

HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Proceeds from the **Rite Aid Flag Football Tournament** went to the Arc Northern Chesapeake Region. The 12 teams competing included Rite Aid, Solo Cup, 1st Team Staffing, Ironbirds Baseball, BB&T, WAVE, Clark Turner Signature Homes, HCC and three other teams out of the Rite Aid Distribution Center. The tournament raised \$2,500, which will be used for the Arc's programs. The Arc offers a wide variety of services to individuals with developmental disabilities in Harford, Cecil and Kent counties, both children and adults.



WHAT'S MAKING NEWS

SICK PASSENGERS REASON FOR STOPPING D.C. METRO LINES

A sick passenger on the D.C. Metro's Red Line put rush-hour service at a standstill recently, but statistics show the situation is not uncommon.

Sick passengers accounted for 16 percent of all major service disruptions in February, the most recent month for which data are available.

Metro's rules dictate that when a passenger falls ill while on a train,

the operator must stop the train at the nearest station, notify the operations control center and investigate the situation.

"If there are bodily fluids, we could just simply isolate that car and remove the passengers from it, and keep the train moving until it gets to the end of the line and can be cleaned," Metro spokesman Steven Taubenkel said. — *Taryn Luntz*

COMMUNITY

Kreager: Bus attack 'strengthened my soul'

Victim says middle schoolers would have killed her

By **Luke Broadwater**
Examiner Staff Writer

Sarah Kreager, 26, was thrust into the spotlight Dec. 4, when she boarded a Maryland Transit Administration bus in Hampden in Baltimore City and was brutally beaten in a racially charged incident that drew national attention.

Allegedly, 30 students from Robert Poole Middle School were involved in the attack on Kreager and her boyfriend, Troy Ennis, 30, but only five were convicted in juvenile court, and only one was sentenced to a secure juvenile facility.

Earlier this month, Kreager was sentenced to 18 months' probation for trying to sell an undercover police officer prescription drugs.

She said she believed the officer was an addict and wanted to help him.

She spoke with *The Examiner* about her long, emotional ride through Baltimore City's criminal justice system.

Your main assailant, 15-year-old Nakita M., will be sent to a secure juvenile facility. Are you satisfied with that?

I'm really happy. She definitely has a problem. [At the time of Kreager's assault, Nakita M. was on probation for an assault in which a girl was stabbed and beaten unconscious.] There's no respect for the law there.

In retrospect, do you think these kids should have been charged in the adult system?

They got off very easy in that respect. They weren't charged with attempted murder. In juvenile court, everything is done to help them.

Some defense attorneys accused you of being a liar. Others said you used racist slurs. In light of that, how do feel about the judge's "involved" verdict, which is the juvenile equivalent of guilty?

It's vindication for me. They tried to beat me spiritually and emotionally. They came out with allegations that are out of this world. To say I would ever say those things is insane. I have children. I have so many connections in the African-American community.

People who know me know I'm not a racist. The Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan wouldn't get on that bus and say the "N" word. And to spit? That's just the dirtiest thing there is.



26-year-old Sarah Kreager said, "I'm glad the truth was told. It actually made me stronger." — Kristine Buls/Examiner

Nakita M. filed charging documents against you that were dismissed. She alleged you punched her multiple times and spit, and that Troy used the "N" word.

Basically everything she said was something she did. I was stabbed with a nail file. She spit at me. I had 15 people on me. It was insane. Am I not to be believed because I'm homeless? They said Troy did this to me.

Why would I stay with somebody who did this to me? I couldn't open my eye. The pain was immense. My body felt like it had been hit by a train. In a way, we're lucky. If we had stayed on the bus, I think they would have killed me.

How have the beating and your injuries affected you?

Every time I look in the mirror, I remember what happened. I have blurred vision. [The doctors] don't know if that will ever heal. It's a life-long issue that I will have to deal with. I have to physically turn my head to see some things. That's a part of me they've taken. They tried to take my face from me. I now walk around thinking, "Are people looking at my face?" One eye is smaller than the other one. It's pushed into my skull more than the other one. It took two months for the feeling to come back to that side of my face.



Sarah Kreager after her assault in December on the MTA bus. — Courtesy photo

And the medical bills are going to be immense.

Have you talked about the incident with your three children [ages 1, 2 and 5]?

When my youngest kids get older, I will. My 5-year-old doesn't understand that kind of hate.

She doesn't understand where that kind of hate comes from. All I tell my daughter is, "I don't know why they did it. I never spit. I never used the 'N' word."

Will you ever ride the No. 27 bus again?

Never. There are still 20 kids out there who know my face.

You said the fight started when Nakita M. wouldn't let you sit down at an open seat.

That's what happened. I didn't think it would escalate like that over a seat. It was something so silly to me and Troy in the beginning. I said, "You can have the seat." I thought it was maybe to impress her friends.

They yelled "cracker" from the back of the bus. Then Nakita said, "You white motherf--- think you own s---." I don't think they're so young, they can't understand what happened. They took advantage of me because I was a woman. "Let's go jump on the woman. Let's go pick on the woman. Let's go beat the woman." That's just cowardly.

Some Hampden residents have complained that crimes by students from Robert Poole Middle are becoming more problematic. Do you agree?

It is a problem in Hampden. These kids have a lot of freedom at Robert Poole. They're always roaming the neighborhood. They need to know, school is out; you need to go home. When I went to Robert Poole, it was African-Americans who felt uncomfortable. Now the shoe is on the other foot, and nothing is being done. Nobody made a big deal about them calling us white motherf---. It's almost like it's OK to say something about a white person. It's a double standard. I just don't want it to divide people. There are white kids who are doing this, too.

Have any parents of the convicted teens apologized to you?

None. That's the first thing I would have done as a mother. I would never want that to happen to my child.

What about Joyce King, the woman who came to your rescue as you were lying in the gutter being beaten?

I have a lot of respect for Joyce. I'm definitely going to give her a hug. What can I do for somebody who did something so special for me?

It must have been upsetting when you learned the bus' video surveillance camera wasn't working.

It would have been a slam dunk. You would have seen it right from the beginning. There would have been no question about what happened. I was upset there was no tape. MTA was negligent. That's supposed to be checked daily.

One defense attorney alleged in court that the bruises on your arm were from intravenous drug use, not the beating. Your response?

I have never used intravenous drugs in my life. I've been very honest about being addicted to painkillers. It was another punch to my character.

Has there been anything positive from this whole ordeal?

I'm glad the truth was told. It actually made me stronger. It strengthened my soul.

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