

High School Students Say No to Family Violence



Family Violence Isn't a Game You Want to Play

Football player, coaches and other partners show solidarity against relationship violence. Bottom row (from left): San Marcos Academy's Desmond Jackson, Wimberley's Tristan Moore, Dripping Springs' Eli Shelton, Lehman's Chris Piedra, Hays' Daniel Minor, San Marcos' C.J. Moreno and Hays County Sheriff Gary Cutler. Middle row: HCWC Executive Director Marla Johnson, SMA Coach Les Davis, Wimberley Coach Doug Warren, HCSO Deputy Julie Villapando, Dripping Springs Coach Bob Schultz, Lehman Coach Todd Raymond, Hays Coach Neal La Hue, SMHS Coach Mark Soto, SMPD Victims Coordinator Roya Williamson. Top row: HCSO Captain Mark Cumberland, HCSO Lt. Eric Batch, HCSO Lt. Jeri Skrocki, Buda PD Sgt. Bill Kuykendall, SMPD Sgt. Marty Manzi, UPD Sgt. Alex Villalobos, Texas State Athletics Assistant Director of Marketing, Promotions & Video John McElfresh, Texas State Associate Athletic Director of External Affairs Don Coryell and HCSO Chief Deputy Jamie Page.



Dating Violence Mock Trial

Dripping Springs High School student "witness" Marcia Young (top) listens as student "attorney" Tori Roberts directs questions during a mock trial involving dating violence held at a courtroom in the Hays County Government Center in San Marcos.



Dating Violence Poster Contest

Micayla Powell of Hays High School drew this poster that headlines the month of July in the 2014 Dating Violence Awareness Calendar.

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The scene was impressive – football players from Hays County high schools and local law enforcement, all in their distinct uniforms, gathering together with their coaches and Marla Johnson, Executive Director of the Hays Caldwell Women's Center, to kick off October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month at the Hays County Government Center.

"We may be playing a violent sport, but outside the game we will not tolerate abuse," noted Hays High School Coach Gary Gaddy. One of his football players, Daniel Minor, added, "As a bystander, it is our civic duty to stop bullying or abuse."

Another football player, Tristan Moore from Wimberley High School affirmed, "We hope to be role models for other kids." Desmond Jackson from the San Marcos Academy clarified, "we 100 percent respect women."

"Law enforcement wanted to increase awareness for Domestic Violence Awareness Month," noted Jeri Skrocki, Lieutenant of Support Services for the Hays County Sheriff's Office. "In an effort to spread the word, we collaborated with local football teams to wear the purple ribbon recognized with the cause. We will be attending designated football games to disseminate educational material with volunteers. Our goal is



San Marcos Academy football player Desmond Jackson is proud to wear a purple ribbon on his helmet for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

to help end relationship violence."

For months, the Hays County Sheriff's Office worked with local law enforcement, Texas State University, local high schools and HCWC to collaborate on a project to promote awareness of family and dating violence at area football games. Reaching this young audience may be a crucial component to prevent future relationship violence.

"We are glad to have so many partners to bring awareness to domestic violence," explained Sheriff Gary Cutler. "We need to engage everyone to work with law enforcement and HCWC to help end relationship violence."

Each school had football players sport purple ribbon decals on their helmets at one home game in or near October. At the stadium gates, volun-

teers passed out literature about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Announcers read statistics during half-time. The target audience was both teenagers and parents attending the games.

Dating Violence Mock Trial

A large turn-out of 100 students at Dripping Springs High School volunteered for a Mock Dating Violence Trial project that was implemented last spring with the guidance of the Law Offices of Sarah K. Brandon.

Students were divided into witnesses, victims, alleged perpetrator, attorneys and three juries -- one all-female, one all-male and one mixed. Each side, prosecution and defense, had two student attorneys and one real adult attorney to advise them. The students rarely found a need to refer to the adults.

After reading an article in a professional publication about Travis County District Court Judge Orlinda Naranjo's work with mock dating violence trials, Sarah Brandon approached Dripping Springs High School about the project.

The Law Office wrote affidavits and prepared exhibits of evidence such as phone messages, photos of bruises, ripped shirts and text messages. They met with the appropriate students to review affidavits and evidence. To create a balance, they prepped the students on the possibility of reasonable doubt for each body of evidence.



Dripping Springs High School students on one jury seriously discuss the mock trial (foreground, left to right) Garith Poe, Gabriel Borg, Gwen Cochran as Amanda Woolery (in the back with the white headband) looks on.

On the day of the mock trial, everyone convened at the Hays County Government Center in an actual court room with Judge Brenda Smith presiding. She explained the law regarding family violence which also covers dating violence. The trial lasted two hours. Two juries found the defendant not guilty, and the mixed jury found him guilty.

After lunch, the group listened to speakers including the Associate Director of the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University Curtis Clay, Hays County Sheriff Gary Cutler, community volunteer Catherine Shellman with the Unsilence the Violence Campaign, Donald Lee of the San Marcos Police Department (and current HCWC board president) and attorney and HCWC Board Member Sarah Brandon.

“The students gave such

positive feedback after the trial was over that the Law Office plans to do it again next year!" exclaimed Tori Roberts, former Dripping Springs High School student and part-time law clerk for The Law Offices of Sarah K. Brandon, P.C. "They will even present a model at this year's Bench Bar to encourage other attorneys to replicate it in their local high schools."

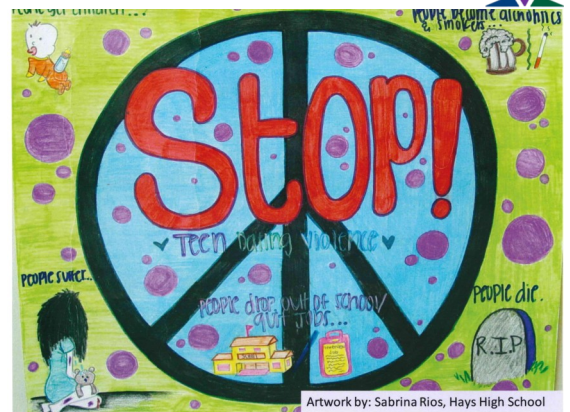
Poster Contest

Hays and Wimberley high school art departments and students at Dripping Springs High School created art for a poster contest to highlight National Crime Victim Rights Week. The best posters were made into a 2014 Awareness Calendar and the posters were displayed at the Hays County Government Center in April.

Renee Sample and Asha Wright were working on

their Master's Degree in Social Work at Texas State University and needed a project that included a presentation. Renee is the Victims Assistance Coordinator for the Hays County Sheriff's Office and works frequently with victims of family violence.

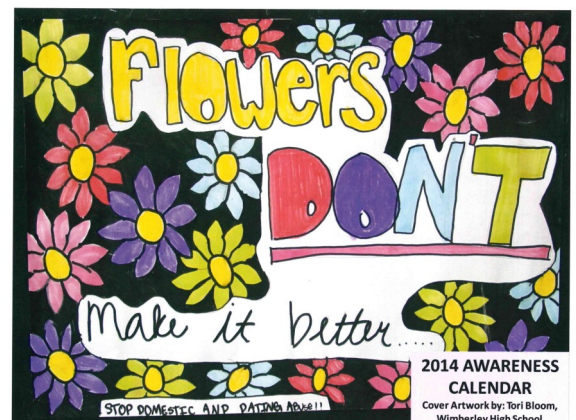
"I wanted the project to raise awareness in young people and help break the cycle of violence," Renee explained.



Artist Sabrina Rios of Hays High School



Artist Abigail Galan of Hays High School



Artist Tori Bloom of Wimberley High School