

The colour purple brings recognition to campaign against gender-based violence



By Chris Drost

As part of the Wrapped in Courage Campaign, a small crowd wearing purple scarves gathered at the pebble mosaic in Millennium Park in Bancroft on Nov. 25 where Deputy Mayor Charles Mullett proclaimed the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Tamarack/Maggie's Resource Centre has been distributing 'End Gender-Based Violence' flags to local agencies as part of the Wrapped in Courage campaign. These flags are being displayed from Nov. 25, the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, until Dec. 10, Human Rights Day. These are called the 16 days of activism.

November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month and also is the 10th anniversary of Ontario's Wrapped in Courage campaign to end gender-based violence. Agencies across the province are encouraging leaders and community members to wear a purple scarf to show their commitment to ending femicide and gender-based violence.

Deputy Mayor Charles Mullett, representing the Town of Bancroft, made the following statement.

'Whereas violence continues to be the greatest gender inequality rights issue for women, girls and gender-diverse individuals;

and Whereas November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month;

and Whereas femicide rates are on the rise in Ontario, with over 40 femicides between November 2021 - November 2022;

and Whereas our community is committed to ending femicide and all forms of gender-based violence;

and Whereas Black, Indigenous, South Asian and South East Asian women and girls continue to experience high rates of violence, including femicide and were overrepresented with the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, 2020-2021 Annual Femicide List;

and Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has increased barriers to support and services for survivors of gender-based violence and their children;

and Whereas last year in Ontario, on average every eight days, a woman or child was killed by a man known to them;

and Whereas this month and throughout the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, we acknowledge our community's support of the Wrapped In Courage campaign and commitment to ending gender-based violence;

and Whereas on Nov. 25, The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the tenth anniversary of the Wrapped in Courage campaign across Ontario, a Wrapped in Courage 2022 campaign flag will be raised in recognition that the courage of a woman alone is not enough, it takes an entire community to end gender-based violence;

and now, therefore I, Charles Mullett, proclaim and declare that Nov. 25, 2022 shall be known as 'The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women' and urge all citizens to recognize this day by taking action to support survivors of gender-based violence and becoming part of Ontario-wide efforts to end gender-based violence.?

'Gender-based violence has been going on forever. We need to take our part in trying to prevent it,?' added Mullett.

During this current Wrapped in Courage campaign, organizers are asking the community to reflect on why they are wearing the purple scarves and to think about what action they can take to address the rising femicide rates across the province.

'The purple scarves are to raise awareness, a reminder that domestic violence happens here in North Hastings. Purple is a symbol of courage against violence?' said Maggie's executive director, Tanya MacKinnon.

Following the presentation, Mullett expressed his thanks on behalf of council for all the work that Tamarack/Maggie's does in the community.

As a result of inquests and death reviews, many actions have been identified that community members, leaders, ministries, services and sectors can take to prevent femicide. Some of those include, volunteering at a local shelter, engaging friends, family and colleagues in conversation that challenges stereotypes and myths about gender-based violence and checking on friends, family and neighbours who may be facing increased isolation.

Shelters across the province are vital for survivors of violence and their children. They offer 24-hour phone support, individual and group counselling, services for children, community education and transitional support. In North Hastings, Tamarack/Maggie's Resource Centre can be reached at 613-332-3010. After hours service is available.

For those interested in learning more about efforts against gender-based violence in the community, the Countdown Art Project recently opened a new website, www.wrappedincourage.ca where videos of both the stone mosaic in Millennium Park and the recently completed one in Hastings Highlands, are available for viewing.