



Safety Net News

February, March, April 2020

Published by the McLeod Alliance

No estas sola

Alliance starts Spanish-speaking support group

By Jane Otto
McLeod Alliance Volunteer

One in three women of all racial/ethnic groups will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes. However, Latinas are less likely to report it.

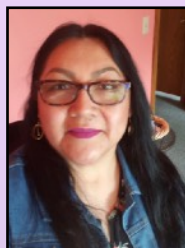
According to the St. Paul-based National Latin@ Research Center on Family and Social Change, that fact may be due to fear of deportation, low awareness of resources, and language and cultural differences.

Bilingual Advocate Ofelia Vergara had a Spanish-speaking support group on her project list for the past year. "I just didn't know how to start it," she said.

She began with a presentation geared toward Hispanic women about the Alliance and its services. She said she told them, "I am inviting you, not because you are the victims, but because I want you to be aware of the services."

The presentation focused on how the Alliance works, what services it offers and how grants make those services possible. Vergara said that those who were there asked so many questions.

The first support group met March 11, but unfortunately the state shortly after went into "stay-at-home" mode. Vergara has been keeping in touch via texting when possible. When regularly scheduled meetings are a possibility, a meeting time and place will be posted wherever possible. As Vergara said more than once, "This is something that is much needed."



Ofelia Vergara

COVID-19 has not closed Alliance doors

By Jane Otto
McLeod Alliance Volunteer

Recently, Alliance's Director Rhonda Buerkle and Advocate Glynis Vacek participated in a digital meeting with McLeod County's COVID-19 response team. Public Health Nurse Laurie Snegosky is the team's incident commander. Vacek said they asked how the Alliance is, or will, handle the high volume of calls.

Vacek explained to them that it just wasn't happening.

"We are not getting inundated with calls like we thought we would be," Vacek said via telephone.

"Eerily quiet" is how she described the Alliance's present call volume. She wondered aloud if this was the "calm

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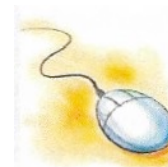
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Teaching teens dating's ups and downs

With Advocate Karina Robeck's guidance, the Alliance has updated its teen-dating school presentation.

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Log onto our Web site at www.mcleodalliance.org for current news.

From the Director's desk:

Open and here to help

Greetings and happy Spring!
In this time of uncertainty, we would like all to know we are still open and here to help. While we prefer phone calls, we will accept an in-office visit on an as-needed basis. We also have the capacity for video chatting when safety allows.

This is such a stressful time for most people. We would like to encourage self-care and mindfulness for all.

Please check out local resources, as well as some great online resources. For



Rhonda Buerkle

example, <https://mhanational.org/covid19> is a great tool to use.

Stay healthy, stay safe, and remember to take care of yourselves.

Rhonda Buerkle
Executive Director

From the Board Chair:

We can be stronger together

Greetings!
I hope you and your family are reading this in a safe and healthy home environment.

We are all suffering various levels of COVID-19's disruption of our daily lives. But we are hoping that we all will find a cure to this disease soon and our lives can return to our new sense of normal.

I am sure many of you wonder what our new normal will be. At McLeod Alliance, it will be helping those who come to us. It will be offering strength, support and a shoulder to cry on. We will continue to be the voice of those who are unsure how to change or ask for the help they need.



Susan Noyes

Our normal will return, but sadly with it we may see a greater fear of the unknown due to the unpredictable new normal we may all face.

So I ask that you be kind. When you see someone having a bad day, or looking sad, angry, or frustrated because of the situation we are in, offer kind words, a smile, or make them laugh. You don't know what their home life is like, if they are an "essential worker" coming off a long shift, or someone on the verge of a mental breakdown over fear of their next meal.

Find ways to show each other kindness throughout this ordeal, because we are all stronger together.

Susan Noyes
Board Chair



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Always grateful for some sweets

Girl Scouts Hutchinson Troop 30111 recently donated cookies. We are so grateful and will use the cookies for our support group meetings.

Low domestic violence call rates unsettling

Continued from front page

before the storm,” and questioned whether victims fear they might not get the help they need, or fear getting sick.

Though domestic violence is reportedly increasing worldwide, most major cities in the United States are seeing a decline in domestic violence calls, according to a recent ABC news report. Despite the low numbers, some California officials told ABC reporters that “the abused are stuck at home with their abusers and can’t alert authorities.”

Vacek stressed that Alliance advocates are here to help. The 24-hour crisis line is available. Though the advocates are handling most cases by phone, they will meet in person if the situation warrants that.

