June 25, 2015

To all of us,

In the aftermath of the tragic killings at the AME church in Charleston SC. We mourn with the families and the entire community of Charleston. We are heartbroken that we live in a society where such violent racism can occur, and does. It is a painful reminder that our legacy of slavery and oppression of people of color is still strong, and that we are still far, far short of the goal of equal and fair treatment for all.

We recognize that it is always individuals and communities of color who feel the real impact after an incident such as occurred in Charleston S.C. People of color still must navigate their daily lives knowing that there is no sanctuary for people of color. ICASA stands in solidarity with the communities of color within our rape crisis programs and communities across Illinois. We recognize your suffering, and we pledge our support to you.

In wake of all of the recent tragic instances of racial violence across the country, ICASA reaffirms our commitment to our stated mission to work toward the elimination of all forms of oppression. We must work toward creating and maintaining sanctuaries for all people of color within our centers and throughout all of our services. Further, we must be outspoken and active allies against racism in our centers and our communities

As the community of Charleston, SC has shown us following this horrific event, a time of crisis and paralyzing pain can also provide a time of opportunity and action. Now is the time when white allies **must** speak out and act against all forms of racism. There can be no more silence or inaction. We must do more.

We hope that all of us will use this opportunity to reflect upon ICASA’s role in ending racism within our hearts and our communities.

We look forward to clarifying ICASA’s role and strengthening our coalition to fight back against all forms of hatred, racism and violence.

In solidarity,

Your allies at the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault