

**COLLECTIVE ACTION**

**FOR SAFE**

**SPACES!**

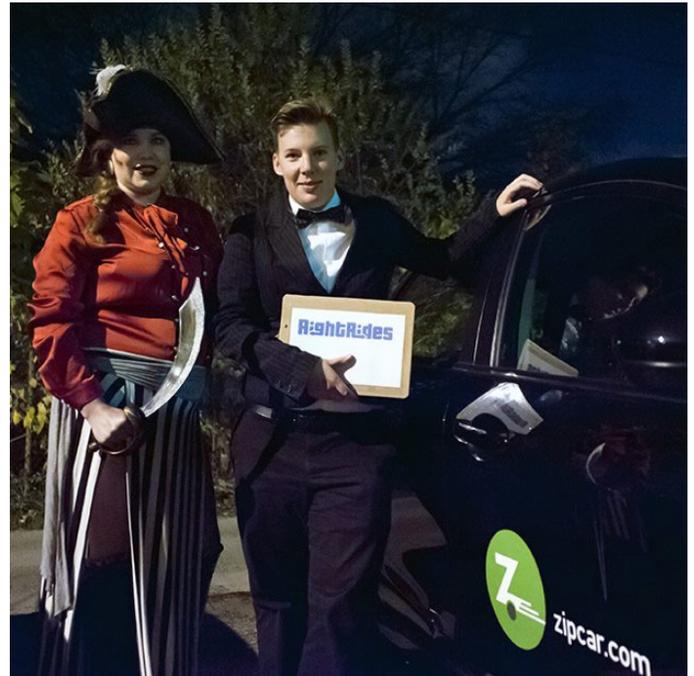


**WHAT CASS TAUGHT ME**

ANNUAL REPORT

# GETTING HOME SAFE SHOULDN'T BE A LUXURY.

01 | RightRides DC



“Volunteering for RightRides DC gave me a sense of empowerment over my own safety in public. I think it’s great that we give people safe rides home, but I also think it’s really important that we’re showing people they can do something to make their community safer.”

- Kyla Hsia, RightRides DC volunteer

RightRides DC helps close the safety gap by providing free, safe late night rides home to women and LGBTQ-identifying people.

Our dedicated all-volunteer team of drivers, navigators, and dispatchers got 20 people safely home late at night during the program’s soft launch on Halloween. That’s **20 people** who otherwise may have been at risk for harassment by walking home or pay an additional fee for their safety by taking a cab -- something which we know doesn’t always equal safety.

Thanks to your support, RightRides DC will run again three more times on major holidays!

# YOU CAN BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR SCHOOL.

02 | Trainings & Workshops



“As a young woman living in D.C., I am unfortunately all too familiar with street harassment. Witnessing harassment and feeling powerless to step up feels awful. After Collective Action for Safe Spaces’ workshop at my school, I feel confident enough to intervene when I see street harassment. Thank you so much for all the work you do!!”

- Elana Margosis, junior at HB Woodlawn High School

In 2014, we trained 415 community members from all backgrounds and walks of life. That’s 415 more people riding your bus, serving your drinks, and walking down your street who have the skills to respond to and intervene in incidents of sexual harassment.

Our workshops empower people to take action in their own communities -- be it school, work, or on their block -- to show harassers that their behavior won’t be tolerated and that we have survivors’ backs. Here are just a few groups we worked with on anti-harassment projects this year: a union of cafeteria workers whose female members were being harassed on the job; local artists organizing a public performance on street harassment in SW DC; and activists from around the country and world who are trying to make their communities safer for all.

# YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE WHILE YOU'RE GETTING AROUND YOUR CITY.



**“CASS has been an integral partner in raising awareness about sexual harassment and assault on Metro.** Harassment on Metro is not OK, and CASS has helped drive that message home across the region. We have welcomed their participation in the program and look forward to our continued partnership in the years ahead.”

