Family Violence
Investing in community education efforts really pays off for prosecutors

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Are you interested in having more enlightened juries? Do you wish that more victims would follow through with prosecution? Are you concerned that so many children are growing up in violent homes without hope for a better future? Do you think batterers might be influenced by media messages that their abuse is wrong and will not be tolerated?

By utilizing community education materials already in existence you may be able to change some of the frustrating patterns we encounter in family violence cases, such as those listed above. Your local shelter and advocacy programs will likely have brochures that can be distributed to the abuse victims with whom you work. Additionally, the Family Violence Prevention Fund is a national organization charged with designing and distributing a wide array of domestic violence community education materials. By calling 415/253-8900 (fax 415/252-8991), you can receive their informational packet, including a bumper sticker (such as the one displayed here), in Spanish or English, as well as public service announcements, op ed pieces, and other similar items. More bumper stickers can be ordered for $.35 each, and the posters displayed on the next page are only $3.00 each. Would it not be appropriate to have one of these thought-provoking images in your waiting room or in your victim assistance coordinator’s office?

The Attorney General’s Office will have available the “Adult Safety Plan” and “Youth Safety Plan” brochures, in English and Spanish, by early March. It is our hope that you and volunteers in your community will make every effort to disseminate these materials widely. Volunteers in several communities have organized “bathroom projects” in which they enlist the help of teens, elders, youth, and religious, social and civic groups to tape shelter brochures, safety plans, and posters in bathrooms and public sites. They have found it helpful to place them in courts, museums, libraries, churches, schools, laundromats, supermarkets, post offices, public buildings, billboards, and any place else where the public might see them.

The challenge is out to see which office can get every staff car to wear the “There’s No Excuse for Domestic Violence” bumper sticker. Nashville Police Department’s Sgt. Mark Wynn now has these bumper stickers on every police, fire, and safety vehicle in the metro Nashville area. The Los Angeles Police Department has the bumper stickers on every police car. We would like to hear about your community education efforts and brag about you in future issues.