



# Champion COMMUNITY Page

## New anti-domestic violence video launched

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

**D**omestic violence doesn't just tear through families. It also shreds the fabric of society.

To help repair it, the Women Survivors Advisory Group (WSAG) has launched an anti-violence video.

The stark half-hour tape will be used to educate students in local schools, as well as help train police officers in the realities of domestic violence.



Ellen De Guerre

The video launch took place September 28 at Rattlesnake Point Golf Club.

The invitation-only event was an elegant affair, complete with entertainment provided by the Tropical Vibes Steel Band, country-gospel singer Kelita and the squeaky clean teen vocal girl group Dream.

All that lent a surprisingly festive touch to proceedings which could have been fundamentally somber.

After all, each WSAG member has stared into the hot, distorted face of domestic violence at one time or another.

### Fighting back against abuse

But the making of the video — planned as the first of six for WSAG — is all part of fighting back against abuse and taking command of once out-of-control lives.

The making of the video was a communal effort, made possible due to the financial support of the Halton Regional Police Services Board and Roy Sangsters of Sangsters Health Centres.

Donations in kind from Cogeco Cable 23, the Halton Regional Police Service, Halton Trauma Centre and co-producer Kathy Ali of Khadija Productions Inc. helped turn the idea of a video into a reality.

The video recounts the gut-wrenching true life experiences of three silhouetted WSAG members, punctuated by dramatic reenactments of the sometimes brutal events they describe.

But this isn't about blame, said WSAG co-chair Ellen De Guerre.

"We have to approach it in a balanced way," she said.

"We don't want to point any fingers."

Since WSAG wasn't interested in pulling punches, either, questions have to be asked.

For men, why do they abuse?

For women, why be in a relationship where the



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Members of the girls group Dream perform during the launch of anti-violence video 'Prisoners of Violence' at Granite Ridge Golf Club September 28.

levers of power and control are so tragically unbalanced?

"There's no one answer," said Ms De Guerre. "There are a lot of facets to it. There are a lot of reasons."

With the video now out, WSAG is hoping to submit it to local schools as part of a growing arsenal against violence.

The time seems ripe.

This has been a particularly harrowing year for Canada in terms of domestic violence, with bloody tragedies writ large on newspapers and television screens.

The WSAG video was made during that period of national grief, but the timing was purely coincidental, said Ms De Guerre.

"There have been high profile instances in the past," she said, noting the horror of those cases didn't slow down abuse.

"The frequency hasn't changed."

But bringing the issue into the open should help, said Halton Chair Joyce Savoline.

"This is an issue that I guess you can call a cancer in our society," she said. "It's almost silent until it's too late."

She urged those experiencing abuse — which can be emotional as well as physical — to speak out.

The critical nature of domestic violence convinced Halton Police Chief Ean Algar to take a speaking role in the video.

"It's a demonstration of our service's commitment to the problem and a recognition of the magnitude of the issue," he said.

### About 1,600 calls per year

In Halton, that can be judged by the approximately 1,600 domestic assault calls answered by police each year.

Of those, about 25 per cent result in charges being laid.

Putting a voice to the silent epidemic deserves applause, said Paul Bennett, executive director of the Halton Trauma Centre.

"It takes a great deal of courage to take your private experiences and be willing to share them in public," he said.

"Their voices will not be muffled or silenced. They will continue."

Video director Ms Ali spoke about the experience of putting the tape together in just a few whirlwind months.

"From June 19 until this date, we have moved mountains," she said.

But there are plenty of mountains left.

"Change is coming," said Ms De Guerre grimly. "But it's slow."

Cogeco Cable 23 will broadcast the video October 23 and 31 and November 13, all times at 7 p.m.

A copy of the video costs \$19.99. Proceeds go to WSAG.

To contact the group, leave a message at the North Halton Distress Centre at 877-1211, or the Oakville Distress Centre at 849-4541.



... taking you there

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### COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — October 10th, 2000 - October 16th, 2000

#### Tuesday, October 10th

9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore  
5pm, 6pm, 7:30pm Plugged In! Seniors Showcase  
6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo  
8:00pm Halton Hills Council, Oct. 2

#### Wednesday, October 11th

9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore  
5pm, 6pm, 7:30pm Plugged In! Cable in the Classroom  
6:30pm Swap Talk  
8:00pm Milton Council, Oct 10th

#### Thursday, October 12th

9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore  
5pm, 6pm, 7:30pm Plugged In! With Good Taste  
5:30pm The Local Scene  
6:30pm Money Week  
7:00pm Halton Region Council, Oct 11th  
8:00pm

#### Sunday, October 15th

5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In!-Week In Review  
5:30pm The Local Scene  
6:30pm Seniors Showcase  
7:00pm With Good Taste

#### Monday, October 16th

9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore  
5pm, 6pm, 7:30pm Plugged In! Living on the Edge  
6:30pm With Good Taste  
7:00pm The Issue Is...  
8:00pm SportsZone Live

Feature this week: Optimist TV Bingo Returns! Tuesday, 6:30pm!