

## 30 years ago this month— The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month

It's an unusual "anniversary" – 30 years ago this month was the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It's not a celebration, but an important marker of how legislation, courts, law enforcement, media and the collective thinking shifted dramatically to first acknowledge this crime, but also put efforts in place to make it stop.



### What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically.

### Domestic Violence In Florida

In 2016, 105,668 crimes of domestic violence were reported to Florida law enforcement agencies resulting in 63,193 arrests. During fiscal year 2015-2016, Florida's certified domestic violence centers provided 600,621 nights of emergency shelter to 16,362 survivors of domestic violence and their children. Advocates created 113,907 tailored safety plans, provided a total of 412,454 hours of advocacy and counseling services, and received 122,999 domestic violence hotline calls from individual seeking emergency services, information, and safety planning assistance.

Many more survivors of domestic violence are not reporting their abusers to the police or accessing services at domestic violence services due to reasons such as shame, fear, or being prevented from doing so by their abusers. For this reason, we may never know the true extent of abuse in our country and in our state.

### Did you know?

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner.
- On a typical day, domestic violence hotlines nationwide receive approximately 20,800 calls.
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%.
- 72% of all murder-suicides involved an intimate partner; 94% of the victims of these crimes are female.

### Background

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) was launched nationwide in October 1987 as a way to connect and unite individuals and organizations working on domestic violence issues and raise awareness for those issues.

Over the last three decades, much progress has been made to support domestic violence victims and survivors, to hold abusers accountable, and to create and update legislation to further those goals.

### 30 Accomplishments from the Last 30 Years

- 1987 The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was held in October.
- 1988 Ohio Domestic Violence Network was founded.
- 1988 Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault was founded.
- 1989 The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month Commemorative Legislation was passed by U.S. Congress.
- 1990 Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence was founded.
- 1990s The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) begins to recognize domestic violence as grounds for asylum in the U.S.
- 1992 The American Medical Association and the U.S. Surgeon General suggested that all women patients be screened for domestic abuse.
- 1993 Violence against women was included as a human rights violation by the United Nations at the International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.
- 1993 Funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services led to the creation of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.
- 1994 The U.S. Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as part of the federal Crime Bill. VAWA funded services for victims of domestic violence and rape, and provided training to increase police and court officials' sensitivity to domestic violence. \$1.6 billion was authorized for the years 1994 to 2000. The bill also authorizes the formation of the Violence Against Women Office in the U.S. Department of Justice and made it a federal crime to cross state lines to commit domestic violence.
- 1994 As a result of VAWA, funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services led to the creation of the Battered Women's Justice Project, the Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, and the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody.
- 1994 In conjunction with Ms. Magazine for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, NCADV created the Remember My Name Project, an annual recognition and memorial to those murdered as a result of domestic violence. Since the first publication, over 500 names are added to the national registry every year.
- 1994 Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence was founded.
- 1995 The first person to be prosecuted for possession of a firearm in

violation of a domestic violence protection order under the Violence Against Women Act occurred in South Dakota.

- 1995 The first person to be convicted of a felony under the Violence Against Women Act in crossing state lines (West Virginia and Kentucky) to assault his wife occurred.
- 1995 With origins stemming from the Domestic Violence Coalition on Public Policy, the National Network to End Domestic Violence was initially incorporated to provide a national lobbying voice for state domestic violence coalitions.
- 1996 The Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban was passed by Congress to extend the federal prohibition on firearms possession by criminals to include individuals convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence and child abuse crimes.
- 1996 The National Domestic Violence Hotline opens and is further funded under the Violence Against Women Act. The hotline responds to nearly 9,000 calls during the first month of operation.
- 1997 Sacred Circle, the National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women, was established to provide technical assistance, policy development, training institutes and resource information regarding domestic violence and sexual assault to develop coordinated agency response in American Indian and Alaska Native tribal communities.
- 1997 The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence was formed at the National Symposium on La Violencia Domestica: An Emerging Dialogue Among Latinos in Washington D.C.
- 1997 An anti-stalking law signed by U.S. President Bill Clinton makes interstate stalking and harassment a federal offense whether or not the victim had obtained a protection or restraining order.
- 1999 My Sister's Place piloted a Latino Outreach Program in Washington, D.C., that translated educational materials, recruited bilingual volunteers, facilitated workshops and raised consciousness in the Latino community.
- 2000 The Violence Against Women Act of 2000 was passed and reauthorized funding for 1) training, 2) services for battered/abused women and their children, and 3) creating new programs to include stalking and dating violence. \$3.3 billion was authorized for the years 2000-2005.
- 2001 President George W. Bush signed into law the Stamp Out Domestic Violence Act of 2001 that called for a creation of a postal stamp that would raise funds for victim services.
- 2001 The Office of Women Advocates, Puerto Rico, was founded.
- 2002 WomenSpirit Coalition/Washington State Native American Coalition Against Domestic Violence and



