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NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH EVENTS

October is *Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)* and across the country, advocates are joining health care providers, business leaders, policy makers, faith-based groups, college students and others at events and activities designed to educate the public about domestic and sexual violence. Activities include national campaigns, events like the Family Violence Prevention Fund's *National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence* on October 8 to 10 in New Orleans, and state and local activities of all kinds.

The following list includes just some of the *DVAM* activities planned for this fall and resources available to advocates. Domestic violence experts and service providers are encouraged to contact the sponsoring organizations to learn more about each and explore how to get involved. Often, advocates can link their local activities to national campaigns. Please note that this list is not comprehensive; it is a sample of national events.

New Resources for Advocates

The *Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2009 Resource Packet* is now available online through the Domestic Violence Awareness Project (DVAP) website at www.nrcdv.org/dvam. The DVAP strives to develop and distribute resources and ideas relevant to *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* and educational activities that take place throughout the year. The 2009 packet includes a collection of informational materials, fact sheets, articles, and order forms for items available from the various organizations represented on the Project Advisory Group, as well as other national, statewide, and culturally specific organizations. *For a print copy of the materials listed in the 2009 Resource Packet, contact Patty Branco at the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence at plvb@pcadv.org or (800) 537-2238, ext. 139.* Print copies are provided on a first come, first served basis.

Capitol Hill Event

The Sheila Wellstone Institute's Annual *DVAM* Reception on Capitol Hill will celebrate the 15th anniversary of the *Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)* on October 1. It will be hosted by Senator Amy Klobuchar (MN) in the Capitol Visitor's Center, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The Sheila Wellstone Award will be presented to Vice President Joe Biden, a long-time supporter of *VAWA*, and posthumously to Guadalupe R. Serrano, a lifelong advocate on behalf of victims of domestic violence. The event will feature Senators Al Franken (MN), Harry Reid (NV) and Tom Harkin (IA). It also features the return of the powerful Silent Witness exhibit. Sheila Wellstone launched the exhibit in 1990 as a way to speak for women who were victims of domestic violence who could not speak for themselves, because she believed that art is a powerful way to convey the impact that domestic violence has on women and families. The Sheila Wellstone Institute holds this event to raise awareness for domestic violence policy and to honor her legacy. *For more information, visit www.wellstone.org/sheila.*

Break the Silence on Domestic Violence

The Body Shop and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) are teaming up again this year during DVAM. The Body Shop is selling a “[For Me, For You](#)” shea lip care duo packaged with the message “Break the Silence on Domestic Violence” that is meant to be shared with a friend. The “[For Me, For You](#)” duo is an extension of The Body Shop’s “[Stop Violence in the Home](#)” Campaign. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each lip duo will be donated to NCADV. *To purchase it, click [here](#) and for more information on “Stop Violence in the Home,” click [here](#).*

It’s Time to Talk Day

Liz Claiborne has pioneered “It’s Time to Talk Day” for several years. This year, on October 6, the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (CAEPV), Radio Bloomington and 30 other community organizations throughout Central Illinois are co-sponsoring “It’s Time to Talk Day” to bring awareness to domestic violence. This year the theme is: “*It’s Time to Talk - Healthy Children, Healthy Families.*” Numerous local governments, universities and colleges have issued proclamations in support of the Day and are encouraging citizens to take a moment to talk about domestic violence. CAEPV will hold a news conference to announce the Day at 8:00AM on October 6 at Illinois Wesleyan University’s Memorial Center. Then CAEPV and the 11th Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council are co-sponsoring a free conference, “It’s Not Child’s Play: Trauma Lasts A Lifetime” to discuss the impact of domestic violence across the lifespan, as well as tools for intervening and responding. Other “It’s Time to Talk Day” events around the country include: “Lunch & Learns” addressing domestic violence; displaying Silent Witness Project silhouettes in prominent areas; hanging posters in workplaces; holding a parade march; or working with a media partner. *For information on “It’s Time to Talk” activities, click [here](#).*

National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence

The Family Violence Prevention Fund is hosting the *5th Biennial National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence* on October 8 to 10 at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, during *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. The *Conference* aims to advance the health care system’s response to domestic violence and attracts the nation’s leading medical, public health and family violence experts from across the country. It includes workshops, poster presentations, and plenary sessions highlighting the latest research and most innovative clinical responses to domestic violence, with a focus on the work being done by physicians, physician assistants, dentists, nurses, nurse midwives, mental and behavioral health providers, social workers, domestic violence experts, and others. *For more information, visit www.fvpfhealthconference.org/.*

