

Violence

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ner assaults are perpetrated against men. And a 2006 study of health risks for the Centers for Disease Control found that along with 2 million women 600,000 men are injured by an intimate partner each year.

Bigger and stronger than his wife, L Pro knew he could easily have hurt her. But all his instincts were focused on protecting her — not himself.

“My father, my coaches all were strong males with strong sense of responsibility” he said. “I’ve never been around men who have abused women in any shape or form. They valued women and I learned that as a man you have to exercise restraint.” “So I would never, ever put my hands on a woman. I would not do that.

“I knew I was bigger than her and I could harm her, but I had made a conscious decision not to hurt her. Many men out there make that same decision. And sometimes it is the women who are harming them. It’s unfortunate but it is true.”

Looking back, he says, he should have seen the signs. From early in the marriage, his partner displayed controlling and out of control behavior.

“After our honeymoon there was an incident when she got into a physical fight with a family member. That was a sign, but I just dismissed it.”

His partner would erupt into anger without warning. And the anger would escalate if her demands were not met. Most of the time, L Pro says he did whatever she said she needed, because he believed that was how a good husband and father should act. In fact, he saw his wife as emotionally frail.

“As a guy you never feel that person is capable of hurting you.”

And as is the case with many women victims, L Pro wanted to put his family back together. He was strongly attached to his partner’s child, a child he had been raising as his own.

But after the attack, a counselor told him,



Portland rapper L Pro

“If you go back to this situation, she could seriously hurt you or even kill you.”

Finally L Pro realized he was done.

“A light bulb went off in my head,” he says. “I woke up one day and said, ‘This is crazy – I’m not going back.’”

Occupy

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trip to New York, thinks activities like these that directly impact people in all communities will help skeptics see the relevance of the movement.

“Large commercial banks have not been a

‘Low income people and communities of color have been screaming this for years’

friend to people of color or lower socioeconomic class,” she says. “They have set up all types of schemes, including reckless speculation and mortgage fraud. I don’t see why anyone would be reluctant to take their

money out.”

She also notes that areas like Chicago have additional movements like Occupy the Hood, which address more specific issues facing low income communities and people of color. This can be replicated in other areas where communities don’t feel their immediate needs are being addressed by the broader Occupy Movement.

Another issue that supporters feel is deterring more participation is lack of organization.

During Saturday’s general assembly, speakers made numerous references to the importance of cleaning up the camp. The first speaker made a point to address the infighting that is hurting the movement’s message and fueling negative

reports.

This was highlighted last month when Jason Parker, a black man, was arrested at Occupy Portland for allegedly displaying a gun, despite having a concealed weapons permit. According to the police report, some occupiers called him a racial slur in the heat of the argument.

“There are some racist people down there,” says Adel. “You can bet these people want to overthrow the government too.”

Rich Ronch, thinks it would help to have more leadership in the form of representatives of color. He says simply getting more people involved would help address this.

“This is our community, whether we want some people there or not,” he says. “It’s a must we get out there.”

While supporters acknowledge that Occupy Portland isn’t perfect, they emphasize that the positives outweigh the nega-

tives.

Millholen, who wasn’t old enough to participate in the anti-Vietnam protests, says this is the first time she has participated in this kind of grassroots campaign.

“Democracy is messy,” she says. “The homeless and people with mental health problems are a part of our society. How do we take care of that?”

Adel, a single mother, empathizes with these people and sees finding a way to make an impact in the heart of the community as the biggest necessity.

She says people aren’t aware of things going on under their noses or how much power they have to change their conditions.

“Occupy is such a simple solution,” says Adel. “In Iceland they overturned their government and changed the constitution. Not a lot of people know that.”

BPA

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tles.”

Multnomah County’s ban also prohibits the sale of reusable plastic drink containers made with BPA. It takes effect Oct. 27.

The vote makes Multnomah County the first jurisdiction in the state to take the controversial move, which officials say is largely because of the racial and economic equity issue involved: Many of the households impacted by the BPA-contamination are the least likely to be aware of it.

“I want to reiterate the equity issue here – low income communities and communities of color are impacted the most,” said Dr. Gary Oxman, public health officer for Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties.

“These concerns, when taken together, make it reasonable for the County Board of Health to take immediate action.

“When you wait for absolute scientific proof, a lot of lives are ruined in the meantime,” he said.

A similar ban proposed in the Oregon legislature was torpedoed in the Senate last year, when lobbyists for Associated Oregon Industries fought back a simple ban only covering infant bottles and sippy cups.

After a long fight, a compromise measure that many expected to pass was voted down by all Republican senators plus three Democrats: Sens. Betsy Johnson of Scappoose, Martha Schrader of Canby and

Joanne Verger of Coos Bay.

As members of the County Commission heard testimony on the BPA ban, Commissioner Loretta Smith asked Health Department staff how moms can avoid using contaminated bottles and cups in the meantime.

Lila Wickham, director of environmental health, suggests looking for baby items clearly labeled “BPA-Free.” In 2008, many major retailers, including Wal-Mart, announced they would pull contaminated

Many of the households impacted by the BPA-contamination are the least likely to be aware of it

items off their shelves, making it easier to find safer products.

Wickham also suggested turning your baby products over and checking for a recycling symbol at the bottom; any marked with the number 7 may contain toxics used to harden the plastic.

The Environmental Working Group goes farther, addressing the still-unregulated issue of BPA in plastic linings of canned food, which researchers say may be triggering a host of health problems such as heart

disease and diabetes.

“Almost all canned foods sold in the United States have a BPA-based epoxy liner that leaches BPA into the food,” the group said in a 2008 report. “EWG tested 97 canned foods and found detectable levels of BPA in more than half of the foods.”

They found the highest concentrations in canned meats, pasta and soups.

“Pregnant women and children should limit their consumption of canned foods to avoid BPA,” the group says. “Rinsing canned fruit or vegetables may reduce the amount of BPA you ingest.”

Shafia Monroe, of the International Center for Traditional Childbearing, works to educate the local community about the benefits of avoiding baby formula – and bottles – wherever possible.

“We are concerned about the statistics on overall health of the African American community in Oregon, our work is absolutely culturally specific to bring information to Black communities around the benefits of breastfeeding,” she says.

“At ICTC we look at the evidence-based information that tells us that breast milk is the ideal food, we look at information from the American College of Pediatrics and many other organizations that have done a lot of research on the benefits of breastfeeding.”

Monroe says breastfeeding is not only the

best choice for moms nutritionally, and economically – it’s free, after all — but it’s also the best way to build emotionally strong children.

“We want the families to realize that whether it’s a baby bottle or a pacifier or a sippy cup, we would hope that they would use – to be honest – a human breast as a way to not only give their baby the best nutrition, but also to give them overall emotional contentment,” she says.

“And that’s a subject we don’t often talk about — we say breastfeeding is good nutritionally, but breastfeeding also provides emotional and good bonding for babies, which is why we use the pacifier to give our baby a sense of calmness. And so breastfeeding also does that.”

Monroe says the real test of how well the county’s new BPA ban works will be in how it’s enforced and who is educated about it.

“I think all chemicals are dangerous for people, in particular babies who are still developing,” she said.

Janine Tebeau-Jemerson of the Oregon Nurses Association echoed Monroe’s point at the commission meeting Thursday.

“Multnomah County should act to make sure no one mistakenly buys BPA-contaminated products,” she said.

“It ensures parents have one less thing to worry about.”