

At KU, Jewish Women TAKE Action

By Melanie Kantor

Over 50 women learned basic self-defense techniques that could save their lives at TAKE the Hill, a program sponsored by Hillel at the University of Kansas on September 27. The program was co-sponsored by KU's Sigma Delta Tau chapter and the KU Emily Taylor Women's Resource Center.

TAKE the Hill was run by The Ali Kemp Educational Foundation (TAKE), an organization founded in response to the 2002 rape and murder of Ali Kemp, a Kansas State University student. The organization promotes self-defense and safety awareness programs and provides an online listing of self-defense courses for women across the country.

"The best part of the program was seeing the diversity of the women that attended and knowing that we were spreading this information across campus," said Elizabeth Cohen, a junior at KU who participated in the event. "I think the women took away a new sense of pride and better confidence because they learned how to stand up for themselves."

The two-hour program began with a speech from Ali's father, Roger Kemp. Self-defense trainers Jill and Bob Leiker then showed the participants self-defense methods. The participants broke into pairs and practiced the moves they had learned on each other and on dummies. The trainers also provided the participants with safety tips and statistics.

"The unity of having dozens of Jewish women together was empowering and provided these women with knowledge about self-defense and gave them a better understanding of how to protect themselves," said Tracy Altman, KU Hillel development associate. "The women learned some very scary facts, but I think it made them realize that it's not okay to walk home from the library at midnight even though it's close to their dorm or sorority house."

The program was funded by a grant from the Menorah Women's Foundation in Kansas City.

The KU Hillel will host a Women's Health series in the spring. Altman hopes to bring Jill Leiker back to KU to give a refresher course on safety tips and self-defense moves.

For more information on the TAKE Foundation, visit <http://www.takedefense.org>.

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Jewish women learn self-defense at KU.