

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

It matters, to all of us; Woman Abuse Awareness Month features events that focus on the issue

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Byline: Clare Freeman
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November is **Woman Abuse** Awareness Month. Each year, 22 agencies work together as members of the **Woman Abuse** Working Group to host a number of public education events to engage the community into taking further action towards ending **violence against women**.

Some people still ask why it matters that we have a **Woman Abuse** Awareness Month.

To each woman, child, family and friend who has had to live with the impact of a murder and/or suicide, it matters.

To the **Ontario** Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAIH), which reports that in **Ontario** since 1995, 280 women, 43 children and 12 loved ones have been murdered by a male husband/ex-partner, it matters.

To the members of the death-review committee of the Office of the Chief Coroner of **Ontario**, whose 2008 report revealed that more than 94 per cent of those murdered in domestic cases were women while 92 per cent of the perpetrators were men, it matters. Each year the report lists a number of recommendations for changes so that deaths may be prevented.

To the Hamilton Police Service, which reports that in domestic-related homicides in Hamilton between 1996-2007, 80 per cent of the victims were female, it matters.

To Statistics Canada which, in its family violence report released just this month, explain that women and children have historically and currently died at the hands of abusive men three to five times more often than the reverse, it matters.

To the many women, community and political advocates who fought to establish shelters and **sexual-assault** centres, and whose actions have changed laws to address the issues of **domestic violence** and **sexual assault**, it matters.

To all the member agencies of the **Woman Abuse** Working Group and community members who have themselves lived through, or watched a neighbour, friend or family member live through a violent relationship; to each one of us who has looked into the eyes of a neighbour, friend or family member whose loved one has been murdered; to each one of us who has taught a child growing up in a violent home; and to each one of us who has considered the social costs and implications of violence in our work and community; it matters.

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Please join the **Woman Abuse** Working Group by attending one of many events, by visiting wawg.ca, by viewing the Neighbours, Friends and Family website at neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca or by contacting one of our local women's agencies and asking "what can I do to WALK the TALK?"

One event that is worth attending is the Walk the Talk Shoe exhibit.

This powerful art installation commemorates the 42 women and children murdered by their abusive partners during a one-year period in **Ontario**. Admission to the exhibit is free.

The exhibit is being held at Christ Church Cathedral, 252 James St. N., Nov. 4 to 27, Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

A special evening commemorating the exhibit will be held during the James North Art Crawl on Nov. 14, 7 to 11 p.m.