

Voices of Men rises up against domestic violence

By Michael King
Post-Crescent staff writer

NEENAH — About 400 Fox Valley men will participate today in a new community initiative that aims to help end male violence against women and girls.

Fox Valley Voices of Men launches with a rally this morning at Bridgewood Hotel & Conference Center, Neenah. The new nonprofit was formed to increase awareness

Watch the rally

Visit www.postcrescent.com at 7:15 a.m. today to watch the Voices of Men Kickoff in Neenah.

On the Web

For more information or to pledge your commitment to the Fox Valley Voices of Men effort, go to www.voicesofmen.com.

and education surrounding the issue so men no longer commit, condone or remain silent

about violence against women and girls.

"Today's kickoff is just the beginning," said Dean Gruner, ThedaCare chief executive officer and Voices of Men co-chairman. "The hope is that the action menu shared at today's event will start a chain reaction, activating an even-larger corps of men throughout the region to foster a positive change — one that promotes a culture of nonviolence

and respect for women and girls that will help put an end to violence and family tragedies in our community."

The ultimate goal is to nurture a generation of boys and men who change a culture, honor and respect women and girls, reject violence and encourage others to spread the message onto their peers and children.

"Research shows that one

See RALLY, A-5

RALLY: Men and boys asked to take pledge

From A-1

in every four women will experience domestic violence at some point in her life and that's just not acceptable," said co-chair Ray Appel, retired Neenah Police Chief. "We're encouraging men to think of all of the incredible women in their lives and to pledge their support to help this initiative succeed in ending male violence against women."



Appel



Host

of healthy manhood. Gruner and Appel are leading a large organizing committee that seeks to connect with men and teen boys throughout the region and encourage them to take a pledge against violence. The campaign will shed light on the common behav-

Domestic violence facts

■ In 2009 there were 46 domestic violence homicides in Wisconsin, killing 59 women and children.

■ From 2000 to 2008, there were 13 domestic violence homicides in Winnebago, Outagamie and Calumet counties and 33 in northeastern Wisconsin.

■ 70 percent of men who batter their partners either sexually or physically abuse their children.

■ A woman in the U.S. is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a male partner than by any other type of assailant.

■ In 2008, the number of domestic violence incidents reported to police in the State of Wisconsin rose to 29,769, according to the state Department of Justice.

Source: Fox Valley Voices of Men

Voices of Men mission

Voices of Men is a group of Fox Valley men dedicated to ending violence in our community and preventing the abuse of girls and women through education, role modeling and mentoring of boys and men.

iors and thinking that can lead to violence against women and girls.

Fox Valley Voices of Men grew out of the leadership and continuing partnership of four local agencies committed to ending sexual assault and domestic violence against women and girls: Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs, Reach Counseling Services and the Sexual Assault Crisis Center-Fox Cities.

"The biggest thing is we're not out there alone anymore," said Kathleen Lhost, executive director, Sexual Assault Crisis Center. "For 30 years, grassroots women's organizations have

been trying to battle with this demon. To really resolve violence against women the men have to come on board. We have an amazing group of men. Nobody else has quite approached the problem the way these guys have decided to engage the community. It's really exciting."

Initial funders and supporters of the Voices of Men initiative include the Community Health Action Team led by: ThedaCare, J. J. Keller Foundation Inc.; Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region Inc.; Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region Inc. and Willems Marketing.

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