

**ONE in FOUR women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.**



# A NOTICE TO COMMUNITY LEADERS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Dear Community Leaders:

On behalf of the **Kent County Domestic Violence Community Coordinated Response Team (DVCCRT)**, we are writing in response to the recent domestic violence conviction of Kent County Commissioner James Vaughn. Domestic violence will be prevented only when our leaders, and we as a community, come together and refuse to accept or minimize its harm. When community leaders are aware and informed about domestic violence, and use their position to educate, they have the power to counter pervasive attitudes that condone, dismiss, or blame the victim for the abuse. We ask that as a leader in our community, you **help prevent domestic violence** by speaking out against it when the opportunity to educate arises.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

- ▶ Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling behaviors used by one person in an intimate relationship to control the other. These behaviors may include physical assaults, sexual assaults, emotional abuse, isolation, threats, stalking, and/or intimidation.
- ▶ Domestic violence is not just a family matter. It is a crime, and it is in Kent County. Every day in West Michigan, thousands of women (and their children) live in fear of the violent actions of an abusive husband or boyfriend (current or former).
- ▶ There is no such thing as a “minor” domestic violence case. Domestic violence escalates over time, so any case has the potential to lead to a fatality.
- ▶ Domestic violence is always the sole responsibility of the abuser. It is a deliberate choice made by the abusive partner. It is NOT an issue of poor impulse control or anger management problems on the part of the abuser. It is NOT a couple fighting, and it is NOT a mere side effect of substance abuse.
- ▶ Domestic violence is perpetrated by all kinds of people, no matter what race or religion they are, no matter what their level of education or economic background.
- ▶ All of us--neighbors, families, friends, police, prosecutors, and the courts--must go the extra mile to protect and support victims, and to hold abusers accountable.
- ▶ Call 911 if you hear or see a domestic violence incident.

We thank you for your assistance and also for your service to our community. If you have further questions or would like more information, please contact Shandra Steininger, DVCCRT Secretary at [ssteininger@drcwm.org](mailto:ssteininger@drcwm.org).

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Bliss  
DVCCRT Co-Chair

Ashley Nickels  
DVCCRT Co-Chair

*DVCCRT is a multi-disciplinary team of local professionals who work in the field of domestic violence prevention, domestic violence intervention, law, education, the faith community, and health care. Its mission is “to cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate on all community efforts and levels in order to eliminate domestic violence.”*