

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Residents Walk In Silence Down Strand Street In Remembrance Of Domestic Violence Victims

VIC News / **Published On October 21, 2016 11:13 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **October 21, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- Although it is performed annually, the silent march organized by the Women's Coalition of St. Croix in remembrance of persons who died through domestic violence, never loses its importance and impact. This year's event was the 35th annual.

The march started near the fish market in Frederiksted and ended at the clock tower near Budhoe Park. There, organizers spoke about the impact of domestic violence in the territory.

According to Carolyn Forno, director of crisis intervention at Women's Coalition, one in three women and one in five men will be emotionally, physically and or sexually abused

in their lifetime. She later led the audience in reciting a pledge aimed at deterring domestic violence.

As has been the case every year, the most emotional segment of last night's event was the shoe project, which saw over 50 pairs of shoes of St. Croix domestic violence victims being placed on the steps of the clock tower by family members. This year included 53, up by one from last year, with the latest victim being slain Police Officer Lesha Lammy.

Carnell Troutman, director of the Men's Coalition, which Mr. Troutman said had been in existence almost as long as Women's Coalition, spoke of the services the organization offers, and the importance of fatherhood. The Virgin Islands Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council Executive Director, Khnuma Simmonds-Esannason, spoke of the importance of showing love to victims of domestic violence, which she said would ease the emotional stress that they go through when attempting to speak about the abuse they suffer.

Among other items, there was an interpretive performance by dancers from the Thalema Williams Dance Company, and a countdown against violence.

According to a blurb on the nonprofit's [website](#), before Women's Coalition began, there was no place on St. Croix for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault to get help on the unique challenges they face. The organization's work began with volunteers offering support without judgement to rape victims in crisis. Victims of domestic violence were in need of crisis intervention and safe, emergency housing as well, which Women's Coalition now offers. The need for a safe space to offer a range of supportive programs and services to victims and survivors helped shape what evolved into the Women's Coalition of St. Croix.