

NEWS



Edward A. Diana
Orange County Executive

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10-19-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

When it comes to observances for national recognition days, weeks, and months, October is one of those exceptionally busy months. A quick online search yields nearly 100 monthly observances, more than 50 weekly observances, and 145 daily observances. They range from the fun, like National Popcorn Popping Month, to the offbeat, National Carry a Tune Week, to the serious, including National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Through these observances, and the events that support these recognitions, much-needed attention is focused on important matters. Thousands turned out for last weekend's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk held at Woodbury Common. In addition to highlighting the good work of the American Cancer Society, recognizing survivors, and spreading the message that early detection saves lives, much-needed funds were raised to support their on-going efforts. I applaud all those who turned out for the early morning walk in every manner of pink fashion to help the ACS make a world with more birthdays.

Purple is the color of awareness for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Locally, Safe Homes of Orange County is undertaking many initiatives to focus attention on this critical issue. Now in their 25th year, Safe Homes was established in 1986 to provide comprehensive and confidential domestic violence services to victims and their families. Last year their 24-hour-hotline answered 5,783 domestic violence calls and 4,720 information and referral calls; their advocates provided 1,100 emergency services and 4,117 advocacy services, and made 4,758 victim outreach and follow-up calls on domestic incident reports. The Safe Homes shelter housed 64 adult victims of domestic violence and 60 children and their Holiday Adoption Program (Santa Project) fulfilled the wish-lists of 330 women and children.

While it's sad that an agency such as Safe Homes is needed in our community, the tragic reality is that there is a real and demonstrated need. We are fortunate to have them in our community to serve as an advocate and outlet for those in need. Thank you to the staff, volunteers, and supporters of Safe Homes of Orange County for your 25 years of service. Keep up the good work.

This week also marks the 12th annual Lights On Afterschool, a national event organized by the Afterschool Alliance. Schools, businesses, and other organizations across the nation, including many right here in Orange County, will be lit up and hosting special events in support of afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. Through Lights On we can communicate the vital role afterschool programs play for children, families, and communities.

Until next week, best wishes for good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana, County Executive