

# **Domestic Violence Memorial Service at AMH on Oct. 17**

October 1 2013 11:13 AM



To shed light on domestic violence and remember the victims and their families, Alton Memorial Hospital is holding a special memorial service from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 17, in the AMH Healing Garden.

This is the ninth annual memorial service and the event is open to the community, families of domestic violence victims, school administrators, clergy, law enforcement, and state and local dignitaries. Refreshments will be served.

Featured speakers will include Madison County Circuit Judge Richard Tognarelli, Judge Elizabeth Levy, Alton City Attorney Megan Williams, and Alton Police Chief Jason A. Simmons.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women. In Madison County since 1996, there have been almost 80 domestic violence related homicides; this number includes 22 children.

“We have learned from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services that the number of children dying from abuse is rising, with 60 percent of the children confirmed to have died from abuse or neglect being younger than 6 months old,” said Tina Culp, an Oasis Women’s Center team member and coordinator for the Third Judicial Circuit Court Family Violence Prevention Council. “A recent report from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services shows that the number of child abuse-related deaths in Illinois has risen more than any year in the last 25 years. Three of every four deaths linked to abuse and neglect had no prior involvement with DCFS. This is a tragedy that we, as a community, must stop. We must be aware of those who are suffering around us and know who to contact for help. We cannot remain silent while children, women and men are dying because of abuse from those who should be caring for them.”

Because of the prevalence of domestic violence, Alton Memorial Hospital in 2002 began screening everyone 12 and older who was being assessed in the hospital. Trained staff members confidentially ask these patients if they feel safe at home or have experienced mental, physical or sexual abuse.

Alton Memorial supports a coordinated domestic violence committee that includes members from the hospital staff, Zonta Club of Alton-Wood River, Oasis Women’s Center and the Third Judicial Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council.

“The hospital is very supportive of this committee,” says Judy Roth, a parish nurse at Alton Memorial and part of the planning committee for this year’s service. “One in four women is abused, so the hospital realizes it’s an important community health issue. We’re providing a safe place with screenings and making people more aware of domestic violence.”

The event will also include prayer for victims, families, advocates and caregivers; music; and a display of the Madison County Clothesline Project from the Oasis Women’s Center. The Clothesline Project serves as a vivid memorial for victims of domestic violence.

“Alton Memorial has such a forward-looking attitude toward wellness in bringing in domestic violence screenings and having events like this,” Culp says. “This event is important because we never want people to feel forgotten. It also lets the community see how ravaging the results of domestic violence are to a family. It’s so dangerous to say abuse is just a private ‘family affair.’ It needs to be brought out in the open. With help, things can be changed and lives can be turned around.”

If you are a victim of domestic violence and need help, call 618-465-1978.