

Walking to end violence

LPD Officer Sue Maltbie honored

BY ERICA KARMEISOOL

BRIDGING THE GAP, SPECIAL PROJECTS WRITER

Communities Overcoming Violent Encounters (COVE) supporters, clients, volunteers and staff participated in the Peace, Love & Unite To Stop Domestic Violence Walk Wednesday evening. The event was capped by a presentation of the 2015 You Make a Difference Award by COVE to Ludington Police Officer Sue Maltbie.

So often today with law enforcement, we hear what were doing wrong, Maltbie said. Its nice once in a while to hear that weve done something right. She thanked COVE for the award and for providing much needed services to the community.

Maltbie said she has called COVE on many occasions where she has suspected domestic violence. Sometimes (victims) dont want to talk to me, she said. COVE can reach out people feel less threatened. The walk was one of many events hosted by COVE throughout October in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The walk convened at COVEs facility and continued to the Mason County Courthouse.

The (COVE) events are so awesome. We come to learn, said Ludington resident Becky Riggs. She and her husband, Phil Riggs, participated in the walk.

With domestic violence, people dont realize how widespread it is, said Phil. People tend to forget about it, unless its happening to them. Becky said it is important to try to walk in others shoes.

Dan Danny V Vargas of WMOM radio demonstrated the concept of walking a mile in her shoes. He wore high-heels throughout the 1.2 mile round-trip event.

The poem, Words to Live By, written by Sara Gadziemski, was read by Olivia Morgan at the courthouse steps.

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“It’s a natural partnership for (Zonta) to support COVE,” said Patty Johnson, Zonta member and past president. Zonta is an organization of professional women who work to empower women through service and advocacy.

“We’re supporters of COVE because they support the lives of women in dire situations,” said Johnson. The Zonta Club of Ludington Area donated funds for the new COVE facility, funded repairs of the previous shelter building and has sponsored fundraisers to benefit COVE.

Michelle Badour read her personal account of experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault. Badour is one of two local survivors who publicly shared their experiences as part of COVE’s “Survivor Stories” events held during the month of October.

The poem, “The Gal in the Glass,” written by Joyce Douglas Coulier, was read by a COVE support group participant. Coulier was an Oceana County resident who was murdered in 2000.

The poem described the action of a woman looking into a mirror. The verses speak to taking care of that person in the glass — one’s own reflection, and to main tain identity separate from a man. The poem was writ- ten five years before Couli er’s death, and her case remains unsolved.



Danny V Vargas of WMOM radio walks “a mile in her shoes” wearing high heels.



Zonta Club of Ludington Area members Kathy Brown, Donna Yager, Patty Johnson, Joy Jensen, Carole Christofferson and Lindsay Reynolds show support for COVE during the Peace, Love & Unite to Stop Domestic Violence Walk.

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Phil and Becky Riggs walk to support COVE.



David Gibbs and Robert Waite carry the COVE sign on the walk.



Children carry a sign with their handprints and the slogan “Healing Domestic Violence with Helping Hands” as the walk makes its way down Ludington Avenue.