“We are here to reach out to those in an unsafe situation,” Vacek said. “We just want to get the word out that we are available.”



Keeping feet comfy

New Era Financial Group Inc., located in Hutchinson, donated more than 200 pairs of Bombas Socks. They are being distributed to clients as needed. The Alliance was one of several small organizations to receive the socks.

Teaching respect and friendship

By Jane Otto

McLeod Alliance Volunteer

We are never too young to learn about love and respect in relationships.

For more than 20 years, the Alliance has been teaching students from as early as second grade to seniors about healthy, non violent relationships.

Advocate Glynis Vacek can recall giving presentations in schools since 2001.

"I feel like I've been educating students for along time, and I've lost track of how many years it's been," Vacek said.

This year, Vacek took the Alliance's newest hire, Karina Robeck, to the middle school for a visit.

"I have kind of aged-out of the public speaking," Vacek said with a laugh. "Karina can connect much easier with young people."

While visiting the seventh graders, Robeck said she learned that the students wanted to know more about "dating around technology." With that in mind, Robeck, updated the Alliance's PowerPoint presentation to include technology. "It's geared for middle-school aged students," she said, "but could eventually be used for junior and senior high students."

The updated version focuses on both the unhealthy and abusive behaviors, in dating as well as the healthy ones.

For example, one of the eight behavior sets the presentation addresses is a comfortable pace versus a possessiveness in dating. Robeck shows the positives and negatives, then applies that to social media, texting, and email giving examples of what might be a comfortable dating approach and a possessive dating approach.



Karina Robeck

"It is important that young people know how to help each other, because sometimes that is a young victim's only point of contact."

*~ Karina Robeck
Alliance Advocate*

Unfortunately, teen dating violence is a common occurrence. The Centers for Disease Control performed two surveys in 2015. They were the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

According to those surveys:

- nearly one in 11 females and one in 15 males high school students reported having experienced physical dating violence in the past year; and
- about one in 9 and one in 36 high school students experienced sexual dating violence in the past year.

The surveys also showed that racial and ethnic minority groups

are disproportionately affected by many types of violence.

Sadly, only about 33 percent of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about the abuse according to loveisrespect.org. Young people, Robeck said, usually tell a friend about the abuse and sometimes tell no one else.

That fact encouraged Robeck to add a segment to the presentation that focuses on how to help a friend. She also developed a brochure on the same theme.

"It is important that young people know how to help each other, because sometimes that is a young victim's only point of contact," Robeck said. "Knowing how to effectively respond is critical."

Robeck added that the website, [love is respect.org](http://loveisrespect.org), is a great resource for people of all ages.

Since the onset of Gov. Timothy Walz's "stay-at-home" order, Robeck has been unable to be in the classroom. Fortunately, the PowerPoint is available for instructors to incorporate into their virtual learning lessons. She also added all her talking points that she normally would give in the classroom.

If instructors are interested in using this as part of their curriculum, they can contact Robeck by calling the Alliance office 320-234-7933 or emailing besafe@hutchtel.net.

"I'm so excited to share this information," she said.

"Hopefully, students can take something away from it."



Striking out violence together

Thanks to the 24th Annual Bowlathon's sponsors and bowlers, the fundraiser will once again benefit the Alliance and those they serve.

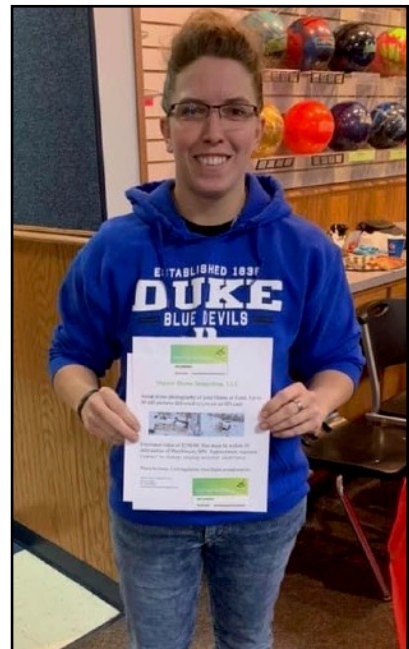
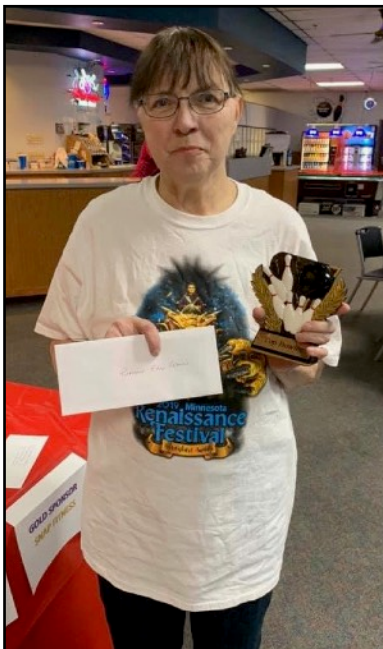
The fundraiser netted \$9,443. This year's sponsors were: at the platinum level – KARP/KDUZ; gold level – Jim Lowinske of Master Home Inspection LLC,

