

Health & Science

BWA, Kaiser helps battered women

In a society increasingly plagued by violence, several organizations are working with Battered Women's Alternatives (BWA), a domestic violence agency in Contra Costa County, to help young people and their family members learn appropriate conflict resolution skills.

A comprehensive Violence Prevention Education Program is slated to begin soon for all seventh graders in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD). The 30-month project — starting in May as a pilot program at Foothill Middle School in Walnut Creek — will involve 5,000 seventh graders at the district's nine middle schools over a two-year period.

The Violence Prevention Education Program began in 1995 when BWA and the Junior League of Oakland/East Bay began a partnership to create curriculum materials centering around the theme "You Never Win With Violence." The content emphasizes the importance of respect, fairness, and teamwork in relationships as in sports. Junior League of the East Bay will provide a minimum of 1500 volunteer hours through 1999.

Kaiser Permanente and John Muir Medical Center each contributed \$40,000, and the State of California another \$350,000 for implementation in the larger community, parenting classes, and evaluation. This is one of 13 domestic violence prevention programs funded by the State Department of Human Health Services, Maternal and Child Domestic Violence Section.

Project leaders hope to break the cycle of domestic violence by reaching children before dating begins. "Violence is a growing social and

FACTS ABOUT PEER RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

- Battering is the leading cause of injury to women. (*The National Committee for Injury Prevention and Control 1989*)
- Every 9 seconds a woman is battered in the U.S. (*Women's Action Coalition 1996*)
- One in three teens experience violence in their dating relationships. (*Family Research Laboratory, University of New Hampshire 1996*)
- Eighty-seven percent of teen dating violence perpetrators are males 16 to 17 years of age. (*Education Development Center 1996*)
- Violent juvenile delinquents are four times more likely than other youths to come from homes in which their fathers beat their mothers. (*Women's Action Coalition 1993*)
- Sixty-three percent of boys 11 to 20 years old who commit homicide, kill a man who is abusing their mother. (*Uniform Crime Reports, FBI 1987*)

Relationship violence is defined as "a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that adults and adolescents use to achieve power and control over a past or present intimate partner."

Information provided by Battered Women's Alternatives and Youth Education and Support Services

community health issue," said Bob Eisenman, Ph.D., External Affairs Director for Kaiser Permanente's North East Bay Local Market. "By intervening in early adolescence, we hope to prevent many of the negative outcomes we're seeing in our hospitals and Emergency Rooms."

This new program is far more comprehensive than existing programs to promote safe and drug-free schools, according to Ken Duckert, Assistant Director for Student Services for MDUSD.

Starting this spring, project organizers will be in the schools, on the airwaves and in the community to send a message that violence is not acceptable or "cool." The goal is to enlist students and their peer leaders, parents, teachers, coaches, coun-

sors and other community members in the effort.

"To improve our community, we must change attitudes at every age level," said Sharon Turner, BWA Project Director. "We will involve teachers and parents as significant role models in training workshops. Adults and young people will work together to create youth-centered messages in expressive arts events and for media campaigns."

Each school will establish a conflict management program with up to 30 students trained to serve as peer mediators. Students having conflicts at school could self-refer to a counselor or peer mediation. Administrative staff would step in only if the problem remained unresolved.

Vice Principal Barbara Weil at

Foothill Middle School is enthusiastic about the pilot program.

"Although we have few problems with violence at our school, students are confused about what the 'real' world is like," she said. "They wonder whether it's as violent as the media and movies they see and the rap music they hear. They're testing family values and getting ready to make important choices. We believe that if we reach them early enough, we can make a difference."

"Most guys think it's womanish to go to a counselor and that it's more manly to duke it out," said Spike Moeser, 13, a seventh-grader at Foothill Middle School. "You know when there's going to be a fight. The person picking the fight brags about how he's going to beat the other guy so hard. Kids here have mostly little fights. They're usually after school and off school property so they can't get suspended."

Spike's classmate Megan Harden, 13, adds that "word wars" and fights happen between girls, too. She believes that people-to-people efforts are especially effective with teens. "It's helpful to talk to other kids our age who understand and have similar problems," she said. Both students look forward to taking part in the program. They hope it can help defuse the messages of violence which surround them every day. "Maybe kids can learn to talk things out," suggested Spike, "or they can go home and punch a pillow instead of starting a fight."

A similar program with BWA involvement at Carquinez Middle School in Crockett has been highly effective. Two years after implementation, aggressive acts and suspensions are now rare. "Peaceful resolu-

tion of conflict is now the language spoken," said Principal Michael Roth.

Turner's dream is to "help students envision a world where personal violence doesn't happen. We want to start young people thinking. 'Maybe this is a possibility.'"

JLOEB is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. JLOEB has been serving the Oakland-East Bay community since 1935, and is part of the Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc.

BWA's mission is to eliminate domestic violence and help families

flourish. Founded in 1977, BWA is the largest domestic violence agency in the Bay Area and the sole agency serving the 800,000 people of Contra Costa County.

BWA provides a variety of services including crisis intervention, emergency and transitional housing, counseling and prevention services for women, men, children and teens. BWA has also been a leader in formulating policy at the local, state and national level.

The California Division of Kaiser Permanente is a prepaid, health maintenance organization (HMO) serving almost 5 million members throughout the state. The Division has approximately 6,100 physicians and 55,000 employees. It is organized into 12 local market areas which are served by 26 major medical centers.

