

## AWARENESS ALERT: YOUR LIFE COULD DEPEND ON IT!

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**M**uch has transpired since my last article about the NPMHU's Women's Committee.

I had the privilege of attending my first LIUNA Leadership meeting in October of this year. The information distributed during this awesome meeting will prove to be invaluable. It was mind blowing to hear women at the meeting of the LIUNA Women Caucus define harassment as a global issue that transcends gender, race, educational level, and economic status.

Harassment, whether it be physical, verbal, sexual, or cyber bullying IS a health and safety issue. When you think about it, this makes absolute sense. Whenever someone is victimized by any form of harassment, the physical and mental status of the person is affected. No matter where the harassment occurs, safety is of great concern to the recipient of the harassment.

At any place of employment, the USPS included, all employees should be provided with a safe work environment. In Article 14 of our National Agreement, the Postal Service has agreed that all employees have a contractual right to a safe work environment. Yet, when a violation is reported by one or more employees, the investigation into the allegations is too often determined by the status of the alleged offender.

Nor has there been any reference to this growing epidemic of assault, harassment, and bullying in the newly titled Safety Ambassador Program. Yes, there has been an increase in the mailing of information to employees regarding harassment reporting procedures. But enforcement is what is needed most. Maybe we need not only to follow the reporting procedures, but also to complete a PS Form 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice). When assault, harassment, or bullying is alleged, a safety hazard has been identified that needs the immediate attention of postal management so that the violation can be abated. Let's see how USPS management responds.

October also was the awareness month for two important campaigns: Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence. Anyone who has survived either of these maladies deserves to be applauded. Both can cause serious erosion to the victim and the family involved. Both need our immediate

attention, and the victims need our immediate support. Both Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence are present in epidemic proportions and cannot be ignored with the unrealistic belief that they will just go away. We must become proactive.

Both women and men are being diagnosed with Breast Cancer, although women more often than men. My Brothers, as well as my Sisters, need to schedule a mammogram and do monthly self-exams. Early detection is the key to prevention and survival from this disease. Educate yourself on the signs of breast cancer. Your life or that of a loved one may depend on it.

If you are the victim of Domestic Abuse, help is available. Tell your family, a friend, or law enforcement about the abuse. Ask for help! Your life is at stake. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are victims of physical violence by a partner every year. The effects of this violence can last a lifetime, and each person heals differently. It is important that discussions about preventing domestic violence do not stop when the month of October ends; efforts to prevent such violence must continue until this violent epidemic is eradicated forever. We all are part of the solution.



Please visit the new NPMHU Women's Committee webpage at [NPMHU.ORG](http://NPMHU.ORG). There, you will find a collection of archived committee reports, contact information for all committee-members and a link to the new NPMHU Women's Committee apparel.