



# *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, females between the ages 16-24 are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence, experiencing abuse at a rate almost triple the national average; and

**WHEREAS**, one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth; and

**WHEREAS**, high school students who experience physical violence in a dating relationship are more likely to use drugs and alcohol, are at greater risk of suicide and are much more likely to carry patterns of abuse into future relationships; and

**WHEREAS**, young people victimized by a dating partner are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior and unhealthy dieting behaviors and the experience may disrupt normal development of self-esteem and body image; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly half of teens who experience dating violence report that incidents of abuse took place in a school building or on school grounds; and

**WHEREAS**, only 33% of teens who are in abusive relationships ever tell anyone about the abuse, and 81% of parents surveyed either believe teen dating violence is not an issue or admit they do not know if it is one; and

**WHEREAS**, by providing young people with education about healthy relationships and relationship skills and by changing attitudes that support violence, we recognize that dating violence can be prevented; and

**WHEREAS**, it is essential to raise community awareness and to provide training for teachers, counselors, and school staff so that they may recognize when youth are exhibiting signs of dating violence; and

**WHEREAS**, the establishment of Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month will benefit young people, their families, schools, and communities regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity; and

**WHEREAS**, everyone has the right to a safe and healthy relationship and to be free from abuse.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Mayor John D. Bridgeman of The Gastonia City Council, do hereby proclaim

## **February 2017 Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month**

and urge all citizens to work toward ending teen dating violence by empowering young people to develop healthier relationships, assisting victims in accessing the information and supportive services they need, creating better and more resources for young people in need, instituting effective intervention and prevention policies in schools and engaging in discussions with family members and peers to promote awareness and prevention of the quiet epidemic of teen dating violence.

**IN WITNESS THEREOF**, I hereunto set my hand this 21<sup>st</sup> day of February in the year of our Lord two thousand seventeen.

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John D. Bridgeman, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Sherry H. Dunaway, City Clerk