



'Monologues' raising awareness

Show highlights issue of abused women

BY SHAWN DALEY
EDITOR

The name of the show evokes all types of reactions. Some people are surprised, others embarrassed and even a few become angry.

Yet, The Vagina Monologues is about a lot more than an attention-grabbing title.

It's a play that highlights violence against women and raises funds for non-profit groups providing solace to the victims.

The show will be held locally March 8 and 9 at the Halle Cultural Arts Center in Apex on N. Salem St. Tickets are \$15 and are available at Booda Beans and the Funky Monkey.

Proceeds from the show will benefit Interact and Circle of Health International.

If there is anything about the "Monologues" that should shock people it's the fact there remains such a

strong need for it.

"It speaks about women's issues in a very deep and witty way," said show organizer Somer Cooper. "It's not pornography. It's a platform that allows you to raise money for women's non-profit groups and to create awareness about the issues."

The show is being held in conjunction with V-Day, which brings attention to violence against women.

"One in three of all women have experienced some form of sexual abuse," said Cooper. "People think it doesn't happen here but it's happening in Pleasantville neighborhoods, too."

Cooper, a Cary native with a background in theater, organized a similar show in California last year. When she moved back to the area she wasn't sure "Monologues" would be accepted in Apex.

But after networking in town a group of about 20 women decided to move forward with the project.

"I sat on this project for three months because I didn't think it would take here," said Cooper. "I also didn't

have the network that I had in California.

"We only had four women at our first meeting but now we have anywhere from 15 to 25 women involved. It has turned out much bigger than I ever thought. I credit that to the power of women."

Cooper said she has also received a great deal of support from the Town of Apex and numerous local businesses.

Although the Town did receive a formal complaint about the show no one has approached Cooper.

"No one has said anything negative about it to my face," said Cooper.

As for removing the word "vagina" from the show's title Cooper said that isn't an option.

"Why we need to keep the name is a very valid question," said Cooper. "This show is about raising awareness and leaving that word in there helps. You can't change things until you talk about them. I think we will make a tremendous difference."

For more information visit www.vday.org.



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A group of local women will perform in The Vagina Monologues on March 8 and 9 at Halle Cultural Arts Center. Here, Booda Bean coffeehouse owner Dacey Erik-Goss and show organizer Somer Cooper discuss the play at a Saturday morning meeting.