Press Release

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Fort Drum Public Affairs

Fort Drum employees ‘Purple Up’ to support annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month

FORT DRUM, N.Y. (Oct. 30, 2020) – The Fort Drum Family Advocacy Program launched the annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month campaign in October with a simple challenge.

Organizations across the garrison were asked to “Purple Up” and photograph themselves wearing clothing or a ribbon of that color.

“Purple is the color of domestic violence awareness because purple is a symbol of peace, courage, survival, honor and the dedication to ending violence,” said Mandy Mason, the Soldier and Family Readiness Division’s Army Substance Abuse Program manager. “It’s an acknowledgement to survivors of domestic violence, and we use this color to raise awareness to end the cycle of violence.”

Each participating organization encouraged another one to “Purple Up,” and Mason said that more than a dozen directorates and agencies – including two from off post – accepted the challenge.

“People are competitive by nature, so when their team is being challenged by another, then they want to step up, participate and pass on the challenge,” she said. “Any chance we can get information and resources out to the community, it is vital to do. If having people wear one color in solidarity brings awareness to even a handful of people, we have done our job in getting the information out.”

Photos from the “Purple Up Challenge” can be viewed at HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FTDRUMFAP.

Tom Wojcikowski, FAP educator, said that he hopes the photos draw people to their page, where they can also learn more about the services available to victims of family violence.

“Using a small, fun activity that our agencies could participate in to bring awareness to a heavy topic gets domestic violence information in the hands of people who work with our Soldiers and family members,” he said.

Other campaign activities included an “End the Cycle of Abuse” bicycling event, and “Paint with Your Mate” and “Spooktacular Halloween Cooking” classes.

“During our couples painting and cooking classes, we also talk about communication and healthy relationships,” Mason said. “Both of these events allow couples to get out for a ‘date night’ with no cost to them, allowing them to spend time together and learn a few new relationship tips.”

Mason said that developing these skills work toward preventing future relationship stressors that could result in domestic violence. The classes were so popular that two more dates were scheduled in November, and they are filled to capacity.

Visual displays also kept domestic violence awareness at heavily trafficked areas, such as the Main Post Exchange and inside Clark Hall, where silhouette cutouts of male and female faces represent domestic violence victims. A pledge wall was established at the Soldier and Family Readiness Center and the Family Resource Center to draw attention to the services offered to abuse victims.

“The intent is to also get people to realize that it is everyone’s job to help end domestic violence,” Mason said. “As individuals visited both facilities and signed the pledge, they were acknowledging that they would take a hand in helping victims of domestic violence reach out for help to get out of the abusive relationships.”

Mason said that the Fort Drum FAP program is united to end domestic violence, and that staff is available to support survivors and educate the community. She hopes this message was received during the awareness campaign.

“Like many of our Soldier and Family Readiness Division program areas, it is hard to gauge our success,” she said. “However, we focus on the increased knowledge. If one new person now understands what domestic violence is, what it looks like, what community resources are out there, then the campaign was a success.”

For information on domestic abuse, visit the Soldier and Family Readiness Division at 10250 Fourth Armored Division Drive, or call FAP at (315) 772-6929. The Domestic Violence hotline is available 24/7 at (315) 955-4321.

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Caption: Fort Drum civilian employees took on the Family Advocacy Program’s challenge to “Purple Up” and photograph themselves wearing clothing or a ribbon of that color to highlight the annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month campaign in October. (Graphic by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)