



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2017

Contact: Brian Reisinger

715-579-9679

breisinger@hilltopstrategiesllc.com

ICYMI: Childhood Sexual Assault Survivor & Marsy's Law for Wisconsin Supporter "He Told Me That If I Told Anyone He Would Kill Me"

Keaira Stine shares her story of childhood abuse, dedication to the fight for equal rights for crime victims

[Madison, Wis.] - In case you missed it, childhood sexual assault survivor Keaira Stine shared her story with the *Stevens Point Journal* today, revealing the terrifying challenges crime victims face and expressing support for Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's effort to update our state Constitution.

"He told me that if I told anyone he would kill me and that no one would believe me anyway," Keaira said of the abuse she suffered, which she also testified about in the [Wisconsin State Capitol in June](#). You can read the Stevens Point Journal's story [here](#), or find excerpts below:

Her father avoided trial in a plea deal. She says sexual trauma is still painful.

By Chris Mueller

Stevens Point Journal

Thursday, July 27

STEVENS POINT - She ran herself a bath. He walked by the bathroom door and disappeared into the basement.

He returned with a video camera and began recording her. She was 11. He was 37.

She later filed a police report about what happened. The "i" in her name, Keaira, was dotted with a heart at the top of the form.

“The whole thing freaked me out,” she wrote. “I told him that I was uncomfortable, especially with all of the closeups to my private areas.” ...

Then, she wrote, he forced her to perform oral sex on him. When it was over, she ran upstairs and brushed her teeth. But, according to Keaira's police statement, he had one more thing to say before she did.

“He told me that if I told anyone he would kill me and that no one would believe me anyway,” she wrote.

Keaira Damron-Stine is 26 now but said she still lives each day painfully aware of what happened to her as a child. Outside of a police report and a courtroom — where a judge once told her “you will overcome this” — she wasn't able to share her story for a long time.

The memories were too personal, too awful. She felt alone. Keaira said she still feels that way sometimes.

Thousands of children in Wisconsin grow up suffering from the trauma of sexual abuse. Child protective services verified more than 6,100 reports of children sexually abused in the state from 2011 to 2015, an average of more than three new cases each day, according to a report by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. ...

“There are times when it's all I can think about and it consumes me,” she said in an interview.

She said she has anxiety and panic attacks. She has a fear of being alone, but also problems getting close to people.

“I don't like hugs,” she said. “I don't like to be touched, really.”

A traumatic event, including sexual abuse, can lead to short- and long-term consequences even if the victim doesn't have a clear memory of what happened, said Gretchen Hintz, counseling manager for Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services in Marshfield, Stevens Point and Wausau.

“They don't necessarily need to remember a lot of details,” she said. “They do need to get to the point where their body feels safe.” ...

She has involved herself in causes she believes are important, including a recent trip to Madison as one of three women who testified in front of state lawmakers in favor of Marsy's Law, a proposal meant to strengthen rights for crime victims in Wisconsin.

She wants to work with other sexual assault victims, listening to their stories and telling her own. She doesn't think she will ever fully heal, but she hopes helping other victims will give her a sense of purpose.

"I just want to be that person who listens," she said.

###

About Marsy's Law for Wisconsin

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is a grassroots coalition that has developed a unique proposal to give victims of crime equal rights in our state, building on Wisconsin's laws and history of leading on this issue. Marsy's Law is named after Marsalee "Marsy" Nicholas of California who was stalked and killed by her ex-boyfriend in 1983. Only one week after her death, Marsy's mother and brother, Henry T. Nicholas, walked into a grocery store where they were confronted by the accused murderer. The family, who had just come from a visit to Marsy's grave, was unaware that the accused had been released on bail. In an effort to honor his sister, Dr. Nicholas has made it his life's mission to give victims and their families constitutional protections and equal rights.

b