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**CAMPAIGNS URGE AWARENESS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND
“JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS, JUSTICE FOR ALL”**

Reno, NV—April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. During the month’s events, domestic violence advocates across Nevada will deliver a poignant message, urging “justice for victims, justice for all.” Advocates are focusing their efforts on organizing community events, raising awareness of sexual violence, and bringing justice to crime victims. This year, National Sexual Assault Awareness Month will also encompass National Crime Victims’ Right Week (NCVRW), to be observed April 13th – 19th.

According to the most recent data available by the U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey, there were 272,350 sexual assaults nationwide in 2006, accounting for one sexual assault every 2 minutes. Twenty-three million Americans are victims of crime each year and, of those, 5.2 million are victims of violent crime.

Victims of domestic violence are also likely to be victims of sexual assault. According to a 2005 report, 73 percent of female rape or sexual assault victims were assaulted by someone they knew—28 percent of these female victims were assaulted by their intimate partners. Both domestic violence and sexual assault crimes are vastly under-reported. In 2005, only 38.3 percent of all rapes and sexual assaults were reported to law enforcement, and 41 percent of reported forcible rapes were cleared (usually by arrest) by law enforcement. One of the characteristics associated with a positive legal outcome in sexual assault cases is being examined within 24 hours of the assault. Rape survivors who had the assistance of an advocate were significantly more likely to have police reports taken, and were less likely to experience the interaction with law enforcement negatively.¹

Lynne Shull, Client Services Manager at Tahoe Women’s Services (TWS) talks about events the organization has planned to raise community awareness in April. “TWS kicks off the activities on April 1st with a movie night, bringing forth the dire situation of women in a U.S. Mexican border town. Popcorn and sodas are on us.” The movie night will take place in **Incline Village** at the D.W. Reynolds Bldg. at 7:00 p.m. The movie is rated ‘R’.

Tahoe Women’s Services will also host the *Shine the Light on Sexual Violence March* taking place on April 23rd in **Tahoe City**. The march will start with a candle light vigil outside the Tahoe City Safeway and will continue to the Commons Beach, where designated speakers and survivors will share their thoughts.

“Last year it was a very powerful event. By the time the speeches began, it had gotten completely dark outside and people would step into the light by the microphone to share their experiences,” Shull notes, and adds “Remember to dress warm!” The *Shine the Light on Sexual Violence March* event will also include boys from TWS’s *My Strength* campaign, girls from TWS’s high school group, and the *Denim Day Campaign*.

Other Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Crime Victims’ Rights Week events taking place around the state during the month of April include:

- Domestic Violence Intervention, Inc. in **Fallon** is organizing a Sexual Assault Awareness and Remembrance event, together with the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe (FPST), on April 19th at 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. in Fox Peak. Domestic Violence Victim’s Advocate Chrissi Sponsler of FPST promises appeal for the whole family. “We are hoping to have a sexual assault survivor talk, as well as a tribal police officer visit. We will have a fire truck come by for the children, and maybe even a helicopter!”
- Advocates to End Domestic Violence in **Hawthorne** are offering sexual assault training on April 10th at 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
- A Candlelight Vigil will be held in **Reno** at the Mills B. Lane Justice Center on April 16th at 5:30 p.m. to commemorate National Crime Victims’ Rights Week.

With 73 percent of female sexual assault victims reporting to have been assaulted by someone they know, National Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Crime Victims’ Rights Week provide two unique opportunities to raise awareness of the issues that victims of domestic violence and sexual assault face in this country today.

About NNADV:

The Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence was founded in 1980 to work toward the elimination of domestic and sexual violence against all persons. As Nevada’s statewide coalition, NNADV is an inclusive network which both supports our member programs, and educates the public at large. Our agency is based in Reno, but our member programs span the entire state. Affiliated agencies include, but are not limited to: Tahoe Women Services of Incline Village, Domestic Violence Intervention of Fallon, Advocates to End Domestic Violence of Hawthorne, Safe Nest of Las Vegas, Committee to Aid Abused Women of Reno, and Committee Against Domestic Violence of Elko.

For more information about the events listed above, please contact:

Tahoe Women Services: Lynne Shull, Client Services Manager. Tel. 775.298.0167

Domestic Violence Intervention, Fallon: Linda East, Director. Tel. 775.423.1313

Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe: Chrissi Sponsler, Domestic Violence Victim’s Advocate. Tel. 775.867.4908

Advocates to End Domestic Violence, Hawthorne: Clydell Wert, Director. Tel. 775.945.2472

Alliance for Victims’ Rights: Christina Conti, Chair. Tel. 775.328.3214

¹ Information gathered from *Crime Victimization in the United States: Statistical Overviews*, the National Crime Victims Rights Week, 2008.