



# West Valley View

*The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ*  
Phone (623) 535-8439

Friday, October 02, 2009

## Lives on the line

***Clothesline Project at Estrella college to raise awareness of domestic violence***

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People often make a statement with their clothing. This month some clothing will be making a statement all on its own at Estrella Mountain Community College.

Students have put their hearts on the sleeves of T-shirts, designing art pieces to hang outside the Avondale campus during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This is the third year sociology students have participated in the Clothesline Project.

Cynthia Davila hand-designed her shirt one afternoon, along with several other students on campus. She painted the words "Not enough strength, look into your children's eyes" on a shirt with her young daughter's handprints on it.

She has never done anything like the Clothesline Project before, and said she was designing the shirt from personal experience.

"I think people should be able to speak out and live a free life," she said. "Maybe people will feel stronger in order to stop it."

The Clothesline Project will be on display Oct. 12 to 19 on the campus at Dysart and Thomas roads in Avondale. The project is part of the national Clothesline Project, started in 1990.

The colorful shirts include pictures, rings, ribbons and designs of all kinds depicting the importance of ending domestic violence. Sociology professor Olga Tsoudis coordinates the project on campus each year and hangs up the old and new shirts in the art display.

"Every year more people can contribute so it keeps getting bigger and bigger," she said. "It gives the students an opportunity to express themselves and educate the community in a visual way."

The professor gave her students T-shirts as their canvases and they supplied all of the art supplies. One student wrote, "Dream of a day it won't happen." One wrote, "Don't be afraid."

Cherie Key is majoring in social work and is especially concerned with the futures of children raised in violent homes, she said.

"I work with children at risk in the foster care system. So I see the effects every day," Key said. "It's really sad."

The Avondale resident chose to participate in the Clothesline Project to help people face the issue and think about ending the cycle, she said.

"At some point we have to bring it to an end. For me, it's important to raise awareness," Key said. "I hope people understand there's a whole future generation at stake."

Tsoudis works to raise social awareness among her students each semester. The Clothesline Project is one way they can easily express themselves and make a statement, she said. It's not required; however, many students take the time to get involved.

"It's an important topic," the professor said. "Some people don't even know they are victims, they may think it's normal."

### **Opening eyes to issue of domestic violence**

Silent Witness Exhibit will be on display Oct. 5 to 9 at Estrella Mountain Community College. The traveling exhibit features a collection of life-sized human cutouts, each representing a person who lost her life to domestic violence. The person's story is attached to the cutout. The exhibition will be available for viewing in the Ceremonial Plaza at Dysart and Thomas roads in Avondale.

The Clothesline Project will be on display Oct. 12 to 19 on the campus. Shirts designed by Estrella Mountain Community College students about the issue of domestic violence will be hung outside the classrooms.

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