



This Winston-Salem Police Department car, decorated to bring awareness to domestic violence, will be displayed at various public events around the city.



Photos by Todd Luck

John Eddings talks with Kathryn Mobley about his history with domestic violence at last week's Domestic Violence Awareness Month event.



Kathryn Mobley of WSTV (The Government Channel) holds up a candle during last week's vigil for domestic violence.



Stephanie Gimenez with Eliza's Helping Hands Inc. speaks at last week's domestic violence awareness event.

Vigil shines light on domestic violence

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

A vigil tried to shine a light on the violence that happens behind closed doors on Wednesday, Oct. 5, to commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Participants held up battery-operated candles during the indoor vigil, held at the Forsyth Tech Business Center at 525@vine, to remember victims of domestic violence. The event featured information on what domestic violence is like and what services are available to victims.

Among the speakers was Stephanie Gimenez, a survivor of domestic violence who now works to help others through a local non-profit called Eliza's Helping Hands (EHH).

"I sometimes tell my survivors that this isn't love, this is power and control and it does not just stop on its own," she said.

Survivors don't heal on their own either, said Gimenez, who chairs EHH's board. That's why the organization

provides emergency advocacy and support for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse.

John Eddings, a former domestic violence offender, gave another perspective on the issue. He said when an argument between him and his wife turned physical, he slapped her. He was arrested and his wife filed a restraining order against him. He said she eventually wanted to drop the charges but he refused, because he wanted to take responsibility for what he'd done. He was put in a court ordered program for first-time offenders that he said helped him manage anger and conflict while becoming a better man.

"One thing about the class is it makes you take ownership," said Eddings, who is now divorced.

The event also included Mayor Allen Joines reading a Domestic Violence Awareness Month proclamation and a prayer by Police Chaplain Dr. Nathan Scovens. Actor and activist Julian Brittano read the names of those who died

because of domestic violence locally and WXII 12's Nicole Ducouer presented a video on the issue.

Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) Lt. Eric Montgomery and Chief Barry Rountree also made remarks. Kathryn Mobley of WSTV (The Government Channel) was the mistress of ceremonies.

There will be reminders of domestic violence around the city in October. Silent Witnesses, purple silhouette stand-ups that bear the names and stories of those killed because of domestic violence, will once again be displayed around town. Purple ribbons are tied around trees at Corpening Plaza and the Public Safety Center. Some downtown buildings will be lit up with purple lights. A WSPD car decorated to bring awareness to the issue will be at numerous public events.

Eliza's Helping Hands Crisis Line is (336) 865-0389. The Domestic Violence National Hotline is 1-800-799-SAFE.

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