Women get mixed message from media

On television, in the movies and in ads, men are more likely to be working while most women are preoccupied with romance and their looks, according to a study released Wednesday.

The analysis of entertainment and advertising frequently showed women as intelligent and good problem-solvers, but focusing heavily on dating and romance, the survey showed.

Random telephone interviews with 1,200 children aged 10-17 showed the children agreed with the conclusions, according to the groups that released the survey: Children Now, an advocacy group, and the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-profit health care philanthropy,

"What we're learning is that they're getting both some really positive images and also some messages that are limiting, and there's little doubt that this is part of the overall fabric of expectations that girls grow up with," said Lois Salisbury, president of Children Now.

The groups looked at several top-rated television shows, movies, three weeks of top 20 music videos and several issues of leading teen magazines in fall 1996 for the study.

They found that 41 percent of male television characters and 60 percent of men in the movies were shown at work, compared to 35 percent of women in the movies and 28 percent of female television characters.

Nearly two-thirds of female char-

acters on television and movies talked about romantic relationships, while only 38 percent of male characters in movies and 49 percent in television talked about romance or dating.

The study will be presented at a conference entitled "Reflections of Girls in the Media" at the Los Angeles Public Library, where entertainment executives are meeting this week.

In the survey of boys and girls conducted in the first week of April, seven out of 10 girls said yes when asked if they have ever wanted to look like a television character. Only four out of 10 boys said they wanted to look like a television character.

"The media is a powerful tool to

reinforce negative stereotypes or present strong role models for young girls and boys," said Matt James, senior vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Meredith Masters, 13, said it's difficult to find positive role models in the industry.

"I don't want to end up like a lot of women on TV," she said. "It's really confusing. Here in school they say go out there and be successful, but on TV we see women who have to pull their skirts up to get anything."

The survey of boys and girls had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. It was conducted by Lake Sosin Snell & Associates.

Dietitians food safety tips

While the devastation of massive flooding in North Dakota will be felt for months to come by flood victims, their immediate needs for safe water and foods have been aided through the expertise of dietitians and foodservice workers.

- Discard all wooden spoons, plastic utensils and baby bottles and pacifiers
- Throw out practically everything, including meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- Throw out all fresh or frozen flood-damaged produce
- Toss all foods in boxes, foil or cellophane
- Discard spices and seasonings, including your salt and pepper
- Get rid of all foods stored in canisters, including flour and sugar
- Toss any dented, leaking or rusted cans

Undamaged can goods can be salvaged, according to Kramer. She suggests removing can labels and using permanent marker to identify the can's contents, then scrubbing with a brush and strong detergent. If you have a dishwasher available, run the cans through a wash cycle similarly to how you might normally wash glasses.

Mad cow disease threatens Europe

Mad cow disease may be quietly spreading across Europe because farmers and veterinarians are failing to report sick cows, New Scientist magazine said Thursday.

It quoted officials across Europe as saying ignorance and fear were contributing to the spread, and urging better checks for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease).

"Of course we have had (unreported) cases of BSE in Belgium," the magazine quoted Emmanuel Vanopdenbosch, head of BSE at the National Institute for Veterinary Research in Brussels, as saying.

He said animals with strange symptoms of the central nervous system had been slaughtered and

often ended up on supermarket shelves.

"Frankly, I am worried," he said. The European Union banned British beef exports a year ago, when scientists said a new form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), a normally rare human equivalent of BSE, had been identified.

They said eating infected beef products was the likely cause.

But the BSE epidemic that ravaged British cattle had by then raged for a decade, with more than 167,000 cases. Many cattle or their products were exported to Europe and other countries.

New Scientist quoted officials as saying the expected number of European cases had not turned up.

"They were not reported," said Bram Schreuder, head of BSE research at the Dutch Institute for Animal Science and Health in Lelystad.

He said 57,900 British cattle were exported to the rest of Europe for breeding between 1985 and 1990 and at least 1,688 of them should have become sick. If they were not reported, "they have entered the food chain," he said.

Marc Savey, head of animal health research at the French National Center for Veterinary Studies in Lyon, said there was also a huge trade in meat and bone meal — the ground-up and rendered slaughterhouse leftovers that are blamed for spreading BSE in the first place.

Hormone replacement market

For more than three decades, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has effectively relieved menopausal symptoms and increased both length and quality of life in postmenopausal women. Research conducted over the last decade indicates that HRT also reduces the incidence of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

Although HRT has many known benefits, use of estrogen replacement therapy following menopause has been associated with increased incidence of endometrial cancer and

possibly breast cancer.

Given the recent controversy over the use of HRT, how will the market for this regimen fare over the next ten years?

Hormone Replacement Therapy reviews current knowledge about the pathophysiology and epidemiology of menopause and concomitant conditions such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis. It also describes the benefits, risks, and treatment issues surrounding HRT as well as current diagnostic techniques and therapeutic agents. A summary

of the clinical management of menopause in the world's seven major pharmaceutical markets is presented, qualified by a discussion of unmet needs in HRT. The study then identifies and evaluates emerging therapeutics and describes pharmacoeconomic trends and factors that will affect clinical practice. Finally, it presents a 1995-2005 forecast of the HRT market in the seven major markets (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

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