



## Twelve men to be honored as Partners in Peace

By [JILL MOON](#)

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ALTON - Twelve men are being honored with a new award that recognizes them as integral to the fight against domestic violence.

Oasis Women's Center sponsored the inaugural Community Partners in Peace Awards with this year's theme, "Men Against Violence." The center recently announced the award recipients. The men selected are of various backgrounds and have worked with Oasis Women's Center Executive Director Margarete Trushel for years. They will be honored Nov. 5 at a dinner at the Holiday Inn in Alton.

Over the last two decades, retired electrician Gordon Admire of Godfrey has donated numerous hours and materials of electrical maintenance and construction to the Oasis Women's Center, an Alton shelter for abused women and their children.

"When I first got in that building, it was bad," Admire recalled. "I was with a group; we did wiring, a fire alarm system and whatever needed to be done. That's what started it."

Chris Sullivan, recently retired as Alton's police chief, accepted the award humbly.

"There are many people involved, and whatever little bit I did to contribute, I feel honored," Sullivan said.

Capt. Marc McLemore of the Madison County Sheriff's Department shared the honor as a law enforcement official.

"Our overall philosophy is that we have zero tolerance for domestic violence," McLemore, of Godfrey, said about the Sheriff's Department's outlook. "We make sure that all of our deputies have the necessary equipment to investigate domestic violence cases."

Also from law enforcement, Madison County Sheriff Robert Hertz received the Partners in Peace Award. He said he was honored but that "first and foremost, it's my job" to protect domestic violence victims.

"Domestic violence is a crime," said Hertz, of Godfrey. "It usually involves people who cannot defend themselves - the elderly, wives, children. It's against the law; that's where we come in."

He said Trushel told him that she appreciates his drive for perfection.

"We make sure cases are prepared right and presented for prosecution without holes in the report," Hertz said. "It serves no purpose for law enforcement to under-serve the victim and allow the perpetrator to get off. We are the first link in the chain of command."

Attorneys John Ammann, Chris Hunter and Mike Meehan also received the award.

Ammann, of Godfrey, also is a professor and the director of the legal clinic at St. Louis University, where he supervises students who are working on actual cases. He worked for seven years for the Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation as a legal assistant, representing abused women and helping them obtain orders of protection. He also serves on the Oasis board of directors.

"I took that experience and now share it with SLU students," he said.

He also leads the Battered Women's Clemency Project, which represents women who are incarcerated for killing abusive husbands and boyfriends. Ammann said the legal system failed these women.

"They were convicted years ago, before there were a lot of shelters, before they could use domestic violence as a defense, and before we had the understanding of domestic violence that we have now," Ammann explained.

Last month, the Battered Women's Clemency Project was successful in having a woman paroled after 22 years in prison.

Meehan, of Edwardsville, became the vice president of the Oasis Women's Center's board one year ago. He had served previously on the board for several years.

"Domestic violence is a serious public health issue," he said. "It involves men and women of every background, every race, color and creed."

Hunter, of Kirkwood, Mo., has practiced almost his entire career in Madison County, including the last three years in Granite City. After graduating from law school, he began working for Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation in Alton in 1978.

"I got to know Margarett at the early stages of the formation of Oasis," Hunter recalled. "Our office provided them with as much support as we could at the time."

After Land of Lincoln, Hunter worked in Godfrey for more than 25 years at Farrell, Hunter, Hamilton and Julian PC. The name of the firm remains without Hunter's moniker. Hunter works for Roth Evans PC. He was a member of the Oasis board for six or seven years.

Madison County Circuit Judge Richard Tognarelli of Troy volunteers his time and expertise as a co-chair for the 3rd Judicial Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council, based in Edwardsville. The volunteer council, also co-chaired by Circuit Judge Barb Crowder, brings together different entities to coordinate a single effort toward domestic violence education and elimination.

Two Telegraph employees, Publisher Jim Shrader and City Editor Dennis Grubaugh, accepted the award on behalf of their staff and said anything they have contributed has been in line with the nature of their work.

"Any attention brought to the issue of domestic violence has been a group effort," said Shrader, of Bethalto.

Grubaugh has written about domestic violence over the course of his career.

"There are 3,000 other people more worthy of this, but it's certainly an honor," said Grubaugh, of Edwardsville. "As a journalist writing over the past 30 years, it has put me in a position to write about this topic, and I'm going to continue to write about it."

State Sen. William Haine, D-Alton, and state Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton, also accepted the award.

As a former Madison County state's attorney, Haine worked closely with Trushel when she drafted a domestic violence protocol for law enforcement that became the first of its kind in Illinois. The protocol developed standard operating procedure for law enforcement to follow after receiving a domestic violence call.

"It brought a certainty of arrest and prosecution into a situation if it was a credible domestic violence allegation," Haine explained.

Upon taking office five years ago, Beiser contacted the Oasis Women's Center to help the community in a meaningful way, he said.

"By reaching out to them, we also met Margarett, and it was the start of a really great relationship with a really great lady," Beiser said.

Tickets, which cost \$50 per person, are available by calling Oasis Women's Center at (618) 465-1978.

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