

**Preventing Domestic Violence:
The Role of Men**
Rus Ervin Funk

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is upon us. October is the one month a year that is designated as our collective opportunity to think about domestic violence. Communities across the state are planning events and organizing opportunities to remember those who have been affected by domestic violence, honor those who have been murdered, and re-commit to reducing domestic violence in our communities and throughout the state.

As a man who works primarily to educate and engage men around preventing domestic violence, I am painfully aware that the bulk of these efforts will be organized by women, and there will only be a handful of men at any of these, or all of these, events. Statewide, it is safe to assume, that men will make up only a tiny portion of the total numbers of people who are present. This is changing, I'm very happy to say! In tiny Corydon, men are organizing for a "men against violence against women" rally as a part of DVAM. In Bloomington, efforts are under way to organize male athletes across the community to take a stand by wearing a white ribbon and pledging to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls. Efforts are also underway in Evansville, Indianapolis and Ft. Wayne.

As important and groundbreaking (at least in Indiana) as these events and efforts are, they pale in comparison to the number of events and activities that are being organized by women, and even more so when we consider the events and efforts that women organize year around! As men, it is time that we step up and meet women half-way to respond to and prevent domestic violence.

Domestic violence is no more a "woman's issue" than tornadoes. Domestic violence impacts our entire communities, and nearly every woman who is abused is also the mother of sons, the sister of brothers, the friend of men. As men, we have a solemn obligation to speak out against, and work to end domestic violence. This is our work, this is our responsibility...this is our legacy!

Rus Ervin Funk, MSW, is the president of the Board of Directors of the Indiana Coalition *Against* Domestic violence and is the co-founder and Executive Director of MensWork: eliminating violence against women, inc.