

Mayor launches task force to end woman abuse

A new initiative to focus on the issue of woman abuse in London was announced last week by Mayor Anne Marie DeCicco-Best.

Citing an increase in violent crimes against London women in recent years, Mrs. DeCicco-Best launched a mayor's task force with representatives from police, education, business, health, social agencies and London's Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse.

She said the task force will have four goals: To develop relationships among women abuse experts, the city and busi-

ness community; to ensure practical training materials are available to assist the community to respond effectively to situations of woman abuse; to liaise with local mediate to increase public awareness of the problem; and to hold a conference to showcase best practices.

Task force members include Police Chief Murray Faulkner; Kate Wiggins of Women's Community House; Megan Walker of London's Abused Women's Centre; Louis Pitre of the Sexual Assault Centre London; Barb MacQuarrie of the Centre for Research and Education to End Vio-

lence Against Women; Darlene Ritchie of the Al'lohsa Native Family Services; Tim Kelly of Changing Ways; Colleen Montgomery of the United Way of London & Middlesex; Bill Bryce of Thames Valley School Board; Joe Rapai of London District Catholic School Board; Gerry Macartney of London Chamber of Commerce; Toby Stolee of London Home Builders Association; Patrick Tremblay of Royal Bank of Canada; and Jennifer Kirkham of the City of London.

"Over the past year, community members have galvanized with a common pur-

pose to take action against the growing issue of violence against women on several fronts," Mrs. DeCicco-Best told a news conference called to announce the task force.

"In particular, recent reports of death and devastation caused by men who inflict lethal harm on the women in their lives must be addressed and establishing this task force in a solid first step."

Domestic violence has been on the increase in London over the past several years. So far this year two women have been killed by their male partners and two children died in a car driven by their father which police believe was a double murder — suicide. The father had been charged two months earlier with uttering death threats against the mother.