Shop for a Cause Day

For several years, the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) has been working with Macy’s to raise awareness and involve employees and customers in efforts to prevent violence against women and children. For the second year in a row, that work is expanding and the FVPF is offering interested programs the opportunity to sell shopping passes for *Shop for a Cause*, a one-day shopping event on Saturday, October 17 at Macy’s stores across the country. *Shop for a Cause* shopping passes are sold by local programs for \$5 each, and programs keep all the proceeds. The shopping passes provide deep discounts on items throughout Macy’s and can also be purchased in any Macy’s store or at www.macys.com on October 17. There is still time for programs to sign up to sell shopping passes. *For more information about requesting tickets email FVPFShopForACause@prsolutionsdc.com. Note: there are no Macy’s stores in Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Mississippi and Nebraska.*

Please share other national activities so *Speaking Up* can report on them throughout October!

LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH ACTIVITIES

Across the nation, experts and those who work with victims of domestic, dating and sexual violence are planning *Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)* events that educate the public, inspire action, and tell victims about the help and services that are available. While the activities come in all shapes and sizes, the goals are often the same: to raise awareness about the prevalence and cost of domestic and sexual violence, the need

for prevention, and the services that are available to victims and their families.

There is still time to plan activities. The following examples of *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* events can be adapted to meet your program's needs, goals, budget and time constraints. *Speaking Up* editors thank the readers who generously shared their plans! Feel free to contact them to learn more about how to organize activities like these. (We regret that we were not able to include all the creative, unique and powerful events being planned for *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. What follows is a representative sample of the submissions.)

Light Up DVAM with Purple Night Lights™

The H.E.R. Shelter in Portsmouth, VA, is bringing **Purple Night Lights™** to the Hampton Roads Area. To participate in **Purple Night Lights™**, residents are encouraged to purchase a purple light bulb and display it on their porch or in their window throughout *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. *Speaking Up* reader Sandra Becker from the H.E.R. Shelter says the porch and window light bulbs are available in two sizes and for just a few dollars. The goal is to bring awareness and support to victims and survivors of domestic violence and to send a strong message that "*Domestic Violence Has No Place in Our Community.*"

Purple Night Lights™ was launched in King County, Washington in October 2007 by the Covington Domestic Violence Task Force. In the years since, more than 14 other states have participated. Becker says she is, "hoping **Purple Night Lights™** will catch on throughout Virginia next year." *To get more information about holding a Purple Night Lights™ event, email sandra@hershelter.com.*

A Month of Events in Philadelphia

Women Against Abuse in Philadelphia is holding its annual iPledge Campaign this October for *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. iPledge is a citywide anti-violence movement that calls on Philadelphians to help end violence at home and in the community. *Speaking Up* reader Katherine Young Wildes said, "By supporting iPledge, the community recognizes that unhealthy relationships at home not only destroy families, but compromise the health of the entire city." Individuals can sign on to an online pledge against violence at www.iPledgeWAA.org. The web site provides visitors with information about domestic violence, as well as tangible ways they can join the work to stop abuse.

Events are scheduled throughout October help to raise awareness of the iPledge Campaign. iPledge kicks off with a news conference to officially launch the month-long initiative on October 1. Pennsylvania State Senator LeAnna Washington and MoShay LaRen, the midday host at WRNB 107.9 FM radio, are scheduled to speak. On October 21, Women Against Abuse will host a documentary screening followed by a short Q&A after the film featuring experts on domestic violence. On October 26, Women Against Abuse is planning for ten of Philadelphia's top women-owned or operated restaurants to compete for the first ever Purple Dish Award. *Email Katherine Young Wildes at kyoungwildes@womenagainstabuse.org for more information and tips about planning an iPledge event.*

A Month of Events in Danville

Speaking Up reader Mary Williams says that Sheltering Wings in Danville, Indiana plans a series of events to celebrate *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. Sheltering Wings will kick off *DVAM* with a "Break a Sweat, Break the Cycle" 5K walk and 8K run, encouraging participants to "walk a mile in her shoes" on October 3 at Hummel Park in Plainfield. There will be a "kids kormer" with face painting, games, clowns, door prizes and snacks for the community to enjoy.

