

# October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

## Columbia County takes action against domestic violence

By Naaman Córdova-Muenzberg  
Executive Director  
SAFE of Columbia County

Columbia County has twice the state average of teens who report dating violence. More than 1 in 3 women have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking in her lifetime. Statistically, you probably know someone who has accessed services at SAFE. But, SAFE is not alone its efforts to support survivors and prevent domestic violence.

SAFE is part of a movement to empower the next generation to build healthy relationships. Partners like The Amani Center, Public Health Foundation, and our community and School Based Health Centers, provide trauma informed health care for survivors. Community Action Team, Columbia Community Mental Health, Columbia Pacific Food Bank, and police and sheriff's offices help meet survivors' needs and hold abusers accountable. Columbia County is a model for working together to stop domestic violence. But, let's not forget one important person... you.

If we ignore domestic violence

or refuse to invest in interventions that prevent it, abuse continues. However, when you donate money to SAFE or our partners, you make a difference in the life of a survivor. When you volunteer at our agencies, you open up professional opportunities and positively impact your own health and that of your community.

Get involved this October. Be vocal about your opposition to abuse in our community. "Like" SAFE of Columbia County on Facebook, and find out more about how you can be a part of this movement. Thank you for stepping up. We are stronger, healthier, and safer when we stand together.

## Supporting Awareness of Domestic Violence

By Representative Brad Witt

As a State Representative, it is important that I use my voice in Salem to speak up for survivors of domestic violence in my district. This past legislative session saw great strides for the protection of survivors' rights and prevention of violence in all forms.

I was proud to support measures providing vital safety resources for those fleeing violence as well as much needed funding for proven prevention curriculum. The prevention education that SAFE delivers has been shown to

reduce the likelihood of domestic and sexual violence in adulthood. My hope is that we are raising a generation of young people that build healthy relationships, respect each other and break the cycle of abuse and oppression in all forms.

I support SAFE of Columbia County and their mission to empower survivors of abuse and build a healthier, safer community. You should too. Last year, Columbia County's domestic and sexual violence victim's agency, SAFE, took over 1,000 calls on their 24-hour help line and provided shelter for 99 women and their children as they fled

violence, as well as provided countless other services to hundreds of survivors.

As a community, we need to send a clear message that oppression and violence are not tolerated here in beautiful Columbia County. By starting upstream and giving young people the skills to develop healthy, respectful relationships we are moving in the right direction. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and a time to talk about this uncomfortable topic. We must honestly take stock of where we are and commit to a culture of respect and a future free from violence.

## Voices From the Crowd: Sunlight Affective Disorder

Story and Photo  
By Kate Talbot

I am a summer person. Every year, around March or April, I begin to come alive as the days grow longer and the sun a little bit warmer. As spring turns into summer, I can't get enough of the warmth and light and try to spend as much time as possible outside. Even mowing the lawn becomes a welcome chore. I want it to last forever...

And then, just like the throw of a switch, Labor Day arrives and I hit bottom. It seems like overnight, the days are shorter and the nights chillier, and I feel like I am being dragged, kicking and screaming, into fall. I descend into a deep melancholy and for the next six weeks I alternate between anger, depression and a quiet "waiting."

Recently I took a day off from



work just to stay home and catch up. It was a crisp, dry, fall day and the dog and I decide to take a long walk on the Linear Trail. We skirt drifts of wet leaves and listen to the rattle of dry ones falling through the canopy of bare branches. The sound of splashing water lures us to the edge of Beaver Creek to find a lone salmon circling a patch of gravel in the shallow ripples. We stop to watch the

progress of a wooly caterpillar as it inches purposefully across the pavement and I breathe deeply the fragrance of wet cedar and fir, and musty decaying leaves.

As we turn to head back to the car, a sudden gust of wind blows through the trees overhead and we are showered with leaves, falling softly all around us like snow. They land on my head and shoulders like a quiet blessing, and decorate the wavy red hair of the dog. Like a final benediction, I accept the inevitable and am finally able to let go of summer and move on to the next stage...

I imagine how a bulb must feel, during the warm summer months I am fully alive and respond by producing flowers of delicate beauty and foliage of varied shapes and hues. All summer I direct my resources into vigorous growth and absorb the sunlight and

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warmth to replenish my core with life-giving nutrients. But by fall, my foliage has become dry and lifeless and it is removed and discarded. All winter my body is buried deep in the cold, dark soil and I am alone in the silence. Occasionally the rays of the winter sun will bring some warmth to the soil but it is not enough.

And so I wait...

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