

Domestic violence – it's a community issue

By Anna K. Richter



It seems every month of the year has a specific focus and many people associate October with Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Along the pink ribbons that abound, you may also see people wearing or displaying purple ribbons. Those wearing purple ribbons know that October is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month and are showing their support for local adult and child survivors of domestic violence.

If you would like a bowl of ribbons for your business, feel free to call Lisa at (530) 544.2118 or email her at lutzig@sltwc.org and she will deliver them to you. Of course, you can always stop by 2941 Lake Tahoe Blvd. in South Lake Tahoe during business hours to pick up a bowl of ribbons, or even just a handful for your friends and family to wear to show that you believe Lake Tahoe's homes should be safe, violence-free places where each family member can thrive.

This October, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center will host a number of events to raise awareness and funds to support our domestic violence programs, which provided safety and support to more than 1,400 locals last year. One in every three victims served was a child who had witnessed or experienced abuse. Please support South Lake Tahoe Women's Center's work in the community this October by participating in our events.

For the third year, the Women's Center will display red, life-sized silhouettes of people in our area who were murdered

by their intimate partners. These figures are called Silent Witnesses. While this is a national project, we chose to highlight the stories of women, a child and a man who were murdered in domestic violence incidents and who lived in the area from Reno to Placerville.

South Lake Tahoe Women's Center's Silent Witness exhibit has 11 silhouettes. It was startling how easy it was to find stories in newspapers of domestic violence murders close to home. These silhouettes remind us of the dangerous realities faced by victims of domestic violence and encourage us to continue working to prevent and address violence in South Lake Tahoe homes.

The Silent Witnesses were displayed in front of the Women's Center on Oct. 1, and will also appear at Al Tahoe ESL Learning Center on Oct. 15, at South Tahoe High School on Oct. 20 and at Lake Tahoe Humane Society on a date that is TBD during the last week of October.

Please join us for a fun night with appetizers and drinks or dinner on Oct. 28 at Chevys from 4-9 pm. By bringing the required flyer (which can be found at www.sltwc.org/calendar.html) and presenting it to your server that night, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center will receive 25 percent of the evening's total sales. We will use funds raised to support the needs of domestic violence victims and their children in this year of more than \$200,000 in cuts to our state funding.

We are also very excited about the Howl-oween Pet Parade and Costume Contest, which will be at Dog Dog Cat on Oct. 31 from 1-4 pm. Pets often become targets of abuse in abusive homes, so we want to celebrate our love for pets through this event. There will be snacks, games, and you and your favorite furry friend can have your photos taken by Shauna Trim with Cherish Your Moment Photography for \$10.

Proceeds from the photographs and the \$5 fee to enter the costume contest will benefit South Lake Tahoe Women's Center and the Humane Society. Each person who comes will receive a gift bag and is eligible to win other fun prizes. For more information, call Dog Dog Cat at (530) 541.2322 or take a look at the event flyer at www.sltwc.org/calendar.html.

Grocery Outlet supports South Lake Tahoe Women's Center this Domestic Violence Awareness Month by having boxes out at each register so customers can donate their change to help local victims find safety, counseling, support and emergency shelter, food and clothing at South Lake Tahoe Women's Center. Every bit helps us make a difference and every donation, no matter how small, can help support victims struggling to keep themselves and their children safe.

South Lake Tahoe Women's Center is thankful for the community's support this month and every month "we would not be able to continue to provide comprehensive services and support to the adult and child victims living in our community without all of our donors, volunteers, and hard working local staff. Thank you, South Lake Tahoe, for contributing to the success of our events and fundraising this Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Anna K. Richter is the development director for South Lake Tahoe Women's Center.