

# ORANGEVILLE CITIZEN

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1974

January 17, 2008

## Shelter hopes campaign will save lives

By PAUL HUTCHINGS Staff Reporter

It's hard to believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century spousal abuse still takes place. But with lives getting more and more hectic, pressure can reach a boiling point, leading some to hurt the ones they love.

Orangeville-based Family Transition Place is running a campaign to educate the public about domestic violence in the wake of a report by the Domestic Violence Death Review, a committee of provincial coroners and various medical professionals.

The report notes that in past instances of domestic abuse, family, friends, co-workers and other people around the victim were aware of what was happening but did not recognize the warning signs and could not appreciate the risk factors.

Sue Buckle, manager of marketing, communications and resource development for Family Transition Place, said the campaign educates the public on how to support a woman who is experiencing abuse, as well as a man who is an abuser, and how you can support them without putting yourself at risk.

At one point, she said, the FTP women's shelter was operating at above capacity for a three-month run. They have 14 beds, but in any given month they can help over 150 people, including children brought to the shelter with their mothers.

"It's the idea of people helping people," said Ms. Buckle. "We know that people tell their family and friends first when something is going on, so we can give people those tools and those words that they can be able to support each other.

"We're doing some training to champion the message, because you'll listen to someone you know more likely than a stranger."

Ms. Buckle said it's a good time of year for this kind of campaign because they see a rise in victims in the aftermath of the Christmas holidays. Bills start coming into most households and the pressure can rise. She recognized that domestic abuse today can be more complex than it was years ago, with drugs and alcohol having more of an impact.

"If you think of people's lives now compared to 15 years ago and how much more complex society is, we have the shifts of diversity coming into our community so we have more people who need support with language and the complexities of different cultural values. People are under more pressure now, in different kinds of pressure, so it's about supporting them and trying to be responsive to those needs."

Some of the warning signs from the man include:

He puts her down; dominates every conversation; tries to suggest he's the victim and acts depressed, and acts as if he owns her.

As for the victim: she is apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour; is nervous talking when he is around; seems to be sick more often and misses work, and tries to cover her bruises.

The situation may become more dire if he has access to the children or if she is involved in another relationship.

For more information, you can visit the websites *familytransitionplace.ca* or *neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca*