

Light in the Window Campaign

The campaign symbolizes communities' concern in shedding light on the devastating effects of domestic violence and their unified commitment to make every home a safe home.

Observed annually throughout the month of October, the Light in the Window Campaign signifies community solidarity toward ending domestic violence across the state by organizing a widespread display of purple-lit, electric candles in the windows of residences, businesses, public buildings, schools/universities, hospitals, churches, etc. An informational card that provides details about the Light in the Window campaign and about the collective strength symbolized by the purple flames displayed in windows across the state accompanies each candle display. This idea was originally borne out of the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WVCADV) Public Awareness Advisory Committee, comprised of advocates and survivors from around the state.



Despite its prevalence, there are still many people today who don't want to admit domestic violence exists or even talk about it. Light in the Window Campaign provides an opportunity for friends, families and communities to discuss the context in which domestic violence occurs. Domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse; it encompasses numerous tactics that may include coercive behaviors to establish and maintain power and control, emotional and physiological manipulation, financial abuse, sexual assault and threatening to harm children, other loved ones or the family pet. Many injuries may not be easily visible.

The color purple used in this campaign is drawn from the purple ribbon, a traditional symbol of domestic violence awareness and remembrance. Light in the Window represents:

1. A personal commitment to fostering respectful relationships.
2. A unified stance that domestic violence is not acceptable in our neighborhoods, schools, workplaces and homes.
3. Hope that together we are "Lighting the Way to Peace in Our Hearts, Our Homes, and the World."



“The sight of the purple-lit candles lets victims know they are supported, that abuse is not tolerated and that we have a commitment to working together to create safer homes and communities. This is a simple and meaningful way for us all to be a part of ending domestic violence.”

- Deb Beazley, sexual assault prevention educator, WELL West Virginia University (October 2009)

Event Planning Details

Typically, this campaign may take 6-10 months to plan and may involve the help of organization staff, volunteers, students and the Board of Directors. For this campaign, the primary expenses are the electric candles and custom bulbs, which cost approximately \$2.50 each. However, programs may choose to recoup those funds by charging a small fee to the public for use of the electric candles. Another cost saving measure is for staff and volunteers to assemble the candles and bulbs prior to distribution to the community, and for those same candles to be returned back to the domestic violence program for future use.

This event may be heavily marketed throughout the community by way of listserv or email blasts, organization mailings and website, distribution of posters and flyers, press release or news article in the local paper, social networking sites and radio/TV PSAs.

“The Light in the Window campaign heightens awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence in our communities, and it serves as a reminder that each person has a role in ending domestic violence. Whether you are included as part of a victim’s support system or you are a community activist interested in social change, everyone has a responsibility in eliminating violence in the home - making every home a safe home.”

- Sue Julian, Team Coordinator of the WVCADV (October 2010)

Variations to this Campaign

While the cost of purchasing hundreds of electric candles and purple bulbs may become expensive, campaign organizers may reduce costs in a few creative ways. Traditional, tapered candles in the color purple may be purchased in bulk at a discount or donated by local shops. Luminaries made with purple or white paper bags or clear glass jars and votive candles work well. Lastly, holding a one-time event to release floating or sky luminaries in honor of those that have lost their lives to domestic violence can have a powerful and meaningful effect on the community.



Contact Information

Although formal coordination of the campaign by the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence was discontinued in 2011, staff is willing to be contacted with questions. Please contact Angie Rosser at (304) 965-3552 or arosser@wvcadv.org for more details.