On October 12, Sheltering Wings is organizing a free domestic violence training at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg. Participants will learn about domestic violence, how to recognize it and how it affects families and communities. To close out the month, *Speaking Up* reader Mary Williams says that Sheltering Wings will hold a candlelight vigil at Crossroads Christian Church in Avon on October 29 to remember those who have lost their lives due to domestic violence. *For more information, email Mary Williams at mwilliams@shelteringwings.org.*

Press Conference Addressing Budget Cuts

To send a powerful message during *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence will hold a news conference on the North Steps of the Capitol in Sacramento on October 5. Following the news conference, there will be a Special Hearing before the Select Committee on Domestic Violence at the Capitol to alert legislators about the seriousness of domestic violence and the impact budget cuts have on shelters and communities. State lawmakers recently eliminated the state's Domestic Violence Program in a wave of budget cuts, and several shelters and domestic violence agencies have closed as a result. *For more information, call 1-800-524-4765.*

Take Back the Night March and Rally

Take Back the Night in Joliet, Illinois, is holding its 13th annual Take Back The Night March and Rally on October 8 in Bi-Centennial Park. It will include booths with resource information and a memorial to remember the women, their children and other female children murdered in Will County over the last ten years. *Speaking Up* reader Beth Ann May and her committee have also made arrangements with the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention to present StandUp – Men Moving from Standing By to Standing Up. Its mission is to engage men to be active participants and not bystanders in preventing violence against women. Chairperson of the event Jodi Wartenberg said, "Violence against women is a men's issue as much as it is a women's issue. This year's program will enlighten the audience and show how men can work toward solutions to this epidemic problem." *For more information, visit www.willtbtn.com or call 815-723-1497.*

Peacekeepers Luncheon and March

Tri-County Help Center, Inc. in St. Clairsville, Ohio, is holding its annual Peacekeepers Luncheon on October 16 at the Belmont Hills Country Club to give out three awards. They include: the St. Clairsville Noon Rotary, which donated \$2,500 for mattresses for the emergency shelter; Jason Harter, a probation officer at the Monroe County Court of Common Pleas, who is a member of the Monroe County Domestic Violence Task Force and a self-defense instructor; and Dr. Sarah Mahan-Hays, a professor at Ohio University Eastern and a past president and board member.

The following week, Tri-County Help Center, Inc. will hold a *DVAM* March. *Speaking Up* reader Paula Planey said marchers from the Help Center will walk to the Belmont County Courthouse for a short program. Reverend Laurie Armstrong will serve as the keynote speaker. Debbie Karras, a domestic violence survivor and author of *Jagged Memories*, will address the crowd. *For more information about planning a luncheon or march, email Paula Planey at paula_tri@sbcglobal.net.*

Two Events with a Family Focus

Speaking Up reader Josephine Yearby is planning a two-part *DVAM* event on October 17 with a focus on "Families Against Domestic Violence; A House Divided Will Not Stand" in Durham, North Carolina. The morning workshop session at the North East Baptist Church will feature speakers from the Durham Police Department, a representative of the Durham Crisis Response Center, a physician from South Africa, the CEO of A Walk in My Shoes Marie Brodie, a high school guidance counselor, and a family who has experienced the trauma of losing a love one. In the evening at the Old School Enrichment Center, families will share songs, dance, poetry, spoken word, and other forms of entertainment. Yearby said, "Shoes we have collected from our church family will help set the stage for our event. These shoes will enter the church from all directions into the Sanctuary, with an empty front row pew to represent the family who didn't make it to church today." *For more information, email Josephine Yearby at yearb001@mc.duke.edu.*

Community Forum

Lane County, Womenspace, the Lane County Domestic Violence Council, and the Oregon Department of Human Services are hosting "Addressing Domestic Violence in Lane County: A Community Forum," in Eugene on Wednesday, October 21 to commemorate *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. The evening will begin with children's activities and a special musical guest. Local human service agencies will have tables and share resources in the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza during the children's event. Lane County Commissioners Rob Handy and Peter Sorenson and Mayor Kitty Piercy will host a town hall meeting in Harris Hall at the County building immediately following. *Speaking Up* reader Theya McCown says Womenspace will end the evening with a candlelight vigil outside the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza. *For more information,*

email Theya McCown at dvcouncil@enddv.com.

