



State of Alaska  
Department of Public Safety  
Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

Sean Parnell, Governor  
Joseph A. Masters, Commissioner

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## **MARCHES IN MARCH**

**Lauree Morton's Remarks,  
CDVSA Interim Director**

**March 31, 2011**

Good afternoon. Thank you for making a conscious decision to march today; for choosing this day and this hour to join your friends, neighbors, relatives, fellow Alaskans in over 50 communities to demonstrate your choice—to choose respect—when you interact with the people in your lives. There is strength in numbers.

We are calling people into a new way of being—creating peace in families and relationships—working to make the intimate free from violence and fear.

We are stopping the secrets; making space for a victim to come forward and tell her story; making space for a person who batters or sexually assaults someone to come forward, face the consequences of those actions and get help. We are bearing witness.

How can we extend this hour? One person can make a difference. Later today when someone at one of our worksites starts to tell a joke at a woman's expense are we going to listen, walk away, call the person on their choice, substitute a joke of our own that is funny and uplifting at the same time??? How about tonight when there's a fight next door or in the apartment parking lot? Will we call the police? Is that the respectful choice to make? How will we decide? Hear a friend talking about getting someone drunk and getting "lucky" tonight, tell them that isn't cool—we choose to respect personal boundaries in Juneau.

Will we learn more about the activities that are available in Juneau to support respect? Call AWARE, look online to find out about the White Ribbon campaign, Girls on the Run, the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event or Coaching Boys to Men?

Are we ready to examine our own thoughts, attitudes, actions, to recognize when we have a respect choice to make and then take the steps necessary to make it? I think more and more of us are, every day. I've worked in the battered women and anti-rape movements since 1984. I missed the early days when everyone was

on fire and anything seemed possible. I joined in the day-to-day work of struggling to keep safe shelter available; of waiting with victims for hours on end to get a rape exam performed; of hearing children talk about being burned with cigarettes and so much worse. Those experiences are still reality today, but I see signs of hope and believe here in Alaska the spark is reigniting, there is a growing momentum now that has been absent and anything is possible.

Thank you to those who have been and continue to be in the day-to-day struggle. Thank you to those who are for the first time joining with others to choose respect. Thank you to the Governor for marching and asking all of us as Alaskans to join him. Thank all of you for deciding to choose respect.