SNAP Fitness; and silver level – Hutchinson Therapeutic Massage Center, GRH Foundation Rite Way Conveyors, Citizens Bank and Trust, and Glencoe Lions.



Pledge and prize winners

Pictured left is the top business team and also who won the Traveling Trophy, HP Insurance. Pictured below from left to right are: Lee Carrigan – top pledge winner with \$2,215; Drew Peterson won the wine basket, and Megan Johnson won the drone photo, which will be of her property. Not pictured are: the top pledge getters – noon session: Becky Havelka, Mike Havelka, Andrea Matheny, and Lori Copler; and three p.m. session: Neil Otto, Sam Otto, and Manny Cevallos.



News briefs

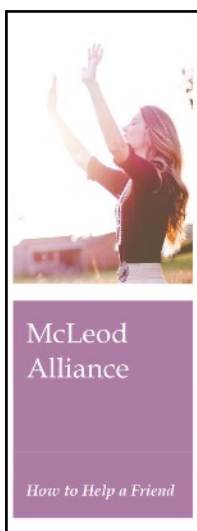
How to help a friend

Alliance Advocate Karina Robeck recently developed a brochure “How to Help a Friend.”

The impetus behind it was the fact that young people typically don’t report abuse, but just tell a friend.

Robeck said that it is crucial that they know how to respond to a friend’s report of abuse.

Young people are not the only ones who may benefit from this information. Many people witness abuse or know of someone in an abusive



relationship, but are unsure how to help. The Alliance wants to see this brochure in counseling offices, health classrooms, clinics, hospitals, or anywhere where someone may benefit from this

information. It’s also available in Spanish, thanks to Bilingual Advocate Ofelia Vergara.

To get copies of this brochure or for more information, please contact the Alliance at 320-234-7933, or email besafe@hutchtel.net.



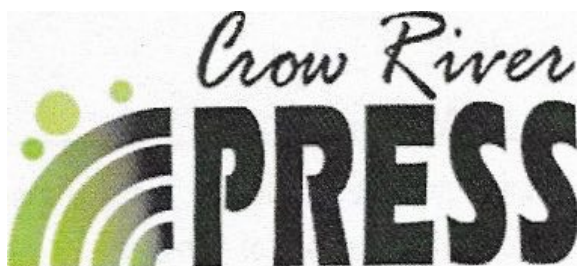
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Tammy Kosek Maiers
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Thank you to all the groups and individuals who have generously provided in-kind donations to our organization. Your gift truly makes a difference in the lives of those affected by domestic violence!

Calendar of Events

May

Mental Health Awareness Month

May 19: 5:15p.m. McLeod Alliance Board digital meeting

June

National Safety Month

June 16: 5:15 p.m. McLeod Alliance Board digital meeting

Ongoing

Support groups will be cancelled through May 2020. We will re-evaluate this decision at that time. If you need support, call our 24-hours crisis line at 320-234-7922.

Stay healthy, stay safe, and remember to take care of yourselves.

THANK YOU, EVERYONE

The Annual Fund Drive is our biggest fundraiser and that is due to all those listed below. The Alliance thanks you for supporting our mission to empower, support, and advocate for those in the throes of domestic abuse. McLeod Alliance sincerely apologizes if we have inadvertently left out any of our wonderful donors.

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McLeod Alliance, Inc.
P.O. Box 393
Hutchinson, MN 55350

Receiving duplicates? Incorrect addresses? New person in position?

We'd like to know. Please contact the Alliance by mail, e-mail, fax, or phone, and we'll take care of the problem. Thanks.

McLeod Alliance, Inc. Staff

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Advocacy Coordinator
Glynis Vacek

Bilingual Advocacy Program
Ofelia Vergara

Legal Advocate
Karina Robeck

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United Way of McLeod County

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Helps Here

Telephone: 320-234-7933
Out of Area: 800-934-0851
Fax: 320-234-6317

E-Mail: mavdv@hutchtel.net
Web site: www.mcleodalliance.org

