

# **Verizon and the South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault Announce Partnership to Educate Youth on Domestic Violence, Bullying in South Dakota**

## **Attorney General Marty Jackley Takes Part in Announcing New Campaign**

PIERRE, S.D., July 13 /PRNewswire/ -- South Dakota school children will receive information and resources on what to do if they or a friend is experiencing domestic violence, dating violence and bullying thanks to a partnership between Verizon and the South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault (the Network).

Funded through a \$13,750 grant from the Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon, the two-year outreach and education campaign is a collaboration between law enforcement, domestic violence agencies and school districts to target teens and pre-teens at private, public and tribal area schools through a series of preventative and educational classroom presentations. The curriculum will cover teen dating violence, bullying and domestic violence.

"The Network is proud to have Verizon as a partner in our campaign to educate South Dakota's youth on violence and abuse," said Krista Heeren-Graber, executive director of the Network. "The broader gain of awareness is that these students will share this information with their family and friends who will in turn be more informed of domestic violence, dating violence and bullying."

According to the fall enrollment numbers for 2009, there were 121,015 children enrolled for K-12 in South Dakota public schools and 16,939 enrolled for K-12 in South Dakota private and tribal schools. When addressing issues surrounding bullying, state school officials have stated that many of the youth struggling with these issues are also living in abusive home environments. Responding to this need, the Network, together with 21 partner agencies (see list below), will inform youth on resources, symptoms and the role that technology plays to prevent and perpetrate abuse.

"I commend the Network and Verizon for collaborating on a campaign that will help to prevent violence in our communities," said South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley. "It is important that we provide our youth with the awareness and means to reduce bullying and domestic violence."

Verizon Wireless has supported domestic violence awareness and prevention efforts over the last decade through the company's award-winning HopeLine® phone recycling program. Through HopeLine, Verizon Wireless collects no-longer-used wireless phones, batteries and accessories, in any condition, from any wireless service provider. Phones that can be refurbished are sold for reuse and those without value are disposed of in an environmentally sound way. All proceeds benefit non-profit shelters and organizations that focus on domestic violence awareness and prevention. Over the last five years, South Dakotans have donated more than 13,000 phones to HopeLine and since the program began more than 7 million phones have been recycled or refurbished.

"This statewide educational campaign allows us to give back to the communities we serve throughout South Dakota," said Seamus Hyland, president–Great Plains Region, Verizon Wireless. "One of the best ways to prevent teen dating violence, bullying and ultimately domestic violence, is to educate our youth about healthy relationships and the resources that are available for any problems they may be having."

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its free educational website, Verizon Thinkfinity ([www.thinkfinity.org](http://www.thinkfinity.org)), and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2009, the Verizon Foundation awarded \$67.9 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the U.S. and abroad. It also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in \$26.1 million in combined contributions to nonprofits. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation's largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 5 million hours of community service since 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit [www.verizonfoundation.org](http://www.verizonfoundation.org). For more information about HopeLine visit [www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline](http://www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline)