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B.C. Lions tackle domestic abuse

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Gary Nylander

Be More Than a Bystander

B.C. Lions players Eric Fraser, left, and Rolly Lumbala spoke during a presentation about sexual violence Tuesday at Okanagan College in Kelowna.

violence against women.

"If we can use our platform for something good like (this), something so positive, why not," he said.

Representatives from the Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society, which works with people affected by domestic violence, also attended the event.

"As a service, we are at the end where we're catching people falling off the cliff, and we want to have them not get even to the edge of the cliff," said Michelle Novakowski, executive director of the Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society. "Our goal is to have violence against women be gone."

One in three women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, and after the age of 16, half of women will experience abuse in a relationship, she said.

"That's not acceptable," said Novakowski. "Every six days, a woman is murdered by someone she loves — her partner or boyfriend — in Canada."

Novakowski said it is nice to see members of the B.C. Lions speaking out and connecting with young people on this topic.

"They're very approachable, and they're a group of young men that are admired and looked up to, and they feel as a team that they have a responsibility to use what they know and use their public image to do good for society," she said.

Today, the Lions players are continuing their Okanagan tour with a visit to a school in Coldstream.

Posted: Tuesday, February 21, 2017 10:03 pm | Updated: 10:05 pm, Tue Feb 21, 2017.

Andrea Peacock | 0 comments

B.C. Lions players are speaking out against violence against women as they tour schools around the Okanagan, telling students not to be bystanders.

Players Eric Fraser and Rolly Lumbala spoke to a group of about 60 students from Kelowna Secondary School and Okanagan College about sexual violence Tuesday afternoon at the college as part of the program Be More Than a Bystander.

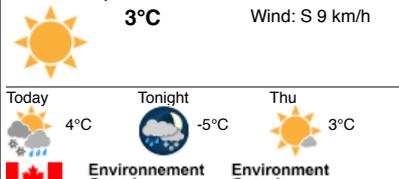
"We're here to promote the program Be More Than a Bystander on breaking the silence on violence against women," said Lumbala.

In 2011, the CFL Lions were the first professional sports team to join the program, which has now spread to other football teams across Canada.

Lumbala said he hopes to inspire young people to be leaders in their communities and to speak up against

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