

OPINION EDITORIAL

Florida's Court Clerks Bring Attention to Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. During this time, we encourage members of our local community to become familiar with how the Santa Rosa Clerks of the Courts Office can help you or someone you know.

Unfortunately, one in four women and one in seven men in the United States suffer physical violence at the hands of their spouses, intimate partners or even family members. Additionally, three out of four Americans personally know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence. When applied to the State of Florida alone, these statistics are staggering and show what a tremendous impact domestic violence has on our local communities.

However, it is vital that we recognize that this violence is not inevitable, nor is it "somebody else's problem." In order to effectively make strides against this issue and improve these statistics within Santa Rosa County, we must not remain silent upon experiencing, witnessing or hearing about incidents of domestic violence.

With this in mind, it is important to focus on what we can do to help victims and, ultimately, how we can put an end to domestic violence in Santa Rosa County. Florida's Court Clerks are keenly sensitive to the needs of domestic violence survivors and take these matters very seriously. We are committed to assisting victims, with complete confidentiality and discretion, throughout the entire process of filing reports and connecting victims with advocate programs.

"Assistance is a phone call away," said Donald C. Spencer, Santa Rosa Clerk of the Circuit Court. "Please contact our office if you or a loved one needs domestic violence assistance." If you or someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, please contact the Santa Rosa Clerk of Courts Family Law Department at (850) 981-5551.

Domestic violence is a prominent issue and the Florida Court Clerks stand ready to protect community members and lend a helping hand for those in need of domestic violence assistance. We work very closely with the local sheriff's office, ensuring that both safety and justice are achieved for victims and their families in the event that a domestic violence incident occurs.

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Reference: Statistics from National Domestic Violence Hotline: <http://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/statistics/>