



PRESS PHOTO/REX LARSEN

Sign of support: Grand Rapids police officer Greg Alcala shows a purple magnet ribbon that squad cars will display to promote Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Organizations partner to raise abuse awareness

10-1-09

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THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS — Picking up the phone can be the hardest part.

When it comes to domestic violence, victims often struggle to admit they're stuck in an abusive relationship, said Eileen McKeever, YWCA West Central Michigan director of residential services.

"There's isolation involved," she said. "They feel like it's only happening to them."

Looking to fight that isolation, several local organizations are joining this month to help raise awareness about domestic violence.

Grand Rapids Police Department patrol vehicles will be outfitted with purple ribbons urging people to "Break the Silence."

Businesses, bulletin boards and community centers will be blanketed with signs advertising domestic abuse crisis lines and domestic shelters. Grand Rapids middle and high school students will receive dating abuse lessons.

Domestic violence "is a community problem; it affects us

IF YOU GO

In remembrance

The YWCA West Central Michigan is holding a candlelight vigil to pay tribute to domestic violence victims.

Where: YWCA, 25 Sheldon Blvd. SE

When: Today from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m.

all," said Kristine Jaros, the site director for Weed & Seed, which is backing the effort.

Grand Rapids police responded to 1,404 domestic incidents from January to Aug. 31, said Lt. Ralph Mason. Of those, 475 arrests were made.

According to a 2006 Harris Poll, about 33 million U.S. adults said they experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives.

Jaros suspects the number is higher because many domestic violence incidents go unreported.

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