



Department of Public Safety

COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE &
SEXUAL ASSAULT
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My Turn/Letter to the Editor

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month – A Time to Focus on Asking For and Receiving Help

By Lauree Morton, Executive Director

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As Executive Director of the Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, I am especially fortunate that all year I have the opportunity to bear witness to the amazing people working in shelters and sexual assault programs throughout Alaska and to witness the miracles that happen because of their work.

If you, or someone you love is a victim of violence, there is help. And there is hope offered day in and day out, morning to evening, weekdays and holidays, through the programs the State of Alaska funds through the Council in local communities across the state. These programs provide support, counseling, legal advocacy and real hope for victims of violence. Whether answering a hotline call, meeting one-on-one with a victim, providing childcare during support groups, or any of the myriad other ways programs meet the needs of domestic violence victims, the women and men on the front lines of this battle are there to help restore dignity and to change lives.

I am also fortunate to see the impact that the prevention and education efforts being undertaken across Alaska are having. From the “Green Dot Alaska” efforts that teach safe and effective ways for to help stop violence, to the “Coaching Boys Into Men” trainings that help coaches address the culture of violence, to the “Choose Respect” community marches that raise awareness, efforts underway across the state are changing attitudes and are changing lives.

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Here are just a few of the accomplishments the men and women working to help victims have achieved in the past year. They:

- Held youth conferences and community youth initiatives aimed at prevention;
- Expanded the “Coaching Boys into Men” program to include 75 more coaches working with young men to shape attitudes toward violence against women;
- In April, Klawock proclaimed itself a “Green Dot” community and this month the Anchorage Assembly passed a resolution officially making Anchorage a “Green Dot” community partner;
- In conjunction with the University of Alaska, CDVSA completed regional surveys of domestic violence and sexual assault in communities throughout state, providing more accurate information on victims;
- A second statewide prevention symposium took place to train workers in prevention techniques;
- An evaluation of the “Fourth R” healthy relationships curriculum was completed, showing the program to be a successful option in changing youth attitudes toward sexual assault and violence;
- Other states asked us for help to use Alaska’s Sexual Assault Response Team training program as a model for their states;
- PSAs were aired to raise awareness and on-the-ground activities took place to help Alaskans learn what they can do to create real changes in attitudes toward violence and reduce violent behaviors in their communities;
- The Governor’s Office and CDVSA successfully raised awareness through “Choose Respect” marches in 170 communities.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and it is my honor and privilege to call attention to the unsung heroes of Alaska’s efforts to create change. It is also my privilege to invite you to join in these efforts to end the scourge of domestic and sexual violence in each and every home, workplace and community and to remind anyone experiencing domestic or sexual violence that there is help and there is hope. Reach out and remember, violence is never a solution. Asking for and receiving help is making a difference in lives every day. Change is possible. Respect is always the right choice.

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