

COUNSELOR HONORED FOR AIDING TEENS

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In the past two years, **J.R. Thicklin** has counseled about 6,000 teens on how to avoid abusive and violent relationships.

For his work to stop domestic violence and to help teens whose lives have been affected by it, Thicklin has received statewide recognition. Thicklin, 33, teen intervention specialist with Aid to Victims of Domestic Assault, was one of five recipients of Gov. Lawton Chiles' Peace at Home Award during a banquet Tuesday in Tallahassee.

"He's the type of individual who relates to kids, and they respect him," Shandra Dawkins, executive director of the Delray Beach program for abused women, said Wednesday.

During his visits to schools, colleges and neighborhood recreation programs, Thicklin talks about issues ranging from date rape to recognizing the traits of an abuser. He also directs a teen theater troupe that delivers the message of domestic abuse prevention in a creative and entertaining way. The group's members include students of different races and nationalities and others who are disabled and have learning disabilities.

"They try to create a unified picture that everyone has to work together to stop domestic violence," Dawkins said.

Thicklin is a youth minister at his church, Redemptive Life Biblical Institute in West Palm Beach