

## Stop the Violence in Your Community

It's easy to say you're against violence. But actively working to make the peace in your community is a little more difficult. It means you understand what violence is. And you know it when you see it.

October is Violence Prevention Month. Did you know? Did you read anything about it and did you do anything? What can we as concerned citizens, block club leaders and others do to stop violence?

One thing is to be informed, find out what is out there, and get involved. A first step would be to educate yourselves.

Make the decision to:

- identify and raise consciousness of violence in all its forms;
- challenge the societal norm that violence is a normal part of life;
- help people own both the problem and the solutions, shifting the focus of action from the streets to the home and community;
- influence people to choose specific actions and behaviors that work and are positive, healthy and peaceful;
- encourage individuals to reduce violence; and;
- create a culture of peace, hope and trust by living this way to teach by example.

A source of education and information on violence prevention is the Ramsey County Initiative for Violence Free Families and Communities. The initiative has volunteers working in many areas from workplace violence, to gun violence, to faith communities working on violence prevention. For more information, call (651) 266-2404. Get educated, get informed, get involved!

### Checklist for Violence Prevention

#### Do my family and I...

- Understand the dangers of weapons, especially firearms, and how to prevent accidents?
- Talk about the costs—personal and financial—of violence?
- Think carefully about the kinds of entertainment we watch and hear?
- Know and practice ways to settle disputes without violence?
- Understand and practice basic self-protection strategies?

#### Do my neighbors and I...

- Know each other reasonably well?
- Work together to make our neighborhoods safe for children?

- Agree on how and when to step in to prevent children's' quarrels from becoming violent?
- Discuss how we feel about weapons, including firearms, and what rules and standards we agree on?
- Help each other by joining and taking an active role in Block Clubs and Neighborhood Watch?
- Know that there are positive ways for our children to spend their time and energy after school?
- Identify, discuss, and solve (or get help to solve) troubling conditions in our area?
- Work with police, school officials, civic groups, and others to address larger issues for the community?

**Does my community...**

- Have and enforce laws and regulations for secure weapons storage and against weapons violence?
- Provide safe ways for residents to dispose of unwanted weapons?
- Actively provide resources and know-how to help residents learn how to solve problems without violence?
- Provide mentoring and other outreach services to troubled youth and families?
- Enlist young people in addressing violence problems?
- Coordinate community groups to develop comprehensive anti-violence strategies and plans?
- Offer an attractive array of both family-oriented and youth-focused events?
- Have clear standards that reject violence as a presence in the community?

**Add your own reminders for your own neighborhood...**