

## Volunteers honored by STAND for Families Free of Violence

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

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Imagine a classroom with a fourth-grade teacher who is very dedicated but quite harried. She has several kids in her classroom she needs to bring up to grade appropriate level but with 36 kids in her classroom and no help she cannot give them individual attention every day, or every week, or even every month.

Imagine a dog in a shelter, stuck in a cage all day, with no one to walk him.

Imagine a woman abused by her husband who called a telephone number somebody gave her to reach a helpline -- but no on answers.

These scenarios would all come true if it weren't for volunteers, Lauren Lyon, program director of the Volunteer Center of the East Bay, told the group enjoying a buffet at the John Muir Medical Center in Concord on Tuesday night.

Attending were the volunteers for Stand for Families Free of Violence and their guests as the STAND staff showed appreciation for their work all year, with drawings, gifts and dinner.

"You deserve all the recognition we can possibly throw at you today," Lyon said. "Martin Luther King said, 'Anyone can serve ... you only need a heart full of grace.'"

She said studies show that volunteers come from all walks of life and it seems to make no difference whether they work full time.

"It's not that they don't work," Lyon said. "The only difference they found is that they watch less television."

STAND has about 70 volunteers altogether, said Volunteer Coordinator Susan Woodhouse, which includes those who only come in once a year to help out with special events. One of STAND's fundraiser is a Night at the Oscars at Brenden Theater in Concord.

About 20 dedicated volunteers come in every week to answer the crisis line, make speaking engagements, etc., Woodhouse added. To learn more, visit [www.standagainstdv.org](http://www.standagainstdv.org).

To learn more about the Volunteer Center, which connects volunteers with opportunities to serve in nonprofit organizations, go to <http://www.helpnow.org/>.



Lauren Lyon, program director of the Volunteer Center of the East Bay, address the volunteers at STAND for Families Free of Violence. Photo by Dolores Fox Ciardelli.