**Restore Smiles During Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

The first punch Barbara took from her husband shattered three of her front teeth. But he was just getting warmed up. Over the course of their 18-year marriage, she was kicked, thrown down stairs, and verbally abused. Her life took an even darker turn when he locked her in the basement, where she was denied food and raped as punishment for trying to stand up to him.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It’s a time to remember those who’ve lost their lives because of domestic violence, celebrate those who’ve survived, educate the public about this serious social issue, and reinvigorate efforts to end violence.

**What You Need To Know**

**Domestic Violence is More Prevalent than You Think**

Domestic violence can be a tough topic to talk about. The unfortunate reality is that there is a good chance that you know someone who has experienced it or that it has even occurred under your own roof. Domestic violence affects both women and men and is pervasive across all races, ethnicities, educational levels, sexual orientation and socioeconomic statuses. In the United States, one in three women and one in four men will experience physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetime. That means on average, every minute, nearly 20 people are physically assaulted. (Source: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence).

**Domestic Violence is About Control**

Contrary to popular belief, someone doesn’t become violent out of frustration or anger or even because they had too much to drink. Domestic violence is a conscious decision to maintain power and control over another person. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse. Each abusive relationship may be different, but in every case, varying tactics such as using intimidation, emotional abuse and isolation are used by abusers to gain and maintain power and control over the victim.

**How You Can Help**

Around 75% of physical assaults are to the head, neck and mouth areas (Source: “Enhancing Dental Professionals Response to Intimate Partner Violence”), which result in a great deal of dental injuries. Bruises and scars fade, but broken and missing teeth cannot repair themselves. So the AACD Charitable Foundation (AACDCF) focuses its efforts on restoring the smiles -- and lives -- of survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Since the inception of the AACDCF’s Give Back a Smile program, more than 1,500 survivors of domestic violence have received life-changing smile restorations all across the United States. There are currently more than 70 survivors of domestic or sexual violence across the country receiving smile restorations, and the Foundation has recently awarded $10,000 in scholarship funding for GBAS program recipients enrolled in college.

Here’s how you can help restore smiles and lives in October, and all year round:

**Participate in the Virtual Race for Smiles**  
Step up and get active October 14-16 in support of Give Back a Smile. Find out more here, [www.aacd.com/raceforsmiles](http://www.aacd.com/raceforsmiles)

**Wear purple in October to increase awareness of domestic violence**  
Purple is the official color of domestic violence and symbolizes peace, courage, survival, honor and dedication to ending violence.

**Contact your local domestic violence agency and ask how you can help**  
Find an agency near you, www.domesticshelters.org/

**Invest in Restoring Smiles**  
Make a financial contribution to the AACD Charitable Foundation.

And if you’re a dentist:

**Restore the smile of a survivor of domestic violence**  
Sign up to become of GBAS Volunteer Dentist

**Participate in the GBAS Whitening Challenge**  
Whiten your patients’ teeth while supporting survivors of domestic violence

Click here to learn more about the cause and effects of domestic violence.

Click here to learn more about the AACD Charitable Foundation’s Give Back a Smile program.

