

With 100s of domestic violence cases a year, Tompkins gov. takes step forward

By: TIFFANY GRECO | 6 HOURS AGO

Editor's Note: This is a column submitted to us this week by Tiffany Greco, education director of the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, and reprinted with her permission.

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Written by Greco:

The Tompkins County Legislature made history on November 18, 2014, by becoming the first rural community in the nation to adopt a resolution recognizing that freedom from domestic violence is a fundamental human right. The Ithaca Town Board quickly followed suit, adopting the resolution on December 8. The resolution empowers survivors as individuals with rights. It encourages a community-wide commitment to eradicating systems that allow domestic violence to flourish and remain hidden. The Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School, and the Cornell Law School Global Gender Justice Clinic collaborated on the proposal.

Representatives from each group discussed the resolution at community events throughout October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Over 400 community members signed the petition in support of the resolution, calling upon their local governments to secure this human right on behalf of their citizens. Tompkins

County is the fourteenth locality in the nation to adopt such a resolution in the last three years, joining local governments including Albany, Boston, and Chicago that have recognized freedom from domestic violence a fundamental human right.

Domestic violence is an epidemic. It impacts individuals of all ages, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and socioeconomic status. Domestic violence can and does have long-term impacts on survivors, children who are exposed to it, and communities at large. Given the recent [domestic violence homicide of Shannon Jones \(http://ithacavoic.com/2014/11/family-friends-teachers-mourn-death-bright-cornell-student-washington-d-c-area/\)](http://ithacavoic.com/2014/11/family-friends-teachers-mourn-death-bright-cornell-student-washington-d-c-area/), it comes as no surprise that domestic violence exists in our midst.

In Tompkins County there was an average of 147 reported cases of domestic violence annually between 2010 and 2013. The number of unreported cases is much higher. In 2013 alone, the Advocacy Center served over 200 new survivors of domestic violence and answered over 2,000 calls on the crisis hotline.

The Tompkins County Legislature and the Ithaca Town Board recognize the pervasiveness and impact of domestic violence on its citizens and the government's responsibility to address and prevent it.



Greco

“By adopting this resolution, Tompkins County has recognized that domestic violence is not just a private matter – it is a societal issue that requires a societal solution,” said Joanne Joseph, a member of the Global Gender Justice Clinic and one of the co-authors of the resolution. “The resolution also creates opportunities for shared strategies and collaboration in an effort to address this devastating human rights problem, which is both intensely local and deeply global.”

Moving forward, the Advocacy Center, the Global Gender Justice Clinic, and the Avon Global Center hope to see the adoption of similar resolutions by other local legislative bodies including the City of Ithaca Common Council, and the Tompkins County Council of Governments.

See related story: [How a Tompkins County org. fights domestic violence and child sexual abuse](http://ithacavoic.com/2014/08/tompkins-county-org-fights-domestic-violence-child-sexual-abuse/) (<http://ithacavoic.com/2014/08/tompkins-county-org-fights-domestic-violence-child-sexual-abuse/>)

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Advocacy CENTER

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For more information about this topic or to get involved, please contact the Global Gender Justice Clinic team at womenandjustice@cornell.edu (<mailto:womenandjustice@cornell.edu>).

For more information about the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County find them on Facebook at “Advocacy Center of Tompkins County,” and visit the website www.theadvocacycenter.org (<http://www.theadvocacycenter.org>). If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, and/or sexual abuse, the Advocacy Center is available to help 24/7 at 607-277-5000.

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