

## How can my church help ?

Concrete activities that congregations and faith communities can undertake to help win the war against domestic violence

### Things that members of the congregation (not just the church leadership) can do to get involved:

- **Organize a cell phone drive or other fundraiser at your church.** Doing so will not only help raise awareness, but can assist organizations working on this issue with much-needed funds.
- **Offer to serve on a committee within the church (i.e., a social justice committee) or the community (i.e., the Interfaith committee of the Domestic Violence Council) to aid in organizing other churches.** As a committed member of your faith community, you can help to spark a wildfire of passion that will spread from your church to others.
- **Raise the issue when discussing plans for women's retreats, men's gatherings, couples outreach events.** This is an issue that touches everyone. It need not be heavy, but it can be very healing to address it openly, particularly in the context of a retreat. Offer a ministry time.
- **Arrange an event at (or with) your church to raise awareness.** Host a ladies' tea and invite a domestic violence organization to do a display. Do a candlelight vigil for survivors. Have a survivors' speak-out at your church. Host the Clothesline Project in your fellowship hall.
- **Volunteer with a faith-based domestic violence agency.** See list below for local agencies.

### Things that the pastoral staff can do to get involved:

- **Demonstrate leadership and commitment to the issue.** Arrange for a training for your entire pastoral staff, as well as support staff. Develop policies to ensure a consistent, compassionate response from your church. Assign a staff member to oversee abuse response.
- **Create a climate of safety within your congregation.** Preach a sermon using illustrations that discuss abuse, and demonstrate the heart of a shepherd toward those hurting within the flock.
- **Require that domestic violence screening be done before any joint marital counseling.** Likewise, if your church offers pre-marital counseling, be sure to ask both parties (*separately*) about issues of anger, conflict, and possible controlling behaviors. If any of these behaviors exist, refuse to marry the couple. Doing so may help to prevent future abusive marriages that will ultimately end in injury, divorce, or untimely death.
- **Endorse, promote, and attend community events like the annual Domestic Violence conference, the Child Abuse Symposium, the Walk Against Domestic Violence, and "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes."** Your presence at these events sends a very clear message that faith leaders are committed to exposing and ending abuse. Even if you are not asked to speak or present at these events, your presence alone speaks volumes.

*Ending abuse is up to all of us.*

#### The Lazarus Project

Serving the Christian community

(408) 225-2381

#### Shalom Bayit

Serving the Jewish community

(415) 241-8874

#### NISA

Serving the Muslim community

1-888-275-6472