING @RAINNOI

**Mia Ramos**  
Speakers Bureau Member

**Julia Torres Barden**  
Speakers Bureau Member

Moderated by **CRISTINA MANZUR**  
RAINN's Bilingual Outreach Coordinator

Spanish language survivors face many barriers to healing, and language shouldn't be one of them. We recognize the importance of providing ongoing support and resources to Spanish-speaking survivors year-round, so we've put together a comprehensive guide of resources in Spanish, dedicated to expanding support to survivors and their loved ones in the Hispanic community. [Check out RAINN's Spanish Language Resource Toolkit](#) and watch Speakers Bureau members Mia Marcus and Julia Torres Barden in our [Hispanic Heritage Survivor Summit](#).

## Speaking Story Highlights

### Meet Cyndy Etler!

Cyndy Etler is a passionate advocate whose interview with TIME Magazine shed light on crucial issues that demand our attention. Cyndy's compelling interview touched upon several significant points.

**What was most rewarding about sharing your story?**

"The opportunity to shed light on root causes of child sexual assault media, which many adults are unaware of."

**During your interview, what pieces of information do you share with everyone?**

"A reporter interviewed me; I focused mainly on the reasons teens tend to be vulnerable to manipulation that results in sexual assault media being shared online."

**Can you tell us about how you felt after your event?**

"I felt empowered. If [Time Magazine](#) is interested in hearing my insights, I know I am doing the work I want to be doing in the world."

Have you recently had a speaking opportunity? Would you like to share a bit about it with members via the newsletter?

Yes  No

Share your story here.

## Events & Workshops

### Leah M. Forney's "Awakening Resilience" Workshop

Watch Leah M. Forney's workshop on a journey of healing and transformation – "Awakening Resilience. This workshop is a powerful training designed for survivors of sexual trauma. In this safe and supportive space, you'll discover the strength within you to reclaim your power, embrace self-love, and embark on a profound journey of self-discovery. Key takeaways include practical steps for recovery, building resilience, and fostering personal growth. Connect with a community that understands, and awaken the resilience within you to reclaim your power, one step at a time. Your healing journey starts here, guided by hope and empowerment.

[Click here to review the recording](#) (Passcode: uA7^fn7)

### Mary Simmerling's "Write Where You Belong" Group/Workshop

As a writer and survivor of sexual assault, Mary Simmerling knows firsthand the healing powers of the creative self, accessed through writing alone and in groups and sharing writing with others. Recent research suggests that sharing stories about one's own traumatic life experiences – including sexual assault – can be healing for survivors of violence and trauma and that art can play an important role in that healing. Language is itself a powerful tool that conveys emotion, carries moral importance, and can create a sense of belonging or community feeling.

Now, in our second year, "Write Where We Belong" has evolved into a group of profoundly talented writers who exemplify the power of story and care deeply about writing as a craft. Through these workshops, we have discovered the ways in which writing and sharing our stories empowers us as individuals and members of communities. We have experienced the many ways our stories can bring us together, create a sense of belonging, and allow us to discover what it is that we have to say and to bear witness to each other. Our stories help to shape and inform how we think about each other and our world. They stimulate our imaginations and open us up to ideas that might never have been considered otherwise. Indeed, our stories have the power to change history. Through our individual and shared stories, we are able to forge bonds, make space for each other, and create ourselves anew. Through these workshops, we have discovered the hopefulness and sense of belonging that can come from writing in a community with others. We have come to realize that we are not defined by what has happened to us but rather that we have the power to make our own meaning of our experiences.

In the coming months, we will be putting together a compilation of some of the writing that has come from this group. We look forward to sharing our stories with you and to receiving your feedback.

To learn more about the workshops, email [RAINN.write.where.we.belong@gmail.com](mailto:RAINN.write.where.we.belong@gmail.com).

The workshops are led in the Amherst Writers & Artists (AWA) tradition. We believe that writers are people who write and that everyone has a unique creative voice. We come together to write from imagination or memory to prompts provided by the facilitator. We treat all writing as a story and maintain confidentiality of everything shared in the workshops. Each writer is invited to share what they have written in the group and to give supportive feedback on the writing that is shared: what about the writing is strong and what stays with us? For more information about the Amherst Writers & Artists method, please visit <https://amherstwriters.org/>

## Sara's Corner



Sara Snyder manages the RAINN Speakers Bureau and cultivates this community.

Hello Autumn! I am excited about the coming months for the Speakers Bureau. You should have received an email about closing applications until Spring 2024 so we can focus on our current group of members and truly bring the member experience you deserve. We have some exciting and daunting changes ahead of us for improvement, and I will share them as they come.

During this time, we will continue to send out speaking opportunities, our Speakers Bureau Facebook group will remain active, and we will continue to hold workshops and trainings.

I am excited about what's to come next for the Speakers Bureau and to share it all with you.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback. You can email at [speakersbureau@rainn.org](mailto:speakersbureau@rainn.org)

## Member Projects

**Speakers Bureau member Wendy Jensen** recently published ["But I Already Said Goodbye"](#), a novel about connecting with the world and discovering inner strength and wisdom from main character lenses along the way along the way. Her book is available on [Amazon](#).



Have you recently published a book, participated in a fundraiser, or completed some other project having to do with RAINN or your survivor story and would like to share it with members? Please email [speakersbureau@rainn.org](mailto:speakersbureau@rainn.org)

## Policy Corner

Attorneys General participating in the multistate investigation of Meta and TikTok for targeting young people in harmful ways on social media are asking for parents to report on how their own families have been impacted in ways that affect their children's mental health. Attorneys General from [Colorado](#), [New Hampshire](#), and [Tennessee](#) have set up portals for parents to share their stories.

We are in the process of planning a policy and legislative training. Take [this survey](#) from our Policy team so we can tailor this training to members' interests and passions.

Take survey.

## Updates & Reminders

### Speakers Bureau Workshops

We are planning more training sessions for Speakers Bureau members. If you are interested in leading a workshop or have an idea for a future workshop, please contact us at [speakersbureau@rainn.org](mailto:speakersbureau@rainn.org)

### Speakers Bureau Applications are Closed

As of October 1, 2023, we have closed applications for new Speakers Bureau members. Applications will re-open in the Spring of 2024.

### Portal Tech Issues

If you are experiencing technical problems with our new Speakers Bureau Portal, please send an email to [speakersbureau@rainn.org](mailto:speakersbureau@rainn.org). We are aware of an issue wherein members are not able to edit their profile information. We are working with our IT Team to fix this issue.

### RAINN News Newsletter

Get more RAINN news and resources in your inbox when you sign up for RAINN's eNewsletter.

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## Self-Care

### Practicing Consent and Respect This Halloween Season

October brings not only crisp leaves and pumpkin spice lattes but also the excitement of Halloween. Halloween is a time for fun and creativity, but it's crucial to remember that a costume is never an invitation for unwanted advances or harassment.

Consent is a fundamental principle; it doesn't take a break during the holiday season. No one's costume choices, whether spooky, sexy, or silly, should ever be interpreted as an invitation for sexual advances.

### Tips to share with your community tonight on Halloween:

- Educate friends and family about the importance of consent.
- Encourage others to select costumes that make them feel comfortable and confident rather than feeling pressured to conform to certain expectations.
- In the event that you witness inappropriate behavior at a Halloween gathering, do not hesitate to intervene or seek help from authorities. Your actions can make a significant difference. This is known as [bystander intervention](#).
- Halloween can be a triggering time for survivors of sexual violence. The National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or [hotline.rainn.org](https://hotline.rainn.org) is available in both English and Spanish.

### Tips for Self-Care tonight on Halloween:

- Set boundaries. You should never feel obligated to attend events that make you uncomfortable or compromise your values.
- Don't hesitate to take breaks when conversations or situations become too intense.
- Reach out to fellow advocates in the Speakers Bureau through our [Speakers Bureau Facebook Group](#) for help navigating the challenges of advocacy, or consider speaking to a therapist or counselor who can offer guidance and support.
- You can also reach out to RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) or chat with us at [hotline.rainn.org/](https://hotline.rainn.org/) for assistance in both English and Spanish.

Together, we can make Halloween a safer and more welcoming experience for everyone.

## RAINN Job Openings

If you are looking to become more involved with RAINN, please view our current job openings:

[Safe Helpline Operations Manager](#)

[Bilingual \(Spanish\) Senior Consultant](#)

[DOD Safe Helpline Shift Manager](#)

### Feedback

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