

## Awareness is Not Enough

*Our Director of Legal Services, Melissa Reed, writes about our plans to try to stop domestic violence before it starts.*

CODA's mission is to eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault through societal change and empowerment. Our strategic planning is focusing on two key initiatives to meet that goal.

The first effort is centered on primary prevention, which is preventing FIRST-TIME perpetration or victimization. This is achieved by reducing factors that put an individual at risk for perpetration and by promoting factors that protect an individual from victimization.

The concept of primary prevention in domestic violence and sexual assault is new nationwide. Little research has been done yet on how to prevent violence before it happens. Most organizational intervention currently occurs after the violence has happened. CODA has the opportunity to blaze the trail as it pertains to primary prevention. Simply raising awareness is not enough. Intervening with the perpetrators to prevent repeat episodes of violence is not enough. Educating our communities on primary prevention is crucial.

CODA has developed an action plan to assist in prevention efforts. This comprehensive plan includes developmental changes on an organizational level, such as updating documents, creating community partnerships, and utilizing resources available to conduct community needs assessments.

Our second objective is to increase male engagement. We hope to achieve this by convening a group of male leaders to help change the misconception that intimate partner

violence and sexual assault are solely women's issues. CODA wishes to develop partnerships with males in the community to help change social conditions that tolerate or encourage abuse.

Perpetrators of domestic violence make the choice to commit those acts of violence. This means that they can also choose not to commit domestic violence. Abusers typically use multiple strategies to establish and maintain control over their victims. Many of these

tactics are not illegal, but they deprive their victims of their human rights. Since there are no sanctions in place to stop the abuse, it is difficult for a victim to leave violent situations.

Although educating people about the problem of domestic violence is important, changing the social conditions that enable the problem is the ultimate goal. Males standing up to other males and demanding that they stop abusing their partners

is a step in changing those social conditions that support abusive relationships. CODA is actively trying to achieve these changes, and has implemented male engagement into a five-year strategic plan in hopes that growth in this area of the organization will take place and will be considered for years to come.

A vital part of this effort will be Ray Geise, who recently joined our team as a Legal Outreach Advocate after 39 years of law enforcement experience. Ray has a strong commitment to making sure that CODA's message is heard.

If you are interested in partnering with us to reach out to the men in our community, please call our office at 812-234-3441.



*Ray Geise (at left) and friends during the recent "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event*

24-Hour  
Crisis  
Line

800-  
566-  
2632

## Thank You So Much!

In our previous issue we inadvertently neglected to acknowledge two groups who provided support in December. Huge thanks to the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Alumnae Club for your generous donations, and to the ISU Women's Holiday Luncheon attendees who provided wrapped gifts for our shelter residents. Thank you all for your continued support!

Thanks to all who attended the **Walk a Mile in Her Shoes** event through downtown Terre Haute on April 23. The event asked men to literally walk one mile in women's shoes, in an effort to get people to talk about the causes and effects of men's violence against women. Everyone of all ages was welcome, and although high heels were not required, there were certainly many participants who gave it a try! Those who donated \$10 received a t-shirt and refreshments, with all proceeds going to CODA. Check out "Walk a Mile In Her Shoes Terre Haute" on Facebook for more photos!



*Gage Cervantes sported a pair of red pumps for the event*



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## Calendar of Events

**July 29  
2016  
7:00 pm**

### **"Christmas in July" Wine and Canvas Event**

*7th and Elm Bar and Grille  
Terre Haute*

Support CODA with a fun evening of painting a holiday scene and enjoying your favorite beverage! Call our office at 812-234-3441 for ticket information.

**October 22  
2016  
7:30 pm**

### **Monte Carlo Masquerade**

*O'Shaughnessy Dining Room  
St. Mary of the Woods*

Casino-style gaming, dancing, and more -- mark your calendar for the best Halloween party in town!

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