

Local women's stories make up 'Monologues'

Production to raise money for YWCA, S-O-S.

By MARGARET FOSMOE
Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND — A locally written and produced theatrical production coming to the stage Saturday is intended to encourage women to talk about sexuality, sexual assault, body image and related issues.

Based on the stories and experiences of local residents, "South Bend Community Monologues" is a cooperative effort of women at Saint Mary's College, Indiana University South Bend and community residents.

Modeled on the format of the Eve Ensler play "The Vagina Monologues," this performance is based on stories provided by local residents.

The production is intended to mark April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, heighten awareness about violence against women and raise money to benefit two community groups.

The local monologues include such titles as "Sixth-grade Crush," "How Sex Ed Got Me Into the Gifted Program," "Midwife," "Words and Sex" and "You Cannot Choose Who You Love."

Each year, students and employees at Saint Mary's College write and perform "SMC Monologues," modeled after Ensler's play. The campus version is based on stories and experiences submitted, anonymously by women on campus.

IUSB students and employees in previous years performed "The Vagina Monologues," and this February offered "Michiana Monologues," also modeled after the Ensler play but based on stories submitted by local women.

"South Bend Community Monologues" uses monologues selected from the Saint Mary's and IUSB 2008 productions. It is planned, produced and performed by women drawn from throughout the community.

Saturday's performance is sponsored by the Saint Mary's College Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership, IUSB, the YWCA of St. Joseph County and S-O-S of Madison Center, Money

raised by the show will be donated to S-O-S and the YWCA to support programs for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Saint Mary's College junior Becki Faunce for three years has contributed to "SMC Monologues" and served as producer, director and an actress for this year's campus show. The 20-year-old Elkhart resident will perform Saturday in the "South Bend Community Monologues."

Working on a production with such powerful personal content is an amazing experience, says Faunce, who graduated from Elkhart Memorial High School in 2005.

"It's a transforming experience. Each time I do it, I learn something more about myself as a woman," the women's studies and sociology major says.

"South Bend Community Monologues" tells stories of real women's experiences that traditionally would not be told, she says.

Faunce is aware of the controversy that Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" has raised at the University of Notre Dame and in the community. Ironically, she has read a few of Ensler's monologues but has never seen a production of that play. "I've always been too busy when it's been

presented on (Notre Dame's) campus," she says.

The benefit of a production such as "South Bend Community Monologues," Faunce says, is that it gets people talking about issues they otherwise might not feel comfortable discussing.

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On stage

The "South Bend Community Monologues" takes place at 7 p.m. Saturday at Bendix Theatre, Century Center, 120 S. St. Joseph St., South Bend. Tickets are \$10 at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased at CircaArts, 528 E. Colfax Ave.; The Beehive, 706 E. Jefferson Blvd.; Lula's Café, 1631 Edison Road; and Chicory Café, 105 E. Jefferson Blvd., all in South Bend.