

# Proclamation



## Office of the Mayor

- Whereas,** victims of sexual violence face unique challenges due to stigma, prejudice, bias and the incredible difficulty of describing the details of such an attack; and
- Whereas,** victims of sexual violence may be reluctant to report sexual assaults to law enforcement or other community professionals; and
- Whereas,** because a friend or family member is typically the first person a victim confides in after an assault, each individual's personal reaction is the first step in a long path toward justice and healing; and
- Whereas,** when these loved ones respond with doubt, shame, or blame, victims suffer additional negative effects on their physical and psychological well-being; and
- Whereas,** knowing how to respond is critical – a negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where perpetrators face zero consequences for their crimes; and
- Whereas,** the “Start by Believing” public awareness campaign is designed to increase awareness and improve the responses of friends, family members, and community professionals, so they can help victims to access supportive resources and engage the criminal justice systems;

**Now, Therefore, I, Jason Nichols,** with the power vested in me as Mayor of the City of Tahlequah, do hereby proclaim month of April 2015 as

### ***“Start by Believing”***

in the City of Tahlequah, public awareness campaign, and encourages all citizens of Oklahoma, if confronted with an allegation of sexual assault, to start by believing, and refer the victim to appropriate resources.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the City of Tahlequah to be affixed this 7th day of April 2015.

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**Jason Nichols, Mayor**