

16 days of activism campaign kicks off...

## Truce on violence must be lasting

THE 16 days of activism campaign between November 25 and December 10, challenges South Africans to declare a truce on violence against women and children and to ultimately make it a permanent one.

SA is participating in the global 16 days of activism for no violence against women campaign.

Although the global campaign focuses on violence against women only, SA added children to its campaign because of the high incidence of child abuse in the country.

The campaign is being co-ordinated by the Department of Correctional Services.

A white ribbon is being popularised as a symbol of commitment to eradicate violence against women and children.

According to the website [www.southafrica.info](http://www.southafrica.info) the white ribbon symbolises the commitment of the wearer to 'never commit or condone violence against women and children, and to speak out about violence where they see it'.

# More women seek help for abuse

DUE to awareness more women are coming forward to seek help against domestic violence and abuse, according to Sandra Govender, senior social worker at Kingsburgh Child and Family Welfare Society.

While this is good, there are still many women caught in the cycle of abuse.

"There is no specific age group when it comes to abuse. It is across the board, from race to educational level," said Sandra.

She said the abuse revolves around power.

### VALUE

"Women need to value and respect themselves and reach a stage to be able to break away from the cycle of abuse."

Statistics vary at the society from month to month, but the average number of cases are about 10 a month.

"We counsel women to give them strength. More women are becoming aware of their rights and are able to take a stand," said Sandra.

The society works closely with Safecare Community Care Centre which assists the women to get further help, such as protection orders. There have been strides in addressing the problem, such as a successful victim empowerment programme run by the society.

"At times it's difficult for me to deal with situations where a woman

*'There is no specific age group when it comes to abuse. It is across the board, from race to educational level'*

- Sandra Govender, social worker

is traumatised, stuck in the situation and it is difficult to change her mindset about why she is staying in the relationship," said Sandra.

General manager of Safecare, Adele van Zyl said the organisation's statistics are usually high in mid-December.

She said more women are trying to do something about their situations by going to court and seek-

ing protection orders.

But on the other hand, some women are forced to go back to the abusive situations as they have no income, resources or skills.

According to Adele, children bear the brunt of domestic violence and abuse.

"Adults move on but a child lives in anticipation of the next time it might happen."

This leads to children suffering from various problems, from physiological to suicidal tendencies.

While there is help for the children, there is often a backlog as it takes between four to six months to respond to a case.

While Safecare has a safehouse, it only takes in a victim for a maximum of seven days.

There are no long-term facilities in the area and those out of the area have conditions attached. Some take in the women only and not their children.

### ABUSE

In some cases the women endure the abuse because they have children. Most of the women who go through Safecare's doors are referred by welfare, police or hospitals.

Anyone who wishes to seek help can contact the KZN Network on Violence Against Women on 031-304-6928 or FAMSA on 031-202-8987.

## Donation boost for Toti charities

AFRICA Cares for Life and Operation Bobbi Bear are two of 20 charities set to receive a financial boost and media exposure to acknowledge their efforts in fighting violence against women and children.

The donation is a joint effort between the Foschini Group and SAFm during the 16 days of activism campaign, from November 25 to December 10.

The nationwide selection of organisations range from trauma support, children, and women's shelters, community empowerment projects to legal aid for those affected by abuse and rape.

Sixteen of the charities will be interviewed on weekdays until December 10 by Nancy Richards on SAFm's 'Otherwise' programme from 1.05pm and 2pm.

"The ever-increasing statistics are a grim reminder that much more needs to be done to make a difference in our nation about violence against women and children," said Gail Schreiner, national director of Africa Cares for Life.

"Rape and incest is continuing at an alarming rate. Children fear to express the anguish of the brutality they suffered to the very people they should trust," she said.

Gail welcomed the 16 days of activism campaign and said Africa Cares for Life was committed to bring about positive changes for a better society.

Administrative director of Bobbi Bear, Eureka Olivier thanked the sponsors for their generosity.

"I thank the Foschini group for getting involved in NPO's and helping children who are abused and raped. Very few corporates are willing to go to such lengths to get actively involved."

Both organisations will receive a donation of R20,000 each.