

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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[ARTICLE]

National Condom week: Please love with caution

By Susannah Wood

Free condoms and safe sex literature will be given away through next Tuesday as Columbia observes National Condom Awareness Week.

The program, sponsored by the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Group, the Barnard AIDS Peer Educators, and the Office of Health Education, marks the first time the three groups have collaborated on such a project, said Leslie Kantor, BC '89, a member of Barnard AIDS Peer Educators.

In addition to the distribution of free condoms and literature, the week-long program will include safe sex workshops and a Condom Kickoff Party.

"The main focus of Condom Awareness Week is the prevention of AIDS. AIDS is here, and it is time for more administrative recognition of the problem," Kantor said.

However, Ann Williams of the Office of Health Education at University Health Services stressed that "Condom Awareness Week is not only for AIDS but for preventing any sexually transmitted disease.

"The two most common STDs on college campuses, chlamydia and genital warts, are both prevented by using condoms," she said.

Most of the programs at the Office of Health Education are outreach and peer counseling programs, according to Williams. "Students who want information or birth control can come to Women's Health Services and talk to peers," she said.

The Barnard AIDS Peer Educators also provide peer counseling, according to Kantor. "We facilitate group discussions to educate Barnard women about the threat of AIDS," she said.

To encourage condom awareness last year, Furnald Grocery gave away over eight-hundred packages of condoms within three hours on St. Valentine's Day, Williams said.

The success of last year's condom giveaway is indicative of a high level of safe sex awareness at Columbia, she added.

Williams stressed that the main issue of Condom Awareness Week this year is to love safely. "We do not want to give across an alarmist message to the students," she said.

Colleges around the country will also be observing Condom Awareness Week.