

Reports of domestic violence in N.E. Colo. up 42%

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Domestic violence programs serving victims in northeast Colorado announced recently that nationally there has been a 42 percent increase in domestic violence reports and a 25 percent increase in the reported incidence of rape and sexual assault in the past year.

In a poll conducted by the Center for Advancement of Women, Perils & Progress: New Agenda for Women, women ranked reducing domestic violence and sexual assault highest among nearly all other priorities. Men have joined women in this growing concern about gender-based violence.

If you are being abused, or know someone who is being abused and do not know how to help them, contact one of the three community-based domestic violence programs that serve battered women and their children in northeast Colorado. These programs are SHARE, Inc. in Fort Morgan; Help for Abused Partners in Sterling; and New Directions in Yuma.

Bilingual services (English and Spanish) available through these programs include crisis intervention, safety planning, individual counseling, court advocacy and help with protective orders. Both SHARE and Help for Abused Partners have emergency shelters, transitional housing, support groups and children's programs. SHARE also has a Safe Haven supervised visitation and safe exchange program.

The three programs collaborate to make sure all victims in the six-county area of Phillips, Morgan, Logan, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties can receive the level of services they need.

Emergency funds are available to help with the cost of travel necessary to stay in shelter, go to court or attend support group. Financial assistance is also available for other emergencies related to domestic abuse, such as payment of rent, utilities and some other expenses not covered by Victims Compensation.

Things you can do to help:

—When you file your taxes, you can easily use the tax check-off program to make a voluntary contribution to the state's Domestic Abuse Assistance Fund which helps support community based domestic violence programs.

—Contribute directly—write a check to your local program. Your donation is tax deductible.

—Volunteer. Contact your local office for information on the next training for volunteer advocates.

—Find out what is on the wish list of things women and children need while they stay in the shelter and help provide for these needs.

For more information, contact SHARE, Inc., Fort Morgan, 970-867-4444 or toll free, 1-888-867-9590; Help for Abused Partners, Sterling, 970-522-2307; or New Directions, Yuma, 970-848-3867. Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline number is 1-800-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). SHARE also has a website with news, information and resources at www.sharemorgancounty.com.