



Waterloo Region Record (Kitchener, ON)

Order/Commande

112963

Date 13.11.2008

Circ. 67000 Page B1

1 / 1

Neighbours, Friends, Families brochure lists signs of domestic abuse

By Greg Mercer, Record staff

WATERLOO — Think domestic abuse isn't happening in your neighbourhood? Maybe you should talk to your hairdresser.

The staff at salons often find telltale bruises on customers that the rest of us can't see, say those behind a new anti-violence-against-women campaign.

That's why hair salons are among the gathering places

— including dentists' offices, libraries and churches — that will be targeted by information pamphlets about spotting the signs of domestic abuse.

Last night, the Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region announced the local launch of a provincial awareness campaign, Neighbours, Friends and Families.

It's about recognizing when a relationship is abusive — and knowing what to do about it. Information for victims and concerned

friends can be found at www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca.

"I don't think the general public really knows when someone is really at risk," said Nicole Schiener, a public education co-ordinator with the Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge and North Dumfries.

But organizers say this isn't about splitting up couples and throwing men in jail. There's help for the men doing the abusing, too.

"If we dare to get involved at an earlier point, we can get help for families before it gets to the level where police are needed," said Pamela Mank, co-ordinator of the Family Violence Project Waterloo Region.

The campaign is spurred by a provincial coroner's report that suggests as many as 90 per cent of domestic homicides are preventable. In most cases, a neighbour or family friend will tell investigators they suspected physical abuse was happening.

"So why didn't they do something about it?" asked Mary Zilney, executive director of Women's Crisis Services.

There's a perception that domestic abuse is mainly a problem for marginalized, addicted or low-income women. But plenty of well-educated, successful women from supportive homes have also been victims of violence, said Garth Juriansz, the guest speaker at last night's event.

Three years ago in Toronto, his daughter Jocelyn, 29, was attacked and left for dead by her boyfriend, who later drove his car into a wall, killing himself.

"She had everything going for her that people could say does not lend itself to a woman being abused," Juriansz said in an interview before his speech.

"It's not one kind of woman who is abused. It could happen to anyone. It could be the girl you were dating, or the girl next door."

Juriansz said it's painful to talk publicly about what happened to his daughter, but he can't let her death be forgotten.

"I refuse to let her be silent," he said. "I'm trying to speak for her."

gmercerc@therecord.com



3