Workshop on Status of Women and Girls in Illinois

In honor of *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, the Women & Girls Collective Action Network is holding a workshop to discuss the findings of its new report – *The Status of Girls in Illinois 2009* – on October 22 at Chicago Freedom School. Speaking Up reader Melissa Spatz says participants will “learn more about how girls are experiencing violence in Chicago and Illinois, find out how girls are taking action to end violence, and plan ways advocates can work together to reverse these trends.” The first comprehensive report of its kind, *The Status of Girls in Illinois 2009*, utilizes existing data and research to present a full picture of girls’ health and well-being, addressing a wide spectrum of areas including sexuality, violence, incarceration, substance abuse, health, education and physical fitness. *For more information about the report, email Melissa Spatz at womenandgirlscaan@gmail.com.*

Grand Rounds on Domestic Violence

Speaking Up reader Dr. Liliana Hamlett in San Jose, California is organizing a “Grand Rounds on Domestic Violence” screening for faculty, medical residents and community guests at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center on October 29. The panelists are: Police Captain Alana Forrest; Supervising Attorney for Family Violence in the Santa Clara District Attorney’s Office Daniel Nishigaya; and Dr. Amy Laws, who specializes in internal medicine, diabetes, preventive cardiology and geriatrics. *Speaking Up* reader Dr. Hamlett said the event will begin with a basic introduction addressing the importance of screening and the prevalence of domestic violence. Panelists with criminal justice backgrounds will explain law enforcement protocol and how health care professionals can strengthen the prosecution of domestic violence cases with better documentation. *For more information on how to organize a health-based DVAM event, email Dr. Hamlett at Liliana.Hamlett@hhs.sccgov.org.*

OUTREACH

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) offers a unique opportunity to raise public awareness about violence against women. This year many programs are also celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the *Violence Against Women Act* and preparing for its reauthorization in 2010.

Most advocates know that *VAWA* is landmark legislation that dramatically improved the criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic, dating and sexual violence and stalking in the United States. Its passage in 1994, and its reauthorization in 2000 and 2005, changed the landscape for those who once suffered in silence. Today, many more victims can access services, and a new generation of families and justice system professionals understand that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking are crimes that our society will not tolerate. Congress must make expanding and reauthorizing *VAWA* a priority in 2010.

(NOTE: This year, some “backlash” groups threaten to intrude on *DVAM*, asking their supporters to set up information tables that challenge the prevalence of domestic violence, or hold competing events. In the past, very little of this activity has actually materialized, but if a backlash group in your area is a problem, feel free to email or call *Speaking Up* editors Luci Manning or Lisa Lederer at 202/371-1999 or SpeakingUp@prsolutionsdc.com for help with strategies and responses.)

Here are some quick facts about the prevalence of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. For more facts, visit the Family Violence Prevention Fund’s website [here](#).

FAST FACTS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 1,200 deaths and two million injuries to women from intimate partner violence each year.

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, on average three women a day are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States. Women are 84 percent of spouse abuse victims, 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend, and three in four victims of family violence.
- Some 450 women are raped or sexually assaulted each day, on average, in the United States. [U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics]
- Young women age 16 to 24 experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, and people age 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking. Females age 20 – 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence. [U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics]
- Approximately one in three adolescent girls in the United States is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner – a figure that far exceeds victimization rates for other types of violence affecting youth. [National Council on Crime and Delinquency Focus]
- In 2003, the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention reported that the health care costs of intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking totaled \$5.8 billion each year, nearly \$4.1 billion of which was for direct medical and mental health care services. Lost productivity from paid work and household chores and lifetime earnings lost by homicide victims totaled nearly \$1.8 billion. Costs have risen since then.
- The United States Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 3.4 million persons said they were victims of stalking during a 12-month period in 2005 and 2006. Women experience stalking victimizations at nearly three times the rate of men.
- A 2006 study in the Journal of Family Psychology finds that more than 15 million U.S. children live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year.

SAMPLE MEDIA MATERIALS

Following are sample fill-in-the-blanks media materials to help with outreach for *Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)*. Feel free to adapt these materials, and distribute them to journalists in your market. If you need help identifying journalists in your market who cover violence, email or call *Speaking Up* editor Luci Manning at 202/371-1999 or SpeakingUp@prsolutionsdc.com and she will provide you with a list.

SAMPLE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK CALENDAR ANNOUNCEMENT

Calendar Announcement

[September 30, 2009]

Contact: [Frances Chang]
[212/555-5555]

The [Asian Women’s Domestic Violence Program] is co-sponsoring a [Domestic Violence: It Is Your Business rally] with [community leaders and domestic violence advocates] at [1:30 p.m., Friday, October 5, in Washington Square Park.] [The rally] will raise awareness about domestic violence and encourage community members to take action to end abuse.

