

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, Dec 6, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

On Friday evening, December 2, members of Trail Area's Anti-violence Committee will be at the Smoke Eaters' game asking fans to wear white ribbons in support of ending male violence against women and girls. The group is also promoting awareness of December 6 as the National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women. Between periods, RCMP Sergeant Mike Wicentowich will briefly speak about the campaign's importance to the local community.

This year, there will not be the usual public vigil in Trail on December 6, but individuals and groups are encouraged to go to the Trail FAIR website or Facebook page and spend some time reading through a reflection on the significance of the day and making a commitment to positive action to help end violence. To help mark the anniversary, the City of Trail will turn the lights on the Victoria Street Bridge to red on December 6.

In Canada, violence against women became a very public issue 33 years ago on the 6th of December 31, 1989 when a lone gunman targeted and murdered 14 women at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. This act shook the country and, in 1991, led Parliament to designate December 6 as a special day to remember and commit to taking action to end violence against women.

Also in 1991, and in response to the massacre in Montreal, the White Ribbon campaign was formed by a group of Ontario men to raise awareness about the prevalence of male violence against women. Today, the campaign is active in over 60 countries and seeks to promote healthy relationships, gender equity, and a compassionate vision of masculinity.

Today, over 3 decades after the Montreal Massacre, more and more Canadians are finally becoming aware of the true extent of violence against thousands of women who, each year in Canada, are stalked, raped, beaten, abused and murdered by men simply because they are women. The 2019 Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Girl's Inquiry has led to a deeper understanding of the violence and trauma experienced by generations of Indigenous women & children but, sadly, implementation of effective necessary actions to prevent the violence is still lacking.

Recently, however, the federal government has come out with a National Plan to End Gender Based Violence and hopefully it will be implemented across the country, with sufficient resources so significant change can start to occur. Most pressing is the need to offer more effective communication & dispute resolution tools to children and youth. Making accessible counselling and supports available to men who recognize they are causing harm and want to change their attitudes and behaviour towards women should also be a top priority.