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**Nationally Recognized Personal Finance Expert to Create Innovative Education Curriculum for Survivors of Domestic Violence**

*The Allstate Foundation Hires Maryland-based Curriculum Developer Karen Murrell to Support New SAFE HANDS Domestic Violence Program*

NORTHBROOK, Ill., [November 21, 2005] – The Allstate Foundation, through its newly formed program, *SAFE HANDS: The Allstate Network for Empowering Women*, has retained nationally recognized financial expert Karen Murrell to create a curriculum focused on the unique financial needs of domestic violence survivors. The curriculum will engage survivors in short- and long-term planning to accomplish their financial goals.

“At Allstate, we believe in the importance of protecting a person’s financial future. Many domestic violence victims struggle with life’s basic needs, such as shelter, transportation and medical care,” said Thomas J. Wilson, president and chief operating officer, The Allstate Corporation. “Our goal with SAFE HANDS is to have a positive impact on the financial lives of survivors, so they can prepare for futures of economic autonomy and opportunity. Our decision to work with Ms. Murrell to develop a curriculum that addresses the unique financial needs of domestic violence survivors is a critical component in the success of this program.”

Karen Murrell is president of Higher Heights Consulting and Training, a Silver Spring, Maryland-based firm that focuses on initiatives to improve housing and economic opportunities for low-income consumers. She has more than 15 years experience in the financial literacy field and has worked with numerous Fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations and faith-based institutions to create financial literacy curricula for a wide variety of audiences. She has authored some of the most widely-used curricula in the United States, including the One Economy Corporation’s *Family Budget Tool* and Neighborworks America’s *Financial Fitness*.

“I am honored to be working with The Allstate Foundation on this unique and extremely important project,” said Karen Murrell. “Survivors of domestic violence have very unique economic challenges and needs, and I feel privileged to be given the opportunity to craft a curriculum that will empower them to improve their circumstances.”

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The *SAFE HANDS* curriculum will address the wide range of economic challenges faced by survivors of domestic violence, including housing, identity theft, restoring damaged credit and career planning, to name a few.

The curriculum, which will be pilot tested in three to five states in the spring of 2006 and rolled out to agencies serving the domestic violence community in at least ten states by June 2006, will provide:

- Approaches for locating, and effectively accessing, personal safety and financial resources at the local, state and national levels;
- Information on how to protect personal and financial safety in-crisis and post-crisis;
- Strategies for dealing with the misuse of financial records; and
- Tools to help people of all incomes and earning power work toward long-term economic empowerment.

Allstate employees and agents will partner with domestic violence advocates to train local service providers to use the curriculum with the women and families they serve.

*SAFE HANDS* is an innovative partnership between The Allstate Foundation and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Fund. According to Lynn Rosenthal, executive director, NNEDV Fund, the curriculum will provide economic empowerment to survivors.

“One of the main reasons women remain in or return to abusive relationships is the difficulty in overcoming many of the economic challenges to self-sufficiency, such as damaged credit, identity theft, etc.,” said Ms. Rosenthal. “The curriculum Ms. Murrell will develop will provide the tools and information that enable survivors of domestic violence to analyze their financial circumstances, understand financial institutions and regain control over their financial futures.”

#### **About The Allstate Foundation**

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation. Allstate and The Allstate Foundation sponsor community initiatives to promote “safe and vital communities;” “tolerance, inclusion, and diversity;” and “economic empowerment.” The Allstate Foundation believes in the financial potential of every individual and in helping America’s families achieve *their* American dream.

#### **About the National Network to End Domestic Violence Fund**

The National Network to End Domestic Violence Fund (NNEDV) Fund is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that is focused on public education, training, and technical assistance to maintain and develop the professional expertise of domestic violence advocates. The NNEDV Fund strives to strengthen advocates as organizers and activists in the tradition of social change movements.

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