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Anchor/Reporters: PAULINE CHAN, KEN SHAW, ROGER PETERSON

Ken Shaw (host): It has been 17 years since 14 women were murdered at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique. Tonight Toronto is remembering that dark day. CTV's Roger Peterson joins us now with more. Roger.

Reporter: Ken, the memorial service here at Philosopher's Walk at the University of Toronto is just one of the hundreds taking place across the country at almost the exact hour that the women were killed, and even though it's been nearly two decades since the massacre, many feel more needs to be done to protect women.

One by one their names are read, 14 young engineering students murdered because they were women. Today a crowd gathered at Women's College Hospital and candles were lit in their memory.

Woman: We're only going to go forward if we remember where we've been.

Reporter: It's been 17 years since the women were gunned down at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique. Madman Marc Lepine separated the women from the men and declared his hatred for feminists before opening fire. Afterwards he took his own life. To this day the murder still bothers Virginia Stead. She's a faculty member at another professional school. Stead was canvassing today to help women in abusive situations get out.

Virginia Stead (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education): To escape, to get their first month's rent in a safe place, to get food, to get clothing for their kids on a short-term basis.

Reporter: There was also a call to action at Queen's Park. A new program called Neighbours, Friends, and Families helps community members identify women at risk of abuse. According to Barbara MacQuarrie, it's a step in the right direction.

Barbara MacQuarrie: We've built more shelters. We've opened more rape crisis centres, and really importantly, we're coordinating our efforts.

Reporter: Efforts that Toronto's Police Chief Bill Blair says he is honoured to be a part of. Blair has a 23-year-old daughter who's moved out on her own.

Bill Blair: Every time I speak to her the last thing I say to her is be safe.

Reporter: A sad commentary on society, Blair says, that he still has to worry about her as much as he does. So how far have we come when it comes to protecting women? All the experts agree pretty much not far enough, and Chief Blair says, for example, this year domestic murders are on the increase.