

# Nonprofits collaborate on domestic abuse workshops

By **Melanie M. Sidwell**

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LONGMONT — Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley and Intercambio de Comunidades share space in the Powell building on the northeast side of town.

Now, the two nonprofits are sharing a goal: to raise awareness about domestic violence in the Latino community.

Since May 22, representatives from Safe Shelter, a regional domestic violence crisis center, visited small

groups through Intercambio, an organization that advocates affordable or free English classes for immigrants.

Safe Shelter outreach coordinator Teri Ebel said the collaboration came about when her organization's legal advocate, BreAnne Bromley, began to volunteer with Intercambio and saw an opportunity.

"This seemed to fall into place for Latino outreach for us," Bromley said.

Brett Kassels, Longmont coordinator for Intercam-

bio, said the nonprofit has similar partnerships with other agencies, in which representatives visit Intercambio classes to speak about other issues, such as immigration, legal help or housing.

Intercambio conducts various classes throughout Longmont, at places including the Longmont Senior Center, Loma Linda and Central elementary schools, River Valley Village, Christ Community Church and Casa de la Esperanza.

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"We not only want to pass along the information, but create a dialogue and a culture of comfort talking about domestic violence," whether it be with a class full of laborers or mothers at the Parenting Place, Kassels said.

Safe Shelter representatives bring bilingual materials to the

workshops, which can last 15 minutes or longer within the Intercambio class, depending on the students' interest, Ebel said. This allows students to ask questions, talk about the cultural differences concerning domestic violence and get information on local domestic abuse services, she added.

About 40 students have heard the Safe Shelter presentations, Kassels said. Intercambio has

151 students enrolled in its various programs, he added.

The collaboration will be ongoing, Ebel said.

"We want to get to every student," she said. "It feels like this is a valuable way to approach (domestic violence) and connect with people about it."

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