

VIOLENCE: 'It's going to take all of us to fix it'

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domestic abuse and teaches bystander intervention classes to train community members how to safely intervene in at-risk situations.

Celeste Norris has been with the organization since it started in 2013, when Oconee County led the state in domestic violence arrests.

"We started thinking, 'How can we truly end it?' We don't want to just keep building safe houses, you know? That's taking care of the end result — not trying to stop it," she said. "We concentrated on prevention."

Volunteers started by taking the Green Dot Bystander Intervention training, which A Call to Action Oconee now teaches, and spread their prevention measures to the classroom through anti-bullying education.

"This has to stop, and it has to stop with us," Norris said. "We've got to be the one to say 'What can I do?' When we could go to the different schools and talk, it's like, 'What can you do personally, and then what can you do in your professional circle?' I think if we all look at it that way and do something every time we see it or hear about it, or just proactively say, 'Kids, let me tell you this,' in our instruction to our young people, that's the way we're going to end this."

REACH OUT, SPEAK OUT
When the race was over, Crystal Campbell stepped



Left: Crystal Campbell wipes away tears after a "tragic situation" with domestic abuse that happened in her family. Right: Quinton Craig and his 5-year-old son, Ayden, run the final stretch of the 5K. Craig said he joined the race because he was "just supporting the family."

PHOTOS BY ANDREA KELLEY | THE JOURNAL



under the tent to speak. "Who would have ever thought I would be right here," she said, looking out at the crowd.

After thanking the Lord and volunteers with A Call to Action Oconee, she looked to her left at a group of people wearing purple.

"I also want to say thank you to my children, my parents, my sisters, my extended family. ... We are so blessed," Campbell said. "Although we have had a tragic situation occur in our lives because of abuse, we are determined to come through this better and stronger than we have ever been."

She quoted Romans 8:28, "We know all things work together for the good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

"I believe we have been called to this very purpose. So, as we forgive and heal, we will share, believing God will use our testimony of deliverance from abuse and control to help us be overcomers," Campbell said, amidst a

chorus of "amens" from the crowd. "So not only will we walk in freedom and newness of life with God's help, but that anyone and everyone that we come in contact with will be freed from any and all types of bondage and abuse.

"We want to prevent these from the beginning. The way we do that is to speak, to talk, to share, to uncover," she continued. "Freedom is in the truth. It's hard to give it, but it's the truth that shall set us free."

Campbell encouraged anyone who is in or has been in an abusive relationship to "reach out, to speak out, to tell your story," even offering herself up as a listening ear.

"It's weird to say, but it seems like it would be easier to turn around and go back to what you were used to," she said, overcome with emotion. "And it's difficult to trust God, move forward knowing that greater is ahead.

"We love y'all," she finished. "We are so grateful for your support."

abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another." This includes physical and sexual violence, threats and economic, emotional and psychological abuse.

According to the NCADV, South Carolina

was 11th in the U.S. in domestic violence reports in 2018 — the first and only year the state wasn't in the top 10.

"For the past 20-some years we've been in the top 10, so we've got a problem," Norris said. "It's going to take all of us to fix it."

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FEST: Set to run through Saturday

FROM PAGE A1

Moore, who will serve as grand marshal of this year's parade.

Festivities are scheduled to run today through Saturday, so don't delay in reading through the section. You won't want to miss out.

Extra copies will be available at The Journal office at 210 W. North 1st St. in Seneca beginning today, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



Fifty-seven crosses displayed on the green at Norton Thompson Park in Seneca represented the 57 lives lost to domestic violence in South Carolina last year.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) defines domestic violence as "the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault and/or other

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