

THE MONDAY TAMPA TRIBUNE

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WEATHER

HIGH 90, LOW 72 Partly cloud

Sex assault survivors take strong stand

Event's focus is on transformation that comes through healing

BY DONNA KOEHN
dkoehn@tampatrib.com

TAMPA — If someone had told Marilyn Bray several years ago that she would be speaking about her devastating sexual assault before a crowd — using

humor, no less — she would have considered it a sick joke.

But Friday night, Bray and about 20 other survivors and professional performers will take the stage at Sacred Grounds Coffeehouse in Tampa to present "Voices of Strength: Night of Expression," featuring dance, poetry, dramatic readings, original songs and comedy. For many of the men and women, it's the first time they publicly

have acknowledged a past sexual assault.

"So often, rape survivors are stuck in that pain, and that is how we are portrayed in the media," says Bray, 28. "But people really do find that healing. This performance will give survivors the opportunity to further their journey in a positive way. We're focusing on the transformation that occurs through

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To be that extraordinary place where people who are in serious life crisis can find the help, support and encouragement to solve their problems and make tomorrow a better day.



FRED BELLET/STAFF

Marilyn Bray is chairwoman of an organization putting on "Voices of Strength: Night of Expression," in support of rape victims.