

Foundation Started By the Late Mary Kay Ash Awards \$3 Million in Grants to Domestic Violence Shelters Nationwide

DALLAS, Nov. 19, 2007 /PRNewswire/ -- Domestic violence shelters across the nation are receiving an infusion of badly needed funding, thanks to the foundation started by the late Mary Kay Ash. Recognizing the growing needs of shelters at a time when finding financial support can be challenging, the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation is awarding grants totaling \$3 million to domestic violence shelters nationwide.

The grants -- 150 in all, covering all 50 states -- will be used to support several unique programs aimed to not only put an end to domestic violence, but help keep domestic violence victims and their children safe. Examples of the programs for which shelters will use these funds include:

- **Elderly Victims:** Providing a safe environment and critical support services for elderly victims of domestic violence
- **Victims with Disabilities:** Seeing to the special needs of women with disabilities who are domestic violence victims
- **Recovery from Katrina:** Replenishing shelter operating funds from the continuing devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina -
- **Victim Transportation:** Provide transportation money for victims who can't otherwise afford it
- **Supporting the Children of Victims:** Providing learning tools and safe play areas for children whose mother is a domestic violence victim

"These grants come at a critical time in the fight against domestic violence," said Jennifer Morrison, executive director of New Beginning Center in Texas. "States such as Illinois and Kansas have recently been pursuing domestic violence initiatives to bring heightened awareness to this problem and further protect the women in their states. At the same time, economic conditions have lessened local contributions in some regions, and the Mary Kay grants help compensate for that."

States receiving the greatest number of grants are: California (12); Texas (10); New York (9); Florida (9); and Illinois (7).

"The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation strongly supports programs to help women survive violent relationships and re-establish their lives,

and we hope others will, too," said Anne Crews, MKACF director and vice president of Mary Kay Inc. "Shelters are especially important, as the frontline resource for battered women and their children, and their needs are great. In providing these grants, Mary Kay wants to encourage others to contribute their resources or their time to helping local shelters in their area."

Nearly 1 in 4 women will suffer domestic violence in their lifetimes. According to a report by the U.S. Surgeon General, domestic violence is the number one cause of injury to women in the U.S. Each day in the United States, three women die from domestic violence-related incidents, often as they are trying to seek help.

With an independent sales force of more than 700,000 in the U.S. alone, Mary Kay has long recognized the importance of educating women about domestic violence and keeping them safe from it.

The Mary Kay tradition of enriching the lives of women who are victims of domestic violence began in the 1980s, when the late Mary Kay Ash took a personal interest in helping a Dallas shelter get started. Through these grants and other company and foundation activities, her legacy continues to flourish. To date, MKACF has awarded more than \$11 million in grants to women's shelters across the country. Shelters are the front-line source of hope and help for the victim of a crime that is the number-one cause of injury to women in the United States.

MKACF funds include those contributed by thousands of Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultants, by Mary Kay Ash's descendants and by Mary Kay Inc. Many of the Independent Beauty Consultants also donate countless hours to their local women's shelters.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (voice), 1-800-787-3224 (TDD).

About MKACF:

The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation was created in 1996 by Mary Kay Ash to fund research of cancers affecting women and, in 2000, expanded its mission to include the prevention of violence against women. To date, the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation has granted more than \$13 million to these two causes. For more information about the Foundation, please visit <http://www.mkacf.org/>.