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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS ARE BUILDING ALLIANCES WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT TO AID IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACROSS NEVADA

Reno, NV—Nevada has long held an undesirable spot among the top states in the nation when it comes to domestic abuse. Our domestic violence advocates work countless hours providing community outreach, shelter, and services to battered Nevadans. Police officers continue to respond to calls reporting escalating violence in homes throughout the state. Today Nevada's communities are forming partnerships, creating new task forces, and working in collaborative projects trying to break the cycle of violence.

Grassroots organizing by domestic violence agencies has created various collaboration models with local police departments throughout the state. In Southern Nevada, **S.A.F.E. House** of Henderson has established two collaborations with law enforcement agencies in the area. For the past four years the agency has had a domestic violence advocate working at the Henderson Police Department (HPD).

"This partnership has been very successful and we have been able to assist victims that walk into HPD due to this advocate being on site. Our victim advocate has also been involved in training of the police officers on how to determine the primary aggressor. That remains to be a constant challenge for our agency," explains Julie Proctor, Executive Director of S.A.F.E. House.

Another cross-sector project that S.A.F.E. House has been involved with is the Henderson Coordinated Community Response team, established by the Henderson City Attorneys' office. This project is specifically designed to improve the criminal justice system's handling of DV cases, as well as to enhance services to victims of domestic violence in the community. The response team brings many social service organizations together, providing resources to victims and helping them establish safe, abuse-free lives. Other members of the team include, but are not limited to: HopeLink, Henderson Animal Control, local cab companies and utility companies, and Safe Nest, a Las Vegas based domestic violence agency.

In addition to the Community Response team, **Safe Nest** has established partnerships with Boulder City and Mesquite Police Departments—Safe Nest advocates in these areas receive referrals directly from the police departments. **Domestic Violence Intervention, Inc. of Lovelock** has launched a similar alliance. To improve victim services, their advocates work closely with police, and the agency gets a majority of its calls for services from local law enforcement officers.

Advocates in Fallon have formed another type of partnership with local law enforcement to assist victims of abuse and enforce perpetrators' accountability: **Domestic Violence Intervention, Inc. of Fallon** and the local police department have set up a committee that will review all of the domestic violence cases that go through the local police department.

Linda East, Domestic Violence Intervention, Inc. of Fallon's Executive Director relates, "*We use these meeting to see how cases are being handled, and to identify any training issues or policy changes that may need to come about with the police department.*" The cross-disciplinary committee tracks cases from the initial report to the final adjudication.

Partnerships between domestic violence programs, law enforcement, and other agencies play an integral role in the fight against abuse. As a result of these collaborative efforts, not only are the victims receiving better services, but Nevada's communities are also gaining more knowledge about the power and control tactics used against victims of abuse in their own homes across the state. Building upon this knowledge our communities are better prepared to break the cycle of violence.

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.

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