

Melissa Ng

3/9/18

Sorensen- 5th period

Rotary Speech

Speak Up

The comfort of home. The melted ice cubes that were kicked under the refrigerator. The stain on the carpet from spilled soda. The warm embrace you receive from Mother and Father during times of hardship. The feeling that you can be yourself and not be judged. This is what many would describe as “home”. But, many kids would not describe this as their home due to domestic violence. Words like “fearful” and “endless pain” come to mind for those kids that are domestically abused. According to research by the U.S department of Justice, “An act of domestic violence occurs at least once a year in 50 percent of all american homes” (“Domestic Violence Teen Health and Wellness”). This number accounts for at least 3.5 million crimes of violence. The topic of domestic violence can absolutely be questioned by the Rotary 4-Way Test. The truth is domestic violence happens every day. It is not fair to the victims who have suffered and for those who continue to suffer. Goodwill and better friendships cannot be built between the abuser and the victim, and finally it is not beneficial for anyone to be in a violent relationship. Once someone speaks up about the disgusting reality that is domestic violence, then it will be beneficial.

The truth is that domestic violence happens every day, and it can happen to anyone. It could happen to your neighbor, your best friend, or even a sibling or parent. Domestic violence is

the worst type of violence because it is usually committed by someone who is close to you, someone you thought you could trust. Up until the age of fourteen, I was a victim of domestic violence. I used to go home after school feeling a pit at the bottom of my stomach, always afraid of saying the wrong thing, always feeling like I am walking on eggshells. But, I spoke up. I wanted change. I was sick of feeling afraid in my own home. Afraid for myself and the rest of my family. Our family eventually got involved with Child Protective Services, which helped put a stop to dangerous acts of violence that were taking place in my home. But sometimes kids don't speak up in time. Last year the University of North Carolina had a shocking death due to domestic violence. A mother and father murdered their five-year-old son in their apartment building and left their whole building shocked. A resident of the apartment building was astounded to hear about the accident and says, "It's super shocking because Baity is an amazing complex. It's super safe and I've never heard of anything like this before. So I think it's really shocking. I still can't believe it" (News,CBS). This news article sheds light on how much of an everyday problem domestic violence is in America. Other residents living in this same apartment complex had no idea domestic violence was happening right above or below them. It is happening every day. You can help put a stop to it. So many lives can be saved if we know how to recognize the signs of domestic abuse. Common signs are anger, jealousy, and control. The abuser usually does not think very highly of him or herself, so insulting another makes him or her feel better about themselves ("Domestic Violence Teen Health and Wellness"). None of this is healthy behavior, and the victim will often feel trapped and mentally drained. The fact this happens every day is appalling. No one ever under any circumstances deserves to be in a domestically abusive relationship.

It is not fair to the victims who have suffered and continue to suffer every day. National statistics collected on domestic violence show how many people suffer every day, and found that “On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States” (“NCADV”). Just think about that for a minute. If “20 people per minute” are being physically abused, that’s 1,200 people an hour across the United States being abused. Those 1,200 people per hour continue to suffer every minute of the day, unless they speak up or someone else speaks up for them. How is that fair that all of these victims are stuck in this cycle of abuse? How is it fair that a child who always believed that Mom and Dad want what is best for them gets physically abused? The answer is it is not. Also, it is not fair to the abuser. Most of the time, the abuser suffers from low self esteem or even a mental illness. They honestly believe being controlling and violent is okay because they do not know any better. It is not fair and frankly it is disgusting that they believe this behavior is acceptable at all, and in a home of all places. Laura Ingalls Wilder once said, “Home is the nicest word there is.” To the victims of domestic violence, the word “home” is the scariest, and most scarring word in the English language.

Goodwill and better friendships are impossible to build between abuser and victim. The victim will always be afraid of the abuser. They are not going to be considered friends in any way. Possibly before a violent cycle began there was a relationship full of love and laughter. But, the minute a loved one puts their hands on their child, significant other, or another loved one, that relationship is over. What takes over in its place instead is the vile domestically abusive cycle. This happened between me and my dad. He had physically and emotionally abused me until I was fourteen, and it broke our relationship. He had set impossible standards for me to

meet in my life, and when those goals could not be met, the consequences were horrific. The scars that he left behind on my body is forever a reminder of our broken relationship. It was hard for me to forgive him, and I was consumed with so much hate throughout those years. It is impossible to make a better relationship out of one that was never there to begin with. Also, if the victim is filled with hate just like I was, they will begin to isolate themselves from their friends and stop doing the things they love. Domestic violence also cannot build better friendships between victim and an outside party because of the fact the victim is so hurt and afraid. The victim does not know who to trust at this point. If you were betrayed by a loved one, how could you possibly put your trust and faith into a friend at school when your own blood betrays you? You can not. Therefore, domestic violence does not just ruin a relationship between the abuser and the victim, it also ruins the relationship between the victim and the rest of the world.

Domestic violence is not beneficial for anyone. Some may even say it benefits the person committing the act, but this is false. To escape the anger and depression they feel, they harm those around them, therefore benefiting themselves. This is not the correct way to cope with a mental illness. This is not beneficial or healthy for either party because the abuser will continue abusing others without receiving consequences therefore they remain blind to the fact they are living in the wrong. More often than not, the abuser will make themselves feel like the victim in the situation to receive pity or sympathy. Or the abuser will explain to the victim that they “Deserved to be hit because [they] are “stupid” or a “flirt”” (“Domestic Violence Teen Health and Wellness”). The fact that the abuser will sometimes back up their disgusting actions by saying the victim “deserved it” is sickening. Imagine that every time you made a mistake in your

life you were slapped, spit on, choked, or shoved. That is a nightmare that victims live in every day and it does not end after they wake up in the morning. Nobody deserves to be living in this never ending nightmare. How is abusing a person going to teach them a lesson for what they did? A better suited punishment would be to just simply ground them and take away their privileges. Hitting them will not solve anything and no lesson is taught. Thus, domestic violence will not benefit anyone and will only cause mental scarring in the long run.

It remains true that domestic violence happens every day. It is scary to think it is happening under our noses to ordinary people like us. It is unfair for all parties involved in a domestic violence situation such as abuser, victim, and also any witnesses. Putting trust into a loved one just for them to stab you in the back will not build goodwill or better friendships in fact it will build the complete opposite. It is not beneficial for anyone in this type of situation because all it will do is cause harm and mental illnesses. We must inform everyone of this issue. Everyone deserves to know that this happens. It is happening. It is real. Becoming aware of the signs of domestic violence can help put an end to a vicious cycle for somebody and as a result they will be eternally grateful. I only hope that people soon realize this is such a colossal problem in America. Nobody is alone in these situations, help is always available. Nobody under any circumstances deserves to be domestically abused.

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