



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Special “Domestic Violence Prayer Vigil” Event Coordinated by Three Nonprofits is Planned for October 27

GREATER METRO WASHINGTON, D.C, AUGUST 17, 2009 – An opportunity to provide prayer and intercessions on behalf of those impacted by domestic violence will take place Tuesday, October 27, at the **“Domestic Violence Prayer Vigil”** community-wide event coordinated by three key local nonprofits. The vigil will be held at First Baptist Church of Alexandria from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the chapel, with a reception to follow for further small group prayer and information about Christian non-profits serving families of domestic violence. The event will feature speakers from three local churches. First Baptist Church of Alexandria is located at 2932 King Street in Alexandria, 22302.

The charitable organizations sponsoring and working together to arrange the event include NOVACO (www.novaco.org), Time to Fly (www.timetofly.org), and Bethany House of Northern Virginia (www.bhnv.org). The three groups offer shelter and/or services that help families with the various phases of escaping domestic abuse.

“The prayer vigil is a time for Christians to gather together to pray for people whose lives have been forever changed by domestic violence,” said Cathy Hassinger, Executive Director of Bethany House. “October is domestic violence awareness month and a time for Christian non-profits to bring the community together to cry out to God on behalf of victims, survivors, children, family and friends who have dealt with or are currently dealing with domestic violence in their lives. We desire to not only provide physical, emotional and mental support, but to also provide spiritual support to those in need of healing from this horrible crime. We hope the community will join with us in lifting up prayers to God and ask for domestic violence to end.”

Women are much more likely than men to be victimized by a current or former intimate partner.¹ Women are 84 percent of spouse abuse victims and 86 percent of victims of abuse at the hands of a boyfriend or girlfriend and about three-fourths of the persons who commit family violence are male.²

Bethany House of Northern Virginia, Inc. (BHNVA) is a private, faith-based, 501(c)(3) organization providing “first response” shelter and services to victims of abuse for more than 30

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years. The organization's domestic violence helpline is 703-658-9500. NOVACO (the Northern Virginia Coalition), is a nonprofit that offers transitional housing and support services to complement the initial escape provided by Bethany House. NOVACO's phone number for more information is 703-218-3984. The Time to Fly Foundation (TTF) is a grass roots faith based, public supported 501(c)(3) non-profit organization devoted to helping formerly abused women and their children break the generational cycle and strengthen their family unit. The organization can be reached at 877-570-9488.

In October 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed and the first national toll-free hotline was begun. In 1989 the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month Commemorative Legislation was passed by the U.S. Congress and such legislation continues to pass every year.

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¹ *National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2007. 2008.* U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv07.pdf>.

² *Family Violence Statistics: Including Statistics on Strangers and Acquaintances. 2005.* U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/fvs.pdf>.