

PADA to debut new video series on domestic abuse victims' rights

By Pam Chickering Wilson Union staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, April 15, 2015 10:53 am

JEFFERSON — A new video series created by People Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse (PADA) informs victims and survivors of domestic abuse about their rights.

The video series, called “Community Supporting Survivors,” was made possible through the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) through a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. It is aimed at promoting community awareness of crime victims’ rights and services.

The release of the new three-part video series coincides with 2015 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week, which runs April 19-25.

All interested community members are invited to attend a screening of the locally-created video at a special event on Tuesday, April 21.

The community screening will take place at Neighbor's Grill and Pizza inside the Jefferson Golf Club, 216 Golf Drive, Jefferson, with a reception beginning at 4:30 p.m., and the program and video premiere at 5 p.m.

The video came about as an outreach project of the Coordinated Community Response Team, a group of police officers, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, human resources professionals, counselors and other professionals working against domestic and sexual abuse in association with PADA, said Bennett Brantmeier, an attorney, who has been a member of the CCRT for the past three years.

Brantmeier serves on the group's community awareness panel, along with Liz Hansen, Kathy Cheek and Mary Prescott.

Hansen wrote the grant to obtain money for this project, creating a video about victims' and survivors' rights, and the efforts within Jefferson County to work against domestic abuse.

“We were lucky enough to receive the grant,” Brantmeier said. “We hired a professional videographer out of St. Louis who came up for two days in March to do the filming.”

Brantmeier was among those who helped recruit local officials and other representatives who could speak on the issue.

Assisting in the process were Lt. Dale Lutz of the Jefferson Police Department, Jefferson County District Attorney Susan Happ, Judge Jennifer Weston, and a representative of the Watertown Police Department, among others.

Coordinators identified areas they wanted the community representatives to address. Also included in the video are comments from victims and survivors.

“It sends a really powerful message about what we are doing in Jefferson County about domestic violence,”

Brantmeier said. "It brings out some good things about domestic violence laws, and other areas that need to be strengthened and worked on."

Even though he has been ensconced in the issue, he said the video really brought home to him the amazing effort that is going on in Jefferson County.

"I was amazed at all Jefferson County is doing on this issue," Brantmeier said.

Once the video was created, he noted, the next mission was to get the information out to the public; thus, the community screening.

"Jimmy Kuehn was kind enough to donate his facility for the event," Brantmeier said, "and Anytime Fitness was gracious enough to co-sponsor the event."

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be provided at the event by Anytime Fitness and Brantmeier Law. A cash bar also will be available.

Brantmeier said the event is free to the public. Organizers particularly would like to see community leaders attend — along with those in law enforcement and those engaged with domestic abuse prevention efforts — but anyone with an interest in the subject is welcome to come.

"It provides a strong message about what really happens in domestic abuse and how the local community is trying to address it," he said.

Organizers felt it was appropriate to schedule this premiere viewing during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This annual observance, first designated by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, seeks to increase general public awareness of and knowledge about the wide range of rights and services available to people who have been victimized by crime.

Another PADA event will be taking place the day after the video premiere as well. The fundraiser, "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," is scheduled to take place from 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 22, at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Hyland Hall/Timmerman Auditorium. More information about that event also is available online.

The theme for the 2015 National Crime Victims' Rights Week is "Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims."

Since 2004, the NCVRW Community Awareness Project has provided financial and technical assistance to more than 720 community projects that promote victim and public awareness activities, and innovative approaches to victim outreach and public education about victims' rights and services during National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

This PADA video was one of the 90 projects recommended by the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and selected for funding by OVC for 2015, out of 194 applications submitted nationwide.

Coordinators extended special thanks to all the participants in the video, also recognizing producer Kara Miller and director/editor Kat Tuschner.

For additional information about services for victims/survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, people may contact PADA at (920) 674-6768 or visit the organization's website at www.padajc.org.

For information about national efforts to promote 2015 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, people may visit the Office for Victims of Crime website at <http://www.ovc.gov>.

The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators is a non-profit organization that represents the 56 state agencies that distribute money from the federal Victims of Crime Act Crime Victims Fund to more than 4,000 direct victim assistance service providers. The money in the Crime Victims Fund comes from fines collected from offenders convicted of federal crimes and not from U.S. taxpayers.