

# TIMES-CALL

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## Help end all forms of domestic violence

By Rick Breeden  
Special to the Times-Call

I am writing to the editor in hopes to assist other men before they get to the point where they commit violence against women. I want them to know about the "White Ribbon Campaign" going on in Longmont and throughout the county.

I committed domestic violence against my ex-spouse. Daily, I regret this act and think of how one moment of anger has cost me so dearly. It cost me in my free time, thousands of dollars and, more importantly, my standing in the community. I attend weekly domestic violence classes, and I am currently on 28 of 36 court-ordered classes. I also meet with my probation officer once a month and have severe restrictions to my life. This act also cost me precious time with my three children.

When one hears of domestic violence, one immediately pictures a broken and battered woman. The community should know that this is not always the case. I did something far worse. I berated, yelled at and threatened my ex-spouse. She was destroyed on an emotional level and lived in fear. I ask her forgiveness for these horrible acts. It is my hope she will one day forgive me for my actions.

We, as men, need to hold each other accountable for violence against women. With every man I have spoken, no matter what his socioeconomic level, this resonates. They know someone who has committed or received violence from men. Gentlemen, it is a problem, and the time has come to bring it to a stop.

We have so many wonderful agencies where men can seek help here in Colorado. I attend Longmont Counseling Services here in Longmont. Lynn Braunagel runs a terrific program where I and others have grown and learned how to follow a different path. Lynn provides tools that will empower us as individuals to make choices that will positively impact our livelihoods, our loved ones and our community. She has a passion to teach men and women how to use their personal power without aggression, violence or self-abuse. If you feel you have a problem, I urge you to stop and see Lynn before you find yourself in my position.

I took my sons for a long walk on Father's Day and spoke to them about how they should respect women and honor their mother. I encourage each of you to find time to speak with your sons. I also spoke to my daughter and told her that violence against her is never acceptable. Working together, we can all make a change and stop the ugly cycle of violence against women.

I made my start by speaking with my sons. Now I am asking each man in Longmont to become involved. How, you ask? By wearing a white ribbon and making a personal pledge never to commit violence against women. It is a pledge not to condone acts of violence, not to make excuses for perpetrators of violence and not to think that any woman "asks for it."

It is a pledge to not remain silent. It is a pledge to challenge the men around us to act to end violence. I am asking you to commit to the following goals and ideals of the White Ribbon Campaign:

- to be non-violent in relationships;
- confront violence wherever you find it in your life;
- challenge oppressive language and ideas

Educate others in the prevalence of gender violence in our society

Facilitate discussion with others on issues of gender violence

Teach your sons and daughters that violence is not the answer

The ribbons are available at the Information Center in Twin Peaks Mall or at your local police station.

Rick Breeden has lived in Longmont for eight years.