*- Caroline Laurin, Manager, Media Relations, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)*

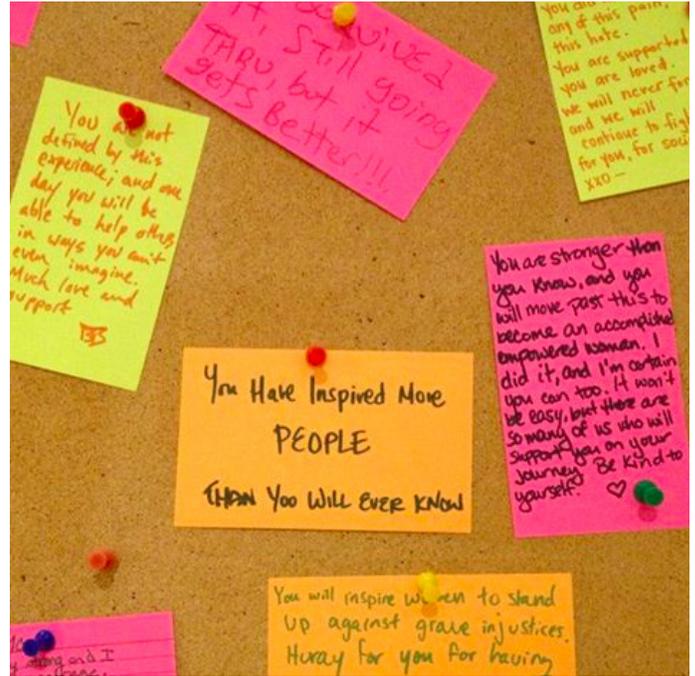
Thanks to the courage of our followers who share their stories, we are working hard to ensure that every transportation option is safe and accessible.

CASS has been advocating for your safety on the Metro and buses since 2009. This year, we worked with WMATA to consult on a new public awareness campaign and assist in the launch of a new training program for all 3,000 frontline WMATA staff members.

Our advocacy is driven by your voices, and many of you spoke up about being harassed or assaulted in cabs or Ubers this year. We're working to educate Uber and the DC Taxicab Commission on increased safety measures to ensure that you have more transportation options to choose from.

# YOUR STORY MATTERS.

04 | Community-Driven Media



“Following CASS’ blog has been so wonderful in my life. I’ve learned that I’m not alone in experiencing harassment and that there are safe ways to improve each situation and stand up for myself. Before learning about CASS, I kept my head down and accepted harassment as a norm in my life. Now, however, I feel much more secure and happy as a part of the CASS community. I love seeing DC communities unified under a common goal that benefits so many people.”

- Emily Biondo, local CASS supporter

In 2014, nearly 100 community members shared their experiences with public sexual harassment and assault on the CASS blog. Many of these stories credited CASS with the inspiration for speaking out against sexual harassment. These stories received exposure to the over 50,000 users who visited our website in 2014.

Social media continues to be perhaps the most powerful space for community members to engage with our work as well as receive support around their experiences with harassment. In 2014, we more than doubled our Facebook following and grew to nearly 4,000 Twitter followers.

Our work was written about in the press over 25 times this year, including in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *NPR*, *Jezebel*, *Al Jazeera* and more!



“CASS is a magnificent organization! I have had the privilege of working with CASS in multiple capacities, and throughout our time together what CASS has taught me is what it truly means to be a grassroots organization committed to dismantling the multi-level systems of oppression in our society. CASS tackles the power of violence and the many ways in which it operationalizes itself in our society, and for that they are timeless and matchless.”

*- Indira Henard, Director of Advocacy at the DC Rape Crisis Center*

Last year, we worked with the DC Rape Crisis Center, DC NOW, and others to organize nearly 50 survivors, community members, and advocates to testify about their experiences with the DC Metropolitan Police Department in an unprecedented showcase of survivors’ voices before the DC Council. This year, we watched the Sexual Assault Victim Rights Amendment Act of 2014 (SAVRAA) pass unanimously, with vocal support from several Council members.

