



FRIDAY DAILY TIMES-CALL

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Domestic violence campaign to enlist men

By Rachel Carter

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LONGMONT — Of the 746 domestic violence cases Longmont police handled in 2005, officers arrested men 77 percent of the time and arrested women only 23 percent.

Nationally, men commit crimes against women in 92 percent of all domestic violence incidents, according to

the U.S. Department of Justice.

Because men are the offenders in the majority of domestic violence cases, police and community leaders hope to recruit men to help fight the problem in Longmont.

"The issue has been relegated to women," Longmont Police Chief Mike Butler said. "They've been the victims, so they've been the voices, the spokespeople. They've been the organizers and the

ones to make things happen."

But, he added, "when you think about it, men are more of the issue with domestic violence than women."

Officials with Longmont Ending Violence Initiative, or LEVI, are organizing a two-week campaign in June to enlist and engage men to fight domestic violence.

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How to help

What: LEVI, or Longmont Ending Violence Initiative, organized the Father's Day White Ribbon campaign to encourage men to be more active in working to end domestic violence.

When: June 10-24

Information: Visit www.longmontdomesticviolence.org or call 303-774-4534 to learn more about the campaign or to get involved.

MEN: Called upon to end domestic violence

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The Father's Day White Ribbon Campaign, June 10-24, will rely on men in the community and ask them to reach out to other boys, teens and men to raise awareness about domestic violence.

"We can be more effective if we have men galvanizing men on this issue," Butler said.

LEVI officials, police officers and community leaders gathered Thursday afternoon to kick off the new campaign and talk about how to make it a success.

The two-week campaign, which organizers planned around Father's Day on June 17, is the start "to something we want to contin-

ue for a really long time," Butler said.

Organizers will distribute white ribbons that men and boys can wear to symbolize their commitment to end domestic violence. The campaign also will include events, ads, fliers, brochures, buttons, drink coasters and public service announcements on several television channels.

Domestic violence is the No. 1 public safety issue in Longmont, Butler said; more people are injured in domestic violence incidents each year than any other crime.

"When people ask if it's safe to live in Longmont ... I say, 'It really depends who you live with,' because, by far, it is the crime that affects the most people in our commu-

nity," Butler said.

According to LEVI's statistics, more than half of Longmont residents have had some personal experience with domestic violence, and more than one-third have witnessed a domestic violence incident.

The message that violence is not acceptable needs to be taught early and often to boys and teens, said Cheryl Swanson, program manager for LEVI, and it needs to come from fathers, uncles, coaches and teachers.

"We've got to get men out there talking to other men," she said.

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