

Anti-domestic violence group to host nationally known speaker

By Samantha Joseph

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MARTIN COUNTY — A fundraiser by the only certified domestic violence center in Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties is garnering widespread support. SafeSpace organized the first of what it hopes will become an annual lunch-

eon to raise about \$50,000 to fund its programs and provide safe havens for victims of domestic violence.



Diamond Littly



Denise Brown

For the March 19 event, entitled “Every Woman is My Sister,” it invited Denise Brown, an advocate for victims

of domestic violence, and the sister of Nicole Brown-Simpson, the late wife of OJ Simpson. Ms. Simpson’s death, allegations of domestic violence in her marriage and her husband’s subsequent trial for her murder caused a media sensation for years. Her

See **HOST, A4**

Host

From page A1

family has since emerged as outspoken advocates for victims of domestic violence.

"Nicole Brown-Simpson's case was the most sensationalized case of domestic violence in our history. Her story drew a lot of people in, and people are interested in what her sister has to say," said SafeSpace CEO Jill Borowicz. "Hopefully, this will connect people to the work we do here."

The local group serves about 1,000 clients each year, nearly half of which are children.

"They're the silent victims of domestic violence," Ms. Borowicz said of the

youngest clients.

Organizers hope this month's luncheon will help raise enough to make up for budget shortfalls in the slumping national economy.

Tickets are priced at \$125 per person for the meal at the Hutchinson Island Marriott Beach Resort.

But weeks before the event, strong community support was leading SafeSpace staffers and volunteers to expect a strong turnout.

Diamond Litty, public defender of the 19th Judicial Circuit, and SafeSpace benefactors Douglass and Patricia Stewart, stepped forward to serve as honorary chairs of the event.

Several local businesses, including Safeco Insurance, Schlitt Insurance Services, U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management, Molly Maid, Ms. Molly Foundation, Waste Pro and Konover South, have all sponsored the luncheon.

"We've had a great response from the community, with lots of companies and people coming forward to support us," said promoter Angie Francalancia.

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