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BUSINESS

O&R LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO HELP EMPLOYEES COPE WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

New personnel policies and practices, education and training programs put in place.

By [William Demarest](#) | [Email the author](#) | November 9, 2010 @ 5:29am



Gathered in O&R's Spring Valley Operations Center for the launch of Orange and Rockland Utilities' new initiative against domestic violence are, from left: Carolyn Fish, Executive Director of the Rockland Family Shelter, O&R's partner in the project; O&R President and CEO Bill Longhi; Joe Erhmann, former professional football player and nationally recognized domestic violence program advocate and trainer; Rockland

County District Attorney Thomas Zugibe; Michael Mandel, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Rockland Family Shelter; and Ram Nagubandi, Commissioner of the Rockland County Human Rights Commission. O&R Credit O&R

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Orange and Rockland Utilities officials on Monday introduced a set of initiatives designed to address the effects of domestic violence on the workplace through stronger personnel policies and practices, education and training programs and increased communication efforts.

The utility says the program is aimed at building awareness among O&R employees about the scope of the problem and the availability of assistance to cope domestic violence.

"These initiatives are aimed at protecting employees from issues of domestic violence in the workplace and offering support and guidance to those who are victims of domestic violence," O&R President and CEO Bill Longhi said. "When domestic violence spills over into the job environment, the situation expands beyond the victim and includes the

employees around him or her. That's when domestic violence grows into a workplace stability and safety issue, and we have a responsibility to provide a mechanism to address those concerns."

Rockland Family Shelter Executive Director Carolyn Fish said O&R's initiatives have made it "a corporate leader in the fight against domestic violence" and applauded O&R's program as "the right thing to do and the right time to do it."

Last month, O&R donated \$10,000 to the Rockland Family Shelter in New City to develop awareness and training programs in Rockland to combat domestic violence.

"Domestic violence also can affect a company in terms of missed workdays, decreased productivity and increased healthcare costs. The other side of that equation is, without a coherent, effective policy in place, individual employee victims can also face the risk of losing pay, promotional and professional development opportunities and even the job itself," Longhi said.

In 2003, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially cited domestic violence as a threat to women's health and lives, it created the DELTA project. DELTA stands for Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances which gave rise to the selection of domestic violence coalitions throughout the nation to expand community alliances and develop domestic violence prevention strategies through social change.

The Rockland County Stop F.E.A.R. Coalition was one of five programs chosen by New York State and Rockland Family Shelter leads the project. [F.E.A.R. stands for Family Abuse --- Endangering Women and Children --- Abuse of All Kinds --- Rape and Sexual Assault]. The Rockland DELTA project collaborates with educational, business and faith-based sectors to develop and support policies, programs and environments that are equitable and safe.





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