

#### (4) Victim's Rights

##### Home objective:

Educate family members about the effects of domestic violence, sexual assault, and incest. If a family member discloses abuse, believe them. Get help, and keep children away from those accused of abuse.

Remove the social stigma from the victims. Let them know it is OK to tell. Purple ribbons show survivors that you care, understand, and are safe.

##### School objective:

Educate school children about safe touch and how to identify and avoid abusive family members or acquaintances. Break the silence and break the cycle.

##### Community Objective:

Provide access to and support for abuse survivor resource centers (rape crisis centers, incest support groups, mental health facilities, shelters). Encourage volunteers in victim assistance programs. Support legislation that allows survivors appropriate access to criminal and civil justice systems and holds perpetrators accountable for their crimes. We cannot allow perpetrators to walk free in the community without consequences, which in turn allows them to continue abusing or even to kill.

#### **Violence/Abuse affects ALL of us!!**

**The International Purple Ribbon Project** is a people powered volunteer campaign dedicated to abuse awareness and support for

victims. For more information call us at our international office in Swanzey, NH, USA @ 1-603-357-1050.

## **The Purple Ribbon Project Handbook**

### **Starting your own personal campaign:**

You can do it yourself for less than a dollar!

Buy a bit of purple ribbon, cut it into short looped sections, then display them wherever you choose! Be creative! Congratulations! You are now a member of **The International Purple Ribbon Project!**

### **A Brief History**

**The International Purple Ribbon Project** grew from a collective of concerned adult rape and abuse survivors from the small town of Berlin, New Hampshire, USA who united their hearts and minds under one common goal: all wanted a better and safer world for children and adult victims of violence. The majority of the founding members are incest and rape survivors, but also included are medical professionals, therapists, law enforcement, and caring members of the town. What began as a small local awareness campaign in February of 1994 has grown into an international network of members from over forty countries and from every state in the USA.

Both public and professional response to the **IPRP** has been remarkable and heartwarming. Individuals of all ages and backgrounds have reached out to the **IPRP** with a willingness to do their part in stopping the cycle

of violence. It has become apparent over the years that the public is becoming willing to address the issue of violence and abuse. Thankfully, that readiness grows steadily each day. The subject of child abuse, incest, rape, and all forms of interpersonal violence is now commonplace in the media, forcing us all to take heed.

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The **purple ribbon** symbol is available to all individuals and organizations willing promote awareness of these problems and to encourage people to stop tolerating these criminal acts of violence. During our many years of operation, **The International Purple Ribbon Project** has gained support and approval in the USA from the American Coalition for Abuse Awareness, the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute, the National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence, the Alliance for the Rights of Children, the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect, and many other groups. Today there are over seventy five **IPRP** affiliated organizations world wide working together.

Despite these powerful allies, **The International Purple Ribbon Project** remains dedicated to LOCAL awareness and action. YOU are an important member of the project, and YOU can make a difference in the lives of millions of people affected by violence and abuse. YOU can be a role model for a new and safer world.

### What We Have Learned

What follows are some suggestions and ideas that various **IPRP** awareness groups have shared with us. If

you have any ideas that seem to have worked well for you, please let us know. We will incorporate new ideas as we come to discover what works for this campaign and what doesn't.

Without some type of leadership, all efforts eventually fail. Leadership comes in many different forms, and each type is necessary. Leaders are people who can coordinate and facilitate the efforts of many without trying to do everything themselves. Leaders *empower* others rather than *overpower* them. Leaders do not dictate, they delegate. The **IPRP** is

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School objective:

Educate and help students and educators evaluate the impact of graphic violence in the media on children.

Community Objective:

Support legislation which helps investigate, identify, and reduce children's exposure to violence in public and private media.

### (3) Abuse Awareness

Home objective:

Realize that violence begins at home. Learn to identify signs of domestic violence, and to identify and know how to use resources for family counseling, and community mental health care to reduce abuse in our own homes. Talk to our children about safe touching and how to define and stay away from dangerous relatives and acquaintances. Yes, a relative can be an

abuser. Education is the key, not distrust, silence, or denial. If children know what is safe touch and what is not, they will help you to keep them safe.

School objective:

Educate and help students come forward if they are facing domestic violence or abuse in their homes.

Current victims often become future criminals.

Family violence affects all students when it produces violent behavior at school.

Community Objective:

Increase awareness of the long-term community effects of domestic violence. 80% of all violent criminals report a history of childhood abuse. Abuse is a public crime, not a private act.

