



# MONDAY DAILY TIMES-CALL

No. 274 LONGMONT AND THE ST. VRAIN VALLEY, COLORADO

## Stand against violence

**By Cheryl Swanson**

*Special to the Daily Times-Call*

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence an intimate partner. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, coerce, manipulate, threaten, humiliate, frighten, isolate, blame or hurt someone. Domestic violence occurs to people who are married, divorced, separated, dating or formerly dating, and applies both to heterosexual couples and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couples.

Nine years ago, a series of particularly violent domestic assaults occurred in Longmont. Since then, our community has come together to form a coordinated community-wide awareness and response to end domestic violence. This group is called LEVI, which stands for Longmont Ending Violence Initiative.

LEVI is focused on domestic violence community education and awareness and on making sure that residents can find access to the resources that are available in our area to end the cycle of violence.

Did you know that, as a resident of Longmont, you can help stop domestic violence? LEVI wants you as a friend, relative, neighbor or coworker to know how to effectively intervene early on and direct a victim or abuser to the resources which can help stop this behavioral pattern. Here is how you can help:

**Educate yourself:** Get the facts, and find out what resources are available in the community. Visit

Resources are  
available to those  
affected by  
domestic abuse

[www.LongmontDomesticViolence.org](http://www.LongmontDomesticViolence.org) or call LEVI at 303-774-4534 for more information.

**Help a victim:** Let them know you are there for them. Tell them they don't deserve to be abused and that they can live a life free of abuse. Let them know about area services that can help. Services for victims include, but are not limited to, safe shelter, counseling, social services, legal advocacy, legal aid, low-income health care and child care, protection (restraining) orders, temporary safe pet housing, sexual-assault resources, employment, self-sufficiency assistance and housing. Children who have been exposed to domestic violence can receive counseling, mentoring, supervised visitations and safe exchanges between parents.

**Talk to an abuser:** Always remember that while an abusive person may be open to talking with you, true change can occur only if that person is willing to be accountable for their actions and take the necessary steps to help themselves. Domestic violence certified treatment and counseling is available to abusers.

**Set a good example:** Other people see your behaviors and actions, especially young people. Treat others with respect, and teach the young people in your life that domestic violence is wrong.

**Take a stand:** Domestic violence

is not a private family matter. It is not an individual issue. It is not just a women's issue. And the police cannot solve this problem alone. Every single person can and should play a role in resolving domestic violence in Longmont. Domestic violence is our problem as a community, and we all need to be involved in becoming part of the solution. I'm honored to be part of a community where so many men have stepped up to be a part of our White Ribbon Campaign. Let's keep that momentum going. Men, wear a white ribbon to show your desire to end all violence against women, and talk to other men and boys about your efforts. Women, wear a purple ribbon to bring awareness to domestic violence, and teach your children about healthy relationships.

While many significant and worthy efforts have been made, domestic violence is still the No. 1 public-safety issue in Longmont. Domestic violence impacts thousands of people every year in our community. More people are injured as a result of domestic violence than any other crime in our city. When our community stands up and takes action by making domestic violence an unacceptable behavior, it can become a thing of the past.

Let's join together during October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month and make it known where we stand on this issue. You can help. We ALL can. Please visit [www.LongmontDomesticViolence.org](http://www.LongmontDomesticViolence.org) or call LEVI at 303-774-4534. For emergency counseling or shelter, call Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley at 303-772-4422. In an emergency, dial 911.

Cheryl Swanson is the coordinator of the Longmont Ending Violence Initiative (LEVI). For more information, contact LEVI at 303-774-4534.