

I Am Shared Safety
Diana Jackson
Project Manager, WOAR:
Philadelphia Center
Against Violence



After graduating from Drexel University with a BS in finance, Diana Jackson worked at a mutual fund company. “I did not love it, to say the least,” said the Philadelphia native. She wanted to interact with – and help – people, so she put her skills to work in financial aid, at Drexel’s College of Medicine, The Art Institute of Philadelphia, and Harcum College in Bryn Mawr. But financial aid wasn’t right either.

Diana wanted to make better use of her abilities in science and statistics to improve people’s lives. So she enrolled in a Master’s program at LaSalle University, and earned a degree in public health with an emphasis on health disparities in urban communities.

In 2017, after receiving her MPH, she became WOAR’s first project manager. “It wasn’t the straightest path, but I’m here. I’m very excited.”

Stephanie Levin, co-chair of Shared Safety’s communications sub-committee, spoke with Diana recently about her role at WOAR and this month’s Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), which concludes with Hands Around City Hall on April 29.

SL: What are your responsibilities at WOAR?

DJ: I oversee special projects and events, and chair the Philadelphia Sexual Assault Advisory Coalition. I run WOAR’s educational training programs at schools, universities, and in workplaces. A big part of my job is coordinating the events for SAAM in April.

SL: What happens during SAAM?

DJ: Our kick-off event is Teal Day/Day of Action. It’s social media-based, so we ask people to post themselves wearing teal, in support of victims of sexual violence. Supporters are encouraged to volunteer with or donate to WOAR. We also hold a press conference early in the month with city agencies and partner organizations to discuss how we’re supporting survivors.

SL: Tell me about WOAR’s Hands Around City Hall

DJ: It’s really a touching event. We link hands and form a circle to honor survivors of sexual violence. We have a moment of silence – and participants can say the names of

people they know who've survived sexual violence. Our partners set up information tables, too.

SL: Are there any new events for SAAM this year?

DJ: Yes. Move with WOAR, the last week of April. We're asking people to participate in activities they love – biking, yoga, whatever they enjoy – and get pledges to support WOAR for doing those activities.

SL: What makes Shared Safety valuable?

DJ: It's important to have a coordinated response to intimate partner violence in the city. It's crucial to make sure everyone – each organization – knows what resources are available.

SL: What part of your work is most rewarding for you?

DJ: I really enjoy being able to address health disparities, especially how they affect African Americans. It's an extension of the research I did in grad school. In Black communities, sexual violence is under-reported. I want to be able to help people who look like me find their voice. I hope to raise awareness and provide resources to people in my community – with a goal of ending sexual violence.

SL: What activities do you enjoy when you're not working?

DJ: Ice skating. I skated competitively for many years, and tried out for the junior Olympics. I love this city and spending time with my family.

This I Am Shared Safety feature was shared in the April 2022 Shared Safety Newsletter.

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