

# Work together to get rapists off streets

A serial rapist has attacked at least five women in New Haven. The victims range from a teenager to a 28-year-old. All were walking alone in the early morning or late evening hours.

These sexual assaults took place between December 2007 and Jan. 17, and the rapist is still out there.

There are things each of us can do to prepare for the unexpected and stay safe. Take a self-defense class, never walk alone, always carry a charged cell phone and be acutely aware of the surroundings.

Five courageous women reported the crime. DNA evidence has linked all to one perpetrator. Now, think about the fact that 60 percent of sexual assaults are not reported.

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We must work together to break the stigmas associated with this misunderstood and underreported crime until victims feel no more shame, no more blame and no more fear. DNA technology is incredibly powerful, but unless

victims come forward, that critical evidence is lost.

All victims need and deserve support and law enforcement needs help. By coming forward, each victim is helping to prevent the next sexual assault. And, that next assault could be against someone close to you. Every two minutes, someone in America is raped, and most rapists are repeat offenders.

The time has come to end the silence. Let's work together to get these perpetrators off the streets so that we all will be safer.

**Donna Palomba**  
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*Donna Palomba, a sexual assault survivor, is founder of Jane Doe No More Inc.*