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SAMPLE STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF DR. ROSA SANTIAGO,
Director, Latina Women’s Center

CONTACT: [Name], [Area Code/Phone]
October 15, 2009

“ Today, during *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, we join women and men across the country to support victims of violence and to send the message that domestic violence is unacceptable – in our community and in every community.

Domestic violence touches every one of us. It fills emergency rooms and morgues. It keeps employees from being able to work. It makes children fearful, and interferes with their ability to learn. It contributes to crime on our streets. It destroys homes and families.

Domestic violence is everybody’s business. Domestic and dating violence, rape and sexual assault remain pervasive problems in our society. We must do much more to stop this violence, and remember that teens and young women suffer the highest rates of rape, sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence.

We have created violence prevention programs that help stop domestic and sexual violence, and services that are effective in protecting victims. But we aren’t taking those programs to scale and implementing them as widely as we should. And during this recession, domestic and sexual violence programs around the country are threatened with cuts or closures when state legislatures and city councils must balance their budgets – and Congress has yet to fully fund the *Violence Against Women Act*. Stopping domestic and sexual violence and protecting victims must be a priority, no matter what the economic climate.

Each of us must do all that we can to stop domestic violence. I encourage everyone here to sign the pledge cards we are circulating, and to take action to stop violence whenever and wherever they can. And, please, join me in urging Congress to fully fund the *Violence Against Women Act* and to pass the *International Violence Against Women Act* this year.”

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FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS EDITORIAL MEMORANDUM

[October 5, 2009]

TO: Editorial Page Editor
FROM: [Your Name, Organization Name]
RE: *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*

The statistics are staggering. On average, three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each day in this country. Every [day/week/year] in our community [include local statistic].

This October, domestic violence experts and service providers in [town/city] and across our state are coming together to help end abuse and to speak out against domestic and sexual violence.

As you may know, October is *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* – the ideal time to make a commitment to end domestic and sexual violence and help keep women and children safe.

This month, [Organization Name] will: [Include information about the activities your organization has planned for October. Be sure to include the date of each event and note which events elected officials and candidates have agreed to participate in].

Domestic violence is everyone's business. It affects all of us - every family, every workplace, every community. And each one of us has a role to play in stopping domestic violence. Action can be as simple as contributing money or clothing to a local shelter, volunteering time to a program that aids victims of abuse, talking to a child about relationship violence, offering support to a victim of violence, or posting awareness materials in public places.

Individuals who want to help or who would like to participate in *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* activities can call [organization's phone] for more information.

During *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, I hope you will publish an editorial that encourages readers to join efforts to reduce domestic, sexual and dating violence in our community. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at [your phone] on weekdays from [9 AM to 6 PM.] Thank you for your consideration.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS PITCH LETTER

[October 1, 2008]

[Journalist's Name]

[Outlet]

[Mailing Address]

Dear [Journalist's Name]:

The statistics are staggering. Every [day/week/year] in our community [provide local statistic]. And nationally, on average, three women are murdered each day by their husbands or boyfriends and one in four women in the United States reports experiencing violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in her life.

As you may know, October is *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, a time we stop to think about those affected by domestic, dating and sexual violence and how we can help them and prevent others from becoming victims. I am writing to suggest that, during *Awareness Month*, you [interview/write a story about/write a column about] [name and title of your organization's director], who is one of the unsung heroes of our movement.

You may know that [include information on the person's history and work at the organization. EG: Dr. Smith has been running the Center for ten years. During that time, the shelter has housed more than X victims of domestic violence and their children, and provided referrals and support to countless others. She works directly with many of those we serve, keeping them safe, providing counseling, aiding them as they navigate complex social service systems, and helping them take legal action, find jobs and rebuild their lives].

The [shelter/organization] [include a brief description of the services your organization provides]. To mark *Domestic Violence Awareness Month* [provide info on the events your organization has planned for October. Include the date for each]. [Name of organization's director] will speak at these events.

Domestic violence is a problem of epidemic proportions in our country. But it is a problem we can solve. [Name of organization's director] works every day to end abuse and keep women and children safe. I hope you will consider [a profile of/an interview with] [organization's director]. I will call you in a few days to follow up. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at [your phone number]. Thank

you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

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