

Longtime activist and former City Council member Dan Benavidez voices his opinions Thursday after a presentation given by Longmont Police Chief Mike Butler at the Safety and Justice Center. The gathering was held as a kickoff for the White Ribbon Campaign, which joins men working toward ending violence against women.

Morgan Varon/Times-Call

# Whiteout

## Ribbons serve as message to men against domestic violence

By Pierrette J. Shields  
Longmont Times-Call

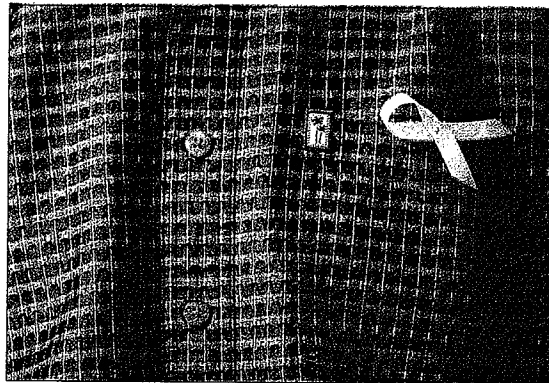
**L**ONGMONT — Dan Benavidez believes that a white-ribbon campaign is a two-week highlight for what men should be doing daily: learning, teaching and preaching against domestic violence.

"It is something you have got to do all the time, and it is something you have to have in your mind," he said.

A Longmont resident, Benavidez said he is particularly concerned about violence against women in the Latino community and is worried that white-ribbon campaign messages won't penetrate the community's tight circles.

During the campaign, sponsored by the Longmont Ending Violence Initiative and supported by the Longmont Police Department, white ribbons will appear on buildings, police cars and the chests of men who have pledged to never commit an act of domestic violence and to teach other men and boys values against partner violence.

Benavidez said he will talk to men, one on one, year-round about the meaning of manhood and how that does



By wearing white ribbons on their chests, men are making a personal pledge to never participate in, excuse or remain silent about violence against women and girls.

not include physically assaulting a partner.

"If you think this is what it takes to make you a man, wow, let me tell you what it takes to be a man," he said.

Benavidez joined other men invited to a campaign kickoff Thursday afternoon at the Longmont Safety and Justice Center.

Police Chief Mike Butler asked the men to wear the white ribbons for the duration of the campaign and to take bags of ribbons, pamphlets

and fliers to spread the word.

The campaign also will air 600 television spots on 10 cable channels over the next two weeks.

"Unfortunately, the scourge of domestic violence is very much alive and well in our community," Butler said.

In 2006, the Longmont Police Department handled 620 domestic-violence cases. Butler said 82 percent of offenders were men and 18 percent were women, and 243 children witnessed the violence.

Historically, he said, advocates for domestic-violence victims have been women, and the second annual campaign is seeking men to step up as advocates.

"We believe the missing voice is the voice of men," Butler said. "We more or less have relegated the difficult and often dirty work to women."

He said boys are more likely to pay attention to anti-violence messages from men; conversely, when men commit violence in front of boys, the behavior is learned.

"Sometimes, we have a 12-year-old victim and in a few years we have an 18- or 19-year-old offender," he said.

Material from LEVI also asks men to examine their feelings and behaviors toward women.

Free ribbons are available at the Longmont Police Department, the Longmont Public Library, the Twin Peaks Mall information desk, Longmont United Hospital, the lobby of the Longmont Times-Call, and the Ed & Ruth Lehman YMCA.

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