February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, a month dedicated to seeing relationship violence as not just an adult issue but one that youth struggle with at high rates. One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence (Source: loveisrespect.org).

Teens are also less likely to seek help for the abuse they are experiencing because they fear for their safety, they don't know the resources, or they don't recognize that what is happening is abuse. This month, Voices of Hope focuses even more on educating the community and youth about healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to seek help here in Lincoln.

During the course of the year, Voices of Hope provides presentations to youth in schools across Lancaster County about healthy and unhealthy relationships. This usually is paired with education that students are receiving in their middle school or high school health class on the subject. To increase outreach during February, Voices of Hope has partnered with Lincoln Public Libraries to put up a display in every branch’s teen book section. Those books that have story lines featuring relationships are paired with bookmarks that have information on healthy versus unrelationships, how to help a friend in an abusive relationship, and how to get help if you have experienced dating violence.

Voices of Hope provides support for victims of dating violence through our 24/7 Crisis Line, walk-in services, and our support groups.