Sexual Assault was founded.

- 2005 The U.S. Congress updated the Violence Against Women Act to include teen dating violence and more prevention funding.

SOURCE: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

### Local Domestic Violence Programs

- HOPE Family Services in Bradenton (941) 747-8499

HOPE provides services to survivors of domestic violence. HOPE, Manatee County's state certified domestic violence service provider, offers a myriad of services



designed to further the mission of promoting safety, strength and well being for those affected by domestic violence. HOPE offers:

- **24 Hour Helpline**—operates a 24 hour, 365 days a year. Call (941) 755-6805 (V/TTY)
- **Emergency Safe Shelter**—HOPE provides a safe place in a confidential location for victims of domestic violence to evaluate their options.
- **Advocacy**—assists clients with identifying and overcoming barriers to a safe way of life. HOPE's case management services in the advocacy department are designed to address emergency issues such as financial concerns, and housing, food, and clothing needs are addressed; as well as information and referrals to other organizations that can be of assistance. Advocacy includes assisting with court-related matters, such as Injunctions for Protection, accompanying clients to hearings and facilitating legal referrals when necessary. Advocates also assist participants with job training opportunities and issues surrounding economic justice.
- **Counseling**—individual and group counseling to victims of domestic violence. Weekly support groups address issues regarding domestic violence and its impact on the family and include specialized groups for Women of Color, Spanish speakers, older women, and women who identify as Lesbian or bisexual.
- **Children's Program**—provides supportive individual and group counseling to children affected by domestic violence. The intent of the program is to assist children with the current trauma in their lives while teaching them non-violent coping mechanisms in an

effort to break the intergenerational nature of domestic violence.

All calls to HOPE and services provided by HOPE are confidential. Visit [www.hopefamilyservice.org](http://www.hopefamilyservice.org).

- Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center in Sarasota (941) 365-0208



SPARCC's mission is to stop domestic and sexual violence in our communities. SPARCC helps woman regain freedom from perpetrator. SPARCC is the only state-certified center for domestic violence and sexual assault services for Sarasota and DeSoto Counties. All of SPARCC's services are free and confidential.

If you are a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault, SPARCC can provide help that is free and confidential. Call 941-365-1976 to speak with a trained advocate. Advocates are available to assist you 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

SPARCC offers a variety of services at its outreach offices in Sarasota, Venice, Northport and Arcadia. SPARCC Offers: safety planning, court accompaniment, children's services, economic empowerment program, case management, crisis intervention and information and referrals

Their IFP Project has attorneys located at SPARCC who provide free legal services to help obtain injunctions for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. Services include: Meet with survivors to provide legal advice to determine whether seeking an injunction is a safe and appropriate legal remedy; Complete and file petitions for injunctions for survivors and represent them at the final injunction hearing; Represent survivors who have obtained temporary injunctions and request representation at the hearing on the final injunction; Represent survivors who have a final injunction for protection at a civil hearing for a violation of the injunction, or refer the violations to the Office of the State Attorney for prosecution; Represent survivors at hearings to extend or modify an injunction; Assist survivors in defending against a motion to dismiss an injunction; Attend continued injunction hearings regarding child support, alimony, and timesharing requested in an injunction petition.

SPARCC provides emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence and their dependents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.