

International Women's Day recognized in Drayton Valley

CATHY WEETMAN

International Women's Day, held March 8, was recognized in Drayton Valley with a different activity this year.

Verna Wicks, Children and Adult Programmer at the Drayton Valley Municipal Library, said she decided to show a National Film Board Movie to the public, called a better man, followed by a discussion period and a craft.

The film was called "A Better Man" and featured two people who had a relationship 20 years ago and moved in together when they were both 17 years old. There was domestic abuse during the relationship before the woman, Attiya, left. Twenty years later and now a film maker, Attiya decided to produce a movie about her experience as a victim of abuse and invited her former boyfriend and abuser, a man named Steve, to talk about the past.

The interaction between the two of them, especially at the beginning of the film, was awkward to say the least, with Steve claiming to not remember the abuse he had inflicted on her. By the end of the film, Steve had opened up more about why did what he did, and Attiya, as a 17-year-old, thought this type of behavior was normal in society.

The couple visited two apartment buildings they used to rent 20 years ago, and that brought back a few more memories of abuse.

During the film, Steve also spent time with a counselor, where he revealed some of the reasons why he abused his girlfriend - for control and power.

Since the abuse, Attiya had a network of friends to depend on, which helped her survive the experience.

After viewing the film, Wilks asked each of the attendees what they thought of it. Some thought it was an awkward interaction between the two of them, and rightly so, but Steve should be commended for agreeing to meet with the person he abused.

One of the attendees, Bridget Schnell, a board member with the Pembina Crisis Connection Society, also brought with her dozens of handouts about family violence, how people in the community can



Pictured above is Drayton Valley library programmer Verna Wicks

help through awareness.

Family Violence is the abuse of power within relationships of family, trust or dependency that endangers the survival, security or well-being of another person. Family violence can include spouse abuse (married or common-law), older adult abuse and neglect, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, parent abuse, and exposure to abuse of others in the family.

Family violence may include some or all of the following behaviours: physical abuse, psychological abuse, criminal harassment/stalking, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse and spiritual abuse. Victims of family

violence include dating couples, spouses (married or common-law), people in same sex relationships, children, teens, people with disabilities and old adults.

People in Drayton Valley suffering abuse have a number of places they can turn to in the community. There are information packages at the library, the Pembina Crisis Connection Society that has recently moved into the Civic Building, and there is also information about abuse posted in the washrooms of buildings throughout the community.

There is also a 24 hour Family Violence Info Line, toll-free at 310-1818 or visit www.familyviolence.gov.ab.ca

Happy
ST. PATRICK'S
day

GERALD SOROKA MP
YELLOWHEAD
GERALD.SOROKA@PARL.GC.CA
GERALDSOROKAMP.CA
780-723-6068