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### *The Philosophy of the IPRP:*

The purple ribbon, like the Purple Heart, symbolizes the injury and suffering of victims of violence, in this case not victims of war or political violence, but of violence in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, and society. Interpersonal violence is first learned as violence in our homes. We want to promote healthy values: Love and respect for self, others, family, and community.

### (1) Violence Prevention Education

Home objective:

Teach families life skills, which are positive alternatives to violence, including the reduction of racism, discrimination and intolerance.

School objective:

Implement violence prevention education programs such as conflict resolution. Assist parents, teachers, and members of the community to teach children nonviolent alternatives and coping skills for life.

Community Objective:

Get all neighborhood entities involved in violence preventions efforts. We must make it clear that we cannot and will not tolerate violence in our communities. Little fights lead to bigger ones in time.

### (2) Reduce Violence in Entertainment

Home objective:

Decrease children's exposure to graphic violence, which proliferates throughout entertainment media in cartoons, video games, toys, and popular movies.

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supported on the local level by leadership in several ways. Here is how it works:

- Recruitment - The Project has been, and should continue to be, a universal effort. Everyone should be gladly accepted as long as they are against violence. Successful local groups formed a local coalition and successfully solicited church groups, civic organizations, social advocates, political leaders, and

business leaders for support. Once you have formed such a coalition you begin to have a real project.

- Spokespersons – Some people are adept at public speaking, but not everyone is a leader in this respect. Those who are good speakers may be lousy organizers or recruiters. Sometimes your best spokespersons will be from among the people you have recruited, and sometimes they may be from the original group of survivors and advocates. Who ever is spokesperson needs to recognize their role as spokesperson for *all members* of the group.
- Meetings - Meetings should be held as infrequently as possible. When they are held, the meeting leader provides a written, timed agenda, with specific actions and goals. After meetings, summaries should be mailed out to everyone in the local group so everyone is kept up-to-date. Not everyone can make every meeting.
- Fundraising - We don't need much money. Once a local organization is in place the production of flyers, ribbons, and educational material is relatively inexpensive. Many committees have found local businesses more than willing to donate paper and low cost items for their campaigns, as well as high

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exposure window space to display announcements regarding scheduled committee events and meetings.

### Keeping Things Simple

Our number one task is to raise local awareness, and that may take some time. First we must get ourselves and our community to be more aware of domestic violence (sexual, physical, and emotional abuse of children, women, and also men), rape, and interpersonal violence. If everyone who reads our flyer tells other people to wear purple ribbons, some day everyone will be wearing purple ribbons. Lawmakers will hear our voices.

- Avoid all temptations to use the purple ribbon symbol for other reasons, i.e. political violence.
- Groups or individuals may have various reasons for joining the campaign. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse have different reasons than parents whose child was killed in a school shooting incident, for example. All should be welcomed.
- Following the kickoff event, meetings can be held infrequently. Keep the focus on the display of ribbons. Individual members can join any of the state or national organizations that more specifically address their particular reason for displaying a purple ribbon, but keep **The International Purple Ribbon Project** focused on the awareness and the ribbons.

### Kickoff Events

Once you have had a few meetings, local political, business, religious and civic leaders have been contacted,

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and an initial run of ribbons and flyers has been assembled, you are ready to have a public event to “kickoff” the campaign, i.e. a picnic or barbecue, a press conference, or focus on civic or religious occasions to distribute ribbons. Your first event should be **POSITIVE and PUBLIC**. The **IPRP** is not just about focusing on past pain. It is also about preparing a *safe future*.

### *Getting and Maintaining Support*

Enthusiasm and commitment is essential in recruiting support, keeping people informed and involved, and expanding the reach of the **IPRP**. It is most important to stay focused on our local efforts. If we can't get people in our own town, state, or province to wear purple ribbons, we can't expect our nations to join us. Ask for help from small businesses or schools. They can copy the flyers, buy their own ribbons, display them, and answer the inevitable questions. The important thing is to *stick with it*.

Individually you can write your congress persons or senators, join a movement to reduce violence in the media, join a gun restriction group, be a volunteer victims assistance counselor, become a child rights advocate, or whatever else fits your desires, interests, strengths, and abilities. The first step is **AWARENESS**. Once people have **KNOWLEDGE**, then they can **ACT**.

**GOOD LUCK IN ALL YOUR  
EFFORTS!**