

There's no room for domestic violence

It took Danielle seven years to leave her dangerous husband. This Indiana mother of three spent much of her time taking precautions to protect her children and herself. She didn't know where to go for help. For years, Danielle stayed in the relationship, uncertain of her future and fearfully awaiting the next fight.

With a startling 8.5 million incidents of intimate partner violence occurring each year in the United States, **approximately one in four women, like Danielle, will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.** This problem was especially dire for Madison County, Indiana. In 2003, Indiana recorded 72 deaths as a result of domestic violence as well as 3,748 adults and 4,009 children checking into emergency shelters due to domestic violence.

Like United Ways across the country, United Way of Madison County focuses on the specific issues plaguing their community. Collaborating with local law enforcement, businesses and a domestic violence prevention agency, United Way worked to devise the *No Room for Domestic Violence* campaign.



Specialists designed the packets with a variety of information including coupons and general community notices to prevent perpetrators from thinking the information specifically targeted their homes.

One of these packets saved Danielle. She found the information packet hanging on her front door and kept it hidden until she could call for help.

“ Approximately one in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. ”

United Way of Madison County focuses on attacking the domestic violence problem through an aggressive, communitywide awareness and response movement.

No Room for Domestic Violence increases awareness, improves services and expands emergency workers' abilities to respond to incidents of domestic violence. United Way and its community partners provide the community with signage, news coverage, training for emergency staff, and places for victims to go for help and protection. In addition to hospitals, police stations and fire stations, a local gas/convenience store chain also opened its doors as a safe haven. All staff are trained to help people experiencing domestic violence, offering victims more places to go for help.

Volunteers also go door-to-door and distribute packets filled with information on domestic violence help centers.

Two weeks later, Danielle called the crisis line and requested shelter services. She and her children were able to stay at a shelter for battered women while Danielle made plans to relocate to another state where she had the support of her family and would be free from her abusive husband.

In three years, **the arrest rates for domestic violence calls in Madison County increased from 29% to 72%.** Research shows that increased arrests serve as a deterrent to the cycle of domestic violence **and in the long-term will result in a decrease in domestic violence incidents.** United Way's ability to increase awareness of the issue, create a county-wide protocol for handling domestic violence calls and increase accessibility to "safe haven" sites is credited with increasing the arrest rates. Like United Ways nationwide, United Way of Madison County dedicates itself to strengthening and supporting families in their community – because that's what matters.