

# Local Groups Try To Solve Problems With Domestic Violence

By MAURICE CROCKER  
Chronicle Staff Writer

With domestic violence steadily rising across the nation, the Winston-Salem YWCA and Family Services recently held a panel discussion to heighten awareness of this growing problem.

"As we see violence increase in society, we also see an increase in domestic violence," said Andrea Wheatley, community educator for Family Services, a United Way agency.

The increase in violence may be due to the heightened media coverage and the growing interest people have about domestic violence.

"The more media coverage the more we are able to inform people of the different programs that are available for them to receive help," she said.

As the media coverage increases, a lot of beliefs and myths are being put to rest concerning domestic violence, Wheatley said.

"The average battered women is beaten three times a year," Wheatley said. "Most people think a battered woman is beaten everyday. But that's not true."

Statistics show the two most violent days of the year are Superbowl Sunday and the day following, she said.

"A lot of women think because he is a loving father most of the year then she can deal with three days," Wheatley said. "What we try to teach the women is that those three times are three too many."

The typical offender takes care of his family and is a loving father, she said.

Although women are the victims in 95 percent of the cases, there are some cases where men are.

Alison Cranford, social worker/criminal justice liaison for Family Services, stressed the importance of women recognizing the violence when it begins.

"It is extremely important for a woman to realize there is a problem as soon as the violence starts," she said.

According to Cranford, women are in the most danger when they are trying to leave a violent relationship.

Seventy-five percent of women who end up at the emergency rooms were trying to leave or have left their relationships, Wheatley said.

"The sooner the victim makes it clear that she is not going to tolerate that type of violence the better," Wheatley said.

The average woman will leave an abusive relationship seven to eight times before she decides to get out permanently, she said.

There are many reasons why a victim may choose not to leave the relationship, press charges or seek to prosecute their offenders, Cranford said.

"Some of them are afraid of losing their relationships and some may be afraid of what may happen if the person is released," Cranford said.

According to Cranford, domestic violence isn't just present in low income families, but all families despite economical status.

"The wealthier victims have more options to solve the problems, and keep their reputations by keeping it quiet, but the lower class people have fewer options and have to solve their problems in court," she said.

Ian Weinman, with the Forsyth County District Attorney's office, said laws concerning domestic violence are being stiffened.

"Any type of assault on a female is considered a Class A-1 misdemeanor and carries more weight than a regular assault charge," she said.

For an assault on a female to occur, the offender must be a male, and the victim must be a female.

An offender can be charged with a felony if they have five prior convictions, said Weinman. If the offender does not have any prior convictions He will probably receive probation, she said.

Another law device used to protect the victim is a 50-B form.

A 50-B is a temporary protective order issued by a judge until the case is heard in court.

"With a 50-B, if the offender comes back around after the order is issued, then he can be arrested and detained," Cranford said.

"The only problem we have with the 50-B is that when people come to fill out the form, they don't know how," said Mary Gentry, with the Forsyth County Clerk of Courts Office.

According to Gentry, personnel from the clerk of courts can not provide any assistance to the person filling the form, which makes the process



Mary Gentry, with the Forsyth County Clerk of Courts, and Alison Cranford, with Family Services.

extremely difficult.

"Whenever someone comes to fill out a form, the information they need is: who did it, when it happen, what took place and what exactly was said," Gentry said.

Once the form is completed the victim must take the case before a judge who will decide if a temporary 10 day protective order is necessary or until the

case is heard in court.

Wheatley says there are some results from the attention on domestic violence, such as new laws being passed and old laws being stiffened.

"We will continue to educate women and teach them that one slap is one too many," she said. "We also want to let men know that this behavior is no longer acceptable."



Sorors Nikita Williams and Angie Mitchell of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc, Omega Chapter solicit clothing donations.

## Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Honor Black History Month

In recognizing Black History Month, the intellectual ladies of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. honored their black ancestors by planning activities every week at the campus at WSSU. To kick Black History Month off, the appreciative ladies of blue and white held a candlelight vigil in tribute to their black historians who paved the way, on January 31, 1996 at 7:30 p.m. in front of

Blair Hall. Students expressed gratitude and thanks for our black leaders and lit candles in their memory.

The first week of Black History was opened with a black poetry reading at 7:30 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom, on February 7, 1996. Students gathered and shared quotes and read poetry of black authors.

Tuesday February 13, a

Black Love Seminar was sponsored. This seminar discussed black love and provided open, positive communication of topics concerning black relationships.

An open forum allowed for discussion of the students on relationships.

Soror Avis Bond, was the mistress of ceremonies. Questions and participation were high from campus students.

Omega chapter also sponsored Voter Registration, on February 27, in the Anderson Center Cafeteria Area, to encourage the students to vote, so their voices can be heard.

In closing of the months events, Miss Zeta Phi Beta, Demetris DeVane, held a TB (Tuberculosis) seminar on Wednesday, February 28 in Wilson Hall in the 4th floor Conference room.

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