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After 10 years, walk against violence gains acceptance

From page 27.

"I've always (been active to stop) violence," says Jonathan Thiang of Thornlea Secondary School.

"In Grade 8, I started reading Gandhi and, from then on, you know, Nelson Mandela (and other) non-violence activists ... and I believe it's very important to have a strong community that confronts the violence that's there."

York Region schools first became involved in the walk 10 years ago when Martin Shulman, now head of the history department at Thornhill Secondary, first participated with a few of students.

Back then, said Mr. Shulman, the walk was met with some resistance from people who thought men were being picked on. But things have changed.

"We know that when it comes to domestic abuse, it's almost exclusively men committing acts of violence against women."

"But there's more to it than

that. When I talk to students now, I talk about the walk empowering men."

"We're not violent as a gender. It's a minority of men who are violent. (Men) have been told, 'You have the power to stop the problem.'

And women are standing beside us saying, 'We want you to be a part of solving the problem, because we are the victims.'

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The Yellow Brick House, one of the organizations funded by the walk, is a shelter for abused women and children.

"We obtain funding from the actual walk, but we benefit

hugely just by making people aware that there are services available to not only women and children, but also to teens," said Susie McGee, public education co-ordinator for the Yellow Brick House.

Organizers of the walk also took advantage of the opportunity to help women on an international scale.

The walk is also providing funding to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan.

"There is an opportunity in Afghanistan to break down all the old barriers with a brand new system."

"It's a country that has suffered from war and oppression for so long, so here's a chance to go from just being local to starting to think globally."

"It was a country that was in need, that where the opportunity to get involved and to make real changes was probably greater than anywhere else."

"So we know now that we're going to help," Mr. Shulman said.



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This message brought to you as a community service of The Economist & Sun/Tribune

Sunday, June 16

Walk-a-thon & bike-a-thon
8:30 a.m. registration
Sunnybrook Park, Toronto
1132 Leslie Street

For more information and pledge forms
please contact:

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