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Dimboola takes stand against family violence

By CARLY WERNER Oct. 9, 2015, 2:24 p.m.

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Dimboola Memorial Secondary College principal Anne Gawith will speak at a family violence prevention night in the town on Thursday. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

COMMUNITY leaders will take a stand against family violence at an event in Dimboola.

The It's up to you, It's up to me – Let's Take a Stand Against Family Violence night on Thursday brings together a range of community organisations to present information for all ages.

The event will feature presentations from Dimboola Memorial Secondary College principal Anne Gawith and Ararat family violence prevention advocate Kylie Plunkett.

Mrs Gawith, who has worked in the education sector for more than 20 years, will speak about how family violence affects schools.

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"Family violence is an issue that impacts schools on a daily basis, whether it be the child who is physically or emotionally damaged and requires extensive support, or the child who has no lunch or appropriate clothing because mum has been assaulted or deprived of access to money," she said.

"A significant cultural change is the only way to reduce the prevalence of family violence."

Mrs Gawith said the only way to achieve change was through education.

"Schools are in the privileged position where they have access to every child in the country," she said.

"While schools cannot do it on their own, they play a significant role in teaching the next generation family violence is not okay."

Ms Plunkett will share her family violence story and detail the bystander approach.

She said statistics from the National Community Attitudes Survey 2013 suggested more than one in four young people had attitudes towards violence that put them at risk of offending.

"There is a link between the views, beliefs and attitudes which devalue, degrade and diminish women and the existence of violence towards women and their children," she said.

"This becomes an alarming statistic."

Ms Plunkett has requested she does not receive a fee for speaking, and money be used for emergency housing for families experiencing domestic violence instead.

White Ribbon Ambassador and Horsham policeman Brendan Broadbent, Member for Lowan Emma Kealy, Hindmarsh Shire chief executive Tony Doyle and Dimboola Sergeant Darren Saddler will attend the event.

Women's Health Grampians, Grampians Community Health and the Wimmera White Ribbon Committee are also involved.

Committee chairman Ross Anders said healthy relationships always had gender equality at their core.

"The main cause of men's violence against women is gender inequity," he said.

The event at the secondary college hall starts at 6.30pm.

College students will provide supper.

Organisers said people could call 5389 1552 by Wednesday to book.

Entry was via a gold coin donation to the Dimboola Cancer Crusaders.