

GUEST COMMENTARY

Teen dating violence is a tragic reality

BY LINDA OBERHAUS, CEO

The Shelter for Abused Women & Children

Five years after the murder-suicide that took their lives, the faces of Immo-kalee teens Coby Martinez Deleon, 18, and Natalia Trejo, 17, still look out from their Facebook pages, a testament to the tragic reality of teen dating violence. A final post on Coby's page still reads, "Nat was here :)"

Today in America, 1.5 million teens are experiencing some form of abuse at the hands of a dating partner. The goal of February's National Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is to raise awareness, promote prevention and reduce those numbers.

If you believe teen-dating violence

does not affect you, think again. The economic impact of domestic violence in America is approximately \$8.3 billion per year in medical costs and lost wages. By investing in adolescent awareness and prevention programs, we will save thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

Many parents think they would know if their child was in a violent relationship, but statistics show that 81% of parents were unaware that their teen had been physically hurt by a dating partner. Only 33% of teens suffering such abuse ever talked to anyone about what was happening to them.

Dating violence is any situation in which one partner purposefully causes

emotional, physical or sexual harm to another. Unhealthy relationships can start early and last a lifetime. With technology at their fingertips 24 hours a day, teens are more vulnerable to dating violence than ever before.

Signs to look for in an abuser include excessive jealousy, constant checking in, isolating the victim from friends and/or family, controlling behavior, name calling, explosive temper, refusal to take responsibility and blaming others for his/her actions.

Signs that a teen may be a victim of dating violence include physical injury (often hidden by clothing), skipping school, failing grades, changes in mood or personality, emotional outbursts, and

isolation.

If you have noticed these signs or behavior changes in a teen, it is important to speak up and get help.

Coby and Natalia are dearly missed in their community. It is hard to say whether early intervention would have changed the terrible ending of their short lives, but their story can be a lesson to us all. You have the ability to save lives by recognizing the signs, reaching out, and reporting any activity that you feel may be abusive. If you or someone you know needs help, call The Shelter's 24-hour Crisis Line at 239-775-1101. More information on The Shelter and its services is available online at www.naplesshelter.org. ■

New assisted living facility promotes green space health advantages

Naples Green Village, the newly remodeled assisted living and memory care facility in North Naples, was purchased at the end of 2018 with complete renovations beginning in April 2020 and ending in November. The result is a dramatic change in the appearance and overall feel.

The green spaces and courtyards really set the facility apart from others in the area, as there are five outdoor spaces in total. The three interior courtyards that existed were completely redesigned and landscaped to give a feeling of serenity and peace. Then, there are two large new courtyards on the exterior of the



facility that have been created to include walkways for daily walks, park benches for sitting, shade trees and flowers for enjoyment, and a gazebo for gathering. An 8-foot privacy wall surrounds the entire outdoor area providing security, peace and quiet.

New owners of the facility, RAM Capital Management of Coral Gables, Florida, are dedicated to the Green Village brand,



which has evolved into a holistic care philosophy emphasizing daily exposure to pleasant and stimulating outdoor environments. The intimate park-like areas

of the facility are intended to entice residents to the outdoors where they can enjoy and experience magnificent oak trees and meandering pathways. Research shows that sunlight, fresh air and friendly surroundings promote well-being, both physical and mental. The target for RAM is to own 10 to 12 Green Village facilities in Florida by the end of 2023.

Naples Green Village is located at 101 Cypress Way East in Naples. For information, visit www.NaplesGreenVillage.com or for a tour of the facility, email Pam Wild at marketingdirector@naples-greenvillage.com or call 239-514-0300. ■



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