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Media Relations

June 2, 2016

UNH Receives \$25,000 Grant to Develop App for College Sexual Assault Survivors

DURHAM, N.H. – Thanks to funding from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF), and several statewide partnerships, students, faculty and staff at 23 New Hampshire colleges and universities will have instant access to a free mobile phone app providing localized information that can help sexual assault survivors, as well as their friends and family.

The uSafeNH app was developed by the Prevention Innovations Research Center (PIRC) at the University of New Hampshire and students in the UNH-Manchester STEM Discovery Lab. uSafeNH uses geospatial technology to provide information on local crisis centers, hospitals, campus resources and police. The app will be free to all New Hampshire colleges and universities this fall. Eventually, it will be offered for sale to schools in other states, with the revenue from those sales helping to sustain the effort.

“In New Hampshire, and nationwide, one in five women will be sexually assaulted during their college career,” said PIRC co-directors Sharyn Potter and Jane Stapleton. “Support and services make a difference in ameliorating the long-term negative effects of this violence, and it was critical that we found a way to harness the mobile technology that millennials have already integrated into their daily lives. We are grateful for the support that we’ve received to make colleges across the state safer.”

Along with the students at UNH-Manchester, UNH’s Prevention Innovations Research Center collaborated with the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the N.H. attorney general’s office, and the N.H. State Police. The logo was designed by students in the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics at UNH.

“This is an incredible opportunity for all the undergraduate students in the STEM Discovery Lab,” said Mihaela Sabin, associate professor of computer science at the university’s Manchester campus. “In partnership with computing faculty and their peers in the women’s studies, sociology, social work, and business majors they’ve been able to transfer and directly apply what they learn in the classroom to the design and development of a tool that will help people across the state.”

Five nonprofit finalists made pitches to the members of the NHCF’s Entrepreneurs’ Fund of N.H. and the developers of uSafeNH received a \$25,000 AMP grant. To prepare, finalists were paired with EFNH mentors, who worked one-on-one with nonprofits to help craft engaging and persuasive pitches for innovative projects that delivered an “amplified” benefit for communities. Finalists took part in an afternoon “pitch camp” prior to the final event to help put the finishing touches on their pitches. Since 2011, the Entrepreneurs Foundation has awarded \$285,000 to nonprofits serving New

Hampshire.

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