

## Purple Night Lights

For the month of October, SAFE San Juans hopes to make the islands glow purple in honor of the victims of domestic violence. The tradition of using Purple Night Lights to honor those who have (or are) suffering from domestic violence began in Covington, Washington in 2006. Since purple is the cause color for domestic violence, the Covington Domestic Violence Task Force devised this subtle yet colorful way to bring recognition of the problem to its community.

SAFE San Juans heard of the initiative a few years back, and now the SAFE staff are working to establish Purple Night Lights as an annual event in the San Juans. Trees and buildings around San Juan County will feature purple-hued lights to bring awareness of the issue.

“October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We are always looking for creative ways to call attention to this issue and find ways for community members to get more involved,” said SAFE San Juans Executive Director Dave Dunaway. “We try to do things in the community that will start the conversation, break the silence, and engage people in seeking solutions. These lights will obviously draw a lot of attention and get people asking questions.”

“Having these on the trees and in various prominent places on all three islands will help us shed light on the issue of domestic violence,” he said. “We would love to see community members and businesses put purple light bulbs in their porch lights or in their windows as a show of solidarity and concern,” Dunaway said. “Eventually, we’d love to see all the islands glow purple throughout the whole month of October.”

“The lights are there to remind everyone to remember those who died from domestic abuse, support those who survived, and provide hope for those still living with abuse,” Dunaway explained. “Those who are suffering, and those who have suffered are our family, friends and neighbors. This issue doesn’t discriminate: It impacts poor and rich, young and old, every race, nationality and gender. Domestic violence is an attitude of disrespect and disregard expressed through an abuse of personal power. It stops when each person learns to treat others with the same dignity and respect they desire for themselves.”

The agency is also doing a story-telling campaign in local print and online newspapers throughout October, inviting people to share who or what gave them hope and helped them break free of domestic violence.

“Sadly, we know there are homes in our communities that are still living with this issue,” Dunaway said, “but there is life beyond violence, and we are here to help.”

For more information about domestic violence support services in San Juan County, visit <http://safesj.org/about>. SAFE San Juans is a nonprofit agency whose mission is

the prevention and elimination of domestic violence and sexual assault through victim services, education, community awareness and cultural and social change.