

# OCTOBER

## *Breast Cancer Awareness Month*

Much progress has been made in preventive health since the first Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, 1985.

Forty-nine states today require health insurance to cover the cost of screening mammograms, up from only two in 1985. In 1999 more than 201,000 mammograms were provided to underserved women through federal programs, vs. 27,000 in 1991.

Since 1987, mammography rates have more than doubled for women age 50 and older (from 25 percent in 1987 and 67 percent in 1997) and death rates from breast cancer have dropped 1.8 percent each year since 1992.

### **What Can You Do?**

- Work with other community coalition partners to raise money for Breast Cancer Research and to fund mammograms for those who have no health coverage but are at risk.
- Work with your local women's shelter to help women obtain screenings and treatment.
- Rallies and forum are great but also consider phone trees of awareness. "Call Someone You Love" to encourage people to phone friends and relatives about taking steps for early detection.
- Hold a lunchroom or brown bag meeting at your plant and invite both brothers and sisters to attend. Bring in a speaker from the local hospital to discuss breast cancer, which can strike men as well as women.
- Get a mammogram yourself and give someone you love a gift of a mammogram.
- Sponsor a "Women Reaching Women" event to bring women of all ages together around a demonstration, testimonial, proclamation, etc. to spread the message.
- Check with the Cancer Society and get posters and literature to distribute in your workplace, beauty shop, health club, library, schools, anywhere where women congregate or will see the message.

## *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*

Domestic Violence Awareness Month evolved from the first Day of Unity observed in October, 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The intent was to connect battered women's advocates across the nation who was working to end violence against women and their children. The Day of Unity soon became a special week when a range of activities was conducted at the local, state, and national levels.

These activities were as varied and diverse as the program sponsors but had common themes: mourning those who have died because of domestic violence, celebrating those who have survived, and connecting those who work to end violence.

In October 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed. That same year the first national toll-free hotline was begun. In 1989 the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Commemorative Legislation was passed by the U.S. Congress. Such legislation has passed every year since with NCADV providing key leadership in this effort.

### **What Can You Do?**

- **Ribbon Campaign:** Distribute purple ribbons to clergy, police chiefs, judges, librarians, emergency room personnel and others in your community.
- **Table Tent Campaign:** Print table tents with a reminder that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and information about services and how to access them. Distribute table tents to area restaurants and hospital cafeterias.
- **Utility Company Campaign:** Ask local utility companies to include a message in their October bills. (Sometimes banks are also willing to include information in their monthly statements.)
- **Library Displays:** Contact public libraries in your area and provide them with materials for a display.
- **Church Campaign:** Send a mass mailing to all religious institutions in your area asking them to address the issue from the pulpit or in their newsletter during October.
- **Children's Campaign:** Have children from the shelter write thank you cards with painted hand prints on them to be distributed to police departments, judges, probation officers and prosecutors in the county.
- **Chili Cook-Off:** Have a chili cooking contest with prizes and entertainment. Invite individual cooks, teams and restaurants to compete, with tasting open to the public. The proceeds benefit the local shelter.
- **Clothesline Project Display:** Display tee shirts created by survivors of domestic violence in a public place. The shirts depict their stories, their pain and their hopes.
- **Teen Dating Violence Essay Contest:** Hold essay contests in area schools with an awards ceremony.
- **Wish List Drive:** Put posters in area beauty salons displaying the shelter's wish list and making literature and information available. For every item contributed, the person's name is entered in a drawing for a prize.

## ***National Work and Family Month:***

In 2003 the U.S. Senate declared October as a month to affirm the idea that supporting a balance between work and personal life is in the best interest of national worker productivity and that reducing the conflict between work and family life should be a national priority.

More households during the beginning of this century are comprised of dual incomes, most to just make ends meet. And these same households either have responsibility for rearing children, grandchildren and caring for aging family members. The pressures on the family unit and women especially need to be addressed by industries, governments, and communities. Your women's committee can develop an annual action with these entities to raise the awareness of what are work family issues and how joint collective action between these groups can build better families, companies and communities.

### **What Can You Do?**

- Develop and award in the region for a company, government official, or person who has done something especially important and lasting to address the positive balance of work and family life on some level.
- Join with your company or companies in the region and host an event jointly to celebrate the family as an essential unit in developing a safe and productive workplace. A panel on best practices could be developed, discussions on issues facing families in the community on balancing work and family issues, and other such awareness building actions could be included at the event.
- Develop and coordinate a letter to the editor campaign or get on local radio and TV. stations throughout the October and talk about the benefits that companies need to establish to help workers balance family and work and how they can benefit with productivity and a richer community. Use first person stories, good and bad; use statistics on companies who have benefited with such language and actions; and how community action through legislation can make families and the family unit strong rather than dysfunctional around work schedules and lack of child and elder care facilities.

## ***National Disability Employment Awareness Month***

Despite the current low rates of unemployment in the United States, people with disabilities are still facing high rates of unemployment throughout the country. Approximately 54 million Americans have disabilities and 17 million of these are working age (16-64), yet only 29 percent are employed full or part time.

While diversity in the workplace has increased over the past several years, people with disabilities are often overlooked. There is still stigma attached to both physical and mental disabilities. This misperception often causes employers to miss out on the talents, skills, motivation, and willingness to work that people with disabilities possess. It is essential that we increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities and raise public awareness of the availability and qualifications of this population.

To recognize the enormous potential of individuals with disabilities and to encourage all Americans to work toward their full integration into the workforce, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 121), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

### ***October 24: United Nations Day***

In the spring of 1945, representatives of fifty nations gathered in San Francisco to put the final touches to a document of far-reaching consequences-- the Charter of the United Nations. Enthusiastically supported by the United States, the U.N. Charter went into effect on October 24, 1945.

Two years later the U.N. General Assembly adopted a U.S.-sponsored resolution declaring October 24th United Nations Day, to be commemorated annually by all member-states of the United Nations. Since 1947, U.N. Day has been observed in nations large and small around the world.