



WEDNESDAY DAILY TIMES-CALL

No. 185 LONGMONT AND THE ST. VRAIN VALLEY, COLORADO

Campaign sends the right message

The clients and staff at Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley want to thank the Men's White Ribbon Campaign for standing up against domestic violence. Historically, women have shouldered this responsibility. Maybe it is because we're the mothers, traditionally charged with nurturing children, guarding their safety and attending to their physical and emotional needs. Then again, maybe it's because, from childhood, males are challenged to exist in a culture that values domination, hyper-masculinity and rigid, relentless control of self and others. It's tough being that tough without becoming heartless.

Statistics show 15 percent of males commit 85 percent of the violent crimes in America. The other 85 percent of males demonstrate their masculinity by treating their fellow human beings with respect. These guys are also more likely to be victims of violence than are women or children.

The good guys have strength in numbers. It follows that they can have strength in influence, too. Men turn to each other — through humor, camaraderie and rough-and-tumble activities — for unspoken support. Boys emulate fathers, uncles, coaches and teachers. Teens and young men pay close attention to how you act. To end violence in homes and to protect children from learning violent ways, encourage your sons, relatives and friends to step up to manhood in all its inherent honor, dignity, strength of character, problem-solving skills, and ability to protect others from harm.

Our community is richer and stronger because of men who are speaking up against popular-culture messages of violent masculinity, personally demonstrating that society values and relies on the good guys.

We'd like to congratulate LEVI coordinator Cheryl Swanson, who did a fantastic behind-the-scenes job on the Men's White Ribbon and Voices of Men efforts!

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Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley