



**State of Alaska
Department of Public Safety
Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

**Sean Parnell, Governor
Joseph A. Masters, Commissioner**

**Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Choose Respect March 2012 Juneau, Alaska**

**Lauree Morton's Remarks
CDVSA Executive Director**

Good afternoon

Thank you for choosing to march today—to show allegiance to the notion that we can make a difference—we can stop domestic violence and sexual assault.

More likely than not each one of us knows at least one person who has been physically or sexually assaulted by someone she or he knew and thought could be trusted--more likely than not some of us are currently experiencing these nightmares.

Don't close your eyes.

Since we gathered last March, the Juneau Victimization Study was conducted and the results showed that 55 out of every 100 Juneau women experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence or both in their lifetime—add in the men, add in people whose first language is not English, add in other populations not surveyed—we have too many hurting people in our city.

Don't close your eyes.

Too often we distance ourselves from seeing the harm. We don't want to acknowledge it because we don't want to acknowledge our own risk—it's easier to look away so we can believe it won't happen to us. But it does.

Don't close your eyes.

This is your life. Are you who you want to be? I challenge each of us to ask that question and be willing to act on the answer. We have the capacity to change, to be better, to choose respect on a daily basis. And when we fall short, we can pick ourselves up and try again. We can live lives free of violence.

This is your life. Are you who you want to be? I want to be someone who can take a breath and extend my hand to help even if it isn't convenient. I want to be someone safe for friends to talk to. I want to be someone who speaks up even when I'm nervous about what people will think

about me. I want to be someone who knows that strength is not in being “right at all costs” or the misuse of power to “get what I want when I want it no matter what anyone else thinks” but *strength* is in gentleness and forgiveness and grace.

I'd like to encourage each of you to participate in one or more of the activities AWARE has planned for sexual assault awareness month.

Tuesday, April 3rd 5:30-8:30-Men are welcome to join Tristan Knutson Lombardo and Juneau's Violence Prevention Program for a free dinner and workshop on how men can step-up and take ownership of the issue

Friday, April 6th at 4:30pm, join AWARE at their First Friday Healing Arts Exhibit at B's Bakery & Bistro

Saturday, April 7th at 10am, the Waterfront run starts at the Juneau Arts & Humanities Council.

Call AWARE for more information on these and other activities.

Open your eyes to the possibilities. This is your life and you *can* be who you want to be.

Thank you

[To see Ms. Morton's 2011 Choose Respect address, click here.](#)