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'The Yellow Dress' seeks to educate about dating violence

By Elizabeth Hackenburg ehackenburg@willistonherald.com Feb 28, 2016

What: "The Yellow Dress" - a one-woman play about dating violence

Why: February is Teen Dating Violence Month

Where: The ARC meeting room

When: Monday at 7 p.m.

Free, and open to all, recommended for ages 13 and up

WILLISTON — Signs of abuse in a relationship aren't always easy to spot, and are sometimes even harder to point out to friends or loved ones who may be caught up in an unhealthy romance.

Teenagers can be especially vulnerable to dating violence, and local advocates for victims of sexual assault are bringing that message to Williston Monday night with the help of a theater company dedicated to helping young people recognize the types and warning signs of abusive relationships.

"The Yellow Dress," a one-woman play based on true stories of young women who were victims of dating violence, will be performed by actress Rydia Vielehr at the ARC. The play's dialogue pulls audiences into a relationship that starts out feeling like perfect young love, and ends in tragedy.

The performance, staged by Massachusetts-based Deana's Educational Theater, has traveled across the country and been seen by thousands. The Family Crisis Shelter of Williston organized the group's first appearance here in an effort to educate local teens.

"People relate more to people acting something out," said Tana Hinricksen, a service provider at the Williston agency. "Sometimes they (young people) don't know the definition of abuse. They think because a boyfriend or girlfriend wants you with them at all times, that that's kind of cool. This is to help them understand the good jealousy and the bad jealousy type."

A discussion period will follow the half-hour play, with a focus on how to help friends and family members who have become victims, identifying sexual assault and recognizing different types of abuse.