SAVRAA, which provides for more community oversight over the police department’s handling of sexual assault cases and codifies more rights for survivors who report their assault, went into effect this November.

We’re continuing to advise the DC Justice for Survivors Campaign, a grassroots coalition of survivors, allies, advocates, direct service providers and community members, on ensuring that our city’s laws and services account for your experiences and serve your needs, and we’re always in touch with legislators, the police, and more on the stories you submit to our blog.

# EVERYONE HAS AN IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY IN CREATING SAFE SPACES.

06 | Safe Bars



“Everyone at Hank’s knows that they’re part of a community where they do the important work of caring for our guests. The Safe Bars training helped show us how this work influences our community writ large here in the DC area. CASS is starting important conversations on how we can work together to make our communities -- small and large -- safe and welcoming for people of all backgrounds and identities.”

*- Jamie Leeds, Chef and Owner at Hank’s Oyster Bar and Safe Bars trainee*

CASS and our community partner trained 15 bartenders this year through Safe Bars, a training program that builds skills for bar staff to intervene in sexual aggression and prevent sexual harassment and assault.

Thanks to the support of wonderful community partners like Hank’s Oyster Bar and others, DC’s business community is stepping up to help make our city safer.

# OUR MOVEMENT NEEDS TO GROW - AND IT WILL, THANKS TO YOU.

07 | Community Accountability



“Street harassment, left unchecked and unaddressed, creates an environment of fear. Where I live east of the Anacostia, this fear makes it difficult for my women and LGBTQ neighbors to join in the process of community building that we really need. I joined CASS because I wanted to bring awareness to my neighbors on how to stop harassing behaviors and how to intervene on behalf of others. Together, we’re working on doing that.”

- Synta Keeling, CASS Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is the guiding light of the organization, and we’re thrilled to have welcomed four new members this year from diverse communities in the DC area. We know they love this city as much as you do.

Everyone’s story matters, and our movement needs to center the voices of the most marginalized. We know we have work to do before we get there. We thank you for your thoughts and stories which keep us always working to do more.

This year, we took another big step forward to stand in solidarity with low-income communities and communities of color by sharing what has been our internal practice: we won’t pursue criminalization of harassing behaviors.

# YOU ARE PART OF OUR COMMUNITY - AND TOGETHER, WE ARE POWERFUL.

08 | Building a Safer DC



“I’ve been following CASS over the past couple of years, trying to learn more about this problem. Thanks to CASS, I now know a lot more about this issue, and I understand that I have a responsibility to stand up to people who harass others, and to support people who get harassed.”

*- Ramin Katirai, local CASS supporter*

“For years, I’ve felt unsafe on the street. I thought that the solution to this feeling was held in my actions, and so I would moderate my outfit, never make eye contact, keep my head low, and always wear headphones to create a safe auditory cocoon. But none of it stopped harassment from happening, and the feeling that I had no control over my own safety in public filled me with even more anxiety.

When I started following CASS’s blog, and then attending their events, I realized a really important thing: I am not the problem. And there are thousands of people in our city who are taking control of their own safety by supporting each other. I feel more powerful on the streets than I ever have, knowing that I’m one of them.”

*- Stefanie Jamison, local CASS supporter*

# COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR SAFE SPACES!

## STAFF

**Chai Shenoy**, Executive Director\* **Zosia Stykowski**, Director of Community Outreach  
**Julia Strange**, Director of Programs and Policy\* **Renee Davidson**, Director of Communications\*  
**Emily Morrison**, Program Fellow

*\*volunteer staff*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# THANK YOU!

CASS | Collective Action for Safe Spaces

202-870-3116

P.O. Box 66231

Washington, DC 20035

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[www.twitter.com/SafeSpacesDC](http://www.twitter.com/SafeSpacesDC)