



**Women Today of Huron receives funding to address abuse
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prevent**

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Communities across the province have been coming together of late with attempts to prevent and educate the public about domestic violence.

Huron County joined them in November of 2006, thanks to the efforts of Women Today of Huron (WTH).

WTH lacked funding at the time, however, that will soon change as monies from a \$39,600 grant given by the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General begin to filter in.

The prevention campaign, titled "Neighbours, Friends and Families," seeks to raise awareness of the signs of woman abuse and to empower others to help women who are at risk of abusive men. WTH executive director Pam Hanington said June 11 the campaign is particularly aimed at preventing domestic homicide.

"One of the things we know from all of the research that's been done is that when women are killed, people around them knew something, but they might not have known that it was a warning sign or a risk factor," she said.

"They might not have known the significance of it, and they certainly might not have known what to do. So that's what this campaign is about.

"The money will be used in part to hire a coordinator. [It will be] somebody who will do training and public presentations on the issue, as well as coordinate the distribution of materials all across the county."

Asked how essential she feels such a program is in Huron, Hanington spoke of the rural nature of the community.

"The thing about our community is we have a population that's fairly spread out," she said. "A campaign like this has an opportunity to get everywhere, to places where maybe this information wouldn't be available.

"It'll get to people who are around people who might be isolate in small communities or on farms, so this campaign is really crucial to get the word out about the risk factors and the warning signs of woman abuse."

Huron-Bruce MPP Carol Mitchell was on hand Monday to announce the grant formally and said she feels domestic violence and hate crimes weaken the community. She has spoken to women involved in domestic violence who feel as though they have had their voices taken away and don't have the strength to keep going.

"By moving forward in a collaborative manner, working with different ministries as well as community partners then it gives the voice back, and the ability to move forward, and to reinforce their family ties," she said.