

## Spring Musings

by Doug "Wookie" Marcks

Spring is many things  
 It's the new life that it brings  
 The buds on the trees that looked dead in winter  
 The exploration of the heart  
 That renews either stale relationships  
 Or seeks out new ones that blossom  
 Like the flowers that are presented  
 To hopefully lifelong partnerships  
 That is what spring brings

## Cherry Blossom Dreams

by Aileen McPherson

Sweet light snows in spring,  
 Pale pink white blanket covers the ground,  
 Down through avenues and parks sleeping souls  
 make no sound,  
 Covered in beauty and hoping for security,  
 May your sleep be serene while under the  
 Cherry blossoms you dream.

## VIOLENCE, from page 9

as emergency room nurses and religious leaders being trained to screen for domestic violence and ask about safety at home. However, there are many more community members and service providers who could be trained to recognize and address domestic violence.

"The problem is most mental health professionals don't know very much about this," Huffine said. "They don't know how to screen for it very well. They don't know how to address it when they see it."

Huffine says that domestic violence needs to rise to the forefront of the public consciousness as a single issue with public accountability.

He suggests that domestic violence be approached much as the public community approached drunken driving, with slogans like "friend don't let friends drive drunk," organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and public support like free cab rides on high alcohol consumption days. This sort of coordinated community response is needed so that domestic violence needs is seen as the community's responsibility, not the responsibility of survivors, Huffine said.

"Coordinated community response needs to be more than just the criminal justice coordinated community response," Huffine said. "That is not adequate. It is a start, but that is not adequate."

Policies like the "Oregonians United to End Gun Violence" bill are a piece of the

puzzle, as well.

"Thinking about gun violence and the link between domestic violence and mass shootings," Nickels said. "If we were to truly understand that and then build policy around it, rather than be focused on, 'We're restricting gun ownership,' if we thought about it more like, 'We're just making gun ownership safer for communities,' and really building policy around what we know to be true around the root of the problem."

On an individual level, there is no formula for the perfect way to support survivors, but offering support is crucial.

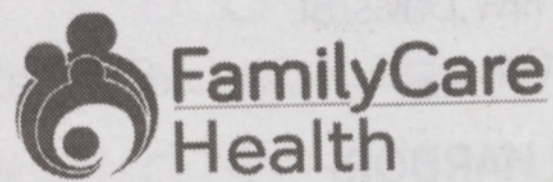
"I think there's something that each one of us can do to support survivors, and the first one is that we listen and believe survivors when they talk to us about domestic and sexual violence," Nickels said. "So now as a nation, or a community, that might have to really advocate to sustain funding for services, believing that this is a problem worth advocating for is something that each one of us can do."

Carsen is now recovering from a broken back, learning to walk again, and expecting her first grandchild. She is telling her story as much as she can to build her strength for her abuser's trial, the first time she will have to see him again.

If she could say anything to her abuser, she said, it would be this:

"Yes, you broke me in a lot of places, but I'm still here. And my word can help someone else. That's what I'm trying to do."

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