

Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE

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DVAM Event Organized for Community and Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) is a national campaign dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence. Every October, organizations and individuals unite across the country for a national effort to uplift the needs, voices, and experiences of survivors. MPD Victim Services Branch (VSB) hosted the DVAM Awareness, Empowerment and Memorial Vigil at Martha's Table in SE that focused on community gathering, sharing resources, and creative arts of expression. Thirteen anti-violence/victim advocacy agencies tabled the event to showcase their services whilst inviting victims and community to learn and connect with their agency. Additionally, the participating community vendors were

able to link with each other to build and sustain working relationships. The event was beautifully concluded with a unifying keynote speech from VSB Director Vann, followed by a candlelight ceremony, prayer and moment of silence to commemorate the 18 lives that were lost to Domestic Violence during the 10/1/23 – 10/1/24 timeframe. VSB sends special thanks to the community vendors, Martha's Table, Starbucks, Chaplain Jerry West, the unwavering support of The DC Police Foundation, volunteers and all the attendees for making the event an unforgettable success! The commitment, support and dedication to serving survivors and responding to Domestic



Violence remains a shared value amongst us all. VSB remains steadfast in furthering partnerships and building community to jointly continue the movement in responding to and eliminating Domestic Violence.

—Torie Stone and Sharon Daugherty



Domestic Violence Awareness Month — ‘The Domestic Violence Symposium’

Resources

For more information and resources feel free to contact:

- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCAV) www.ncadv.org
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
(800) 799-SAFE
(800) 787-3224 (TTY)
(Anonymous and Confidential Help 24/7)
- MPD Domestic Violence Unit
(202) 727-7137
- MPD Victim Services Branch
(202) 724-4339

On October 8, 2024, in celebration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Fifth District Outreach team and MPD Victim Services (5th District Victim Specialist) held their Annual Domestic Violence Symposium in collaboration with CSOSA, Iron Star Foundation, and The Link Up. This event was held at the Arboretum Recreation Center in NE for the community residents to engage in conversations to bring awareness to domestic violence. The residents were reminded that

the month of October is a time when people across the country come together to bring awareness to Domestic Violence, discuss signs of abuse, provide resources to help end the violence and to acknowledge survivors.

During this event, residents were provided with a safe space to share their personal stories of domestic violence and struggles of being a survivor of victimization. Several of the community attendees were survivors of domestic violence and openly discussed how their victimization

negatively impacted their family members, especially their children, who often witnessed their abuse. This level of interaction provided the MPD Victim Specialist an opportunity to discuss how children cope with domestic violence in their household, coping with and preventing domestic violence, the domestic violence power wheel, as well as safety planning information.

While Domestic Violence Awareness was the main meal and ingredient of the Symposium, the community residents had the opportunity to continue their discussion while indulging in a hot meal prepared by the Fifth District MPD Outreach Unit. This atmosphere made it even more relaxing for the residents and engaging, which prompted many to rejoice that they were able to escape the ongoing abuse of Domestic Violence.

—Dawn Christie



Next of Kin Meeting Held During Domestic Violence Awareness Month



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). During DVAM system-based and community-based organizations across the country come together to raise awareness of the domestic violence epidemic. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1 in 4 women

and 1 in 7 men aged 18 and older in the US have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The District is not exempt from this horrific crime, in 2023 there were 21 Domestic Violence related deaths.

To commemorate DVAM, the Victim Services Branch hosted the Next of Kin Meeting

from October 7 to 11, 2024. Family members of open homicide cases for 2023 were invited to attend an in-person meeting with the assigned detectives. These meetings aim to empower families with updates on their loved ones' investigation and allow them to be active participants. During these meetings, the Family Liaison Specialists are available to support families and provide victim-centered resources.

For more information on the Next of Kin Meeting please contact the Family Liaison Specialist Unit at (202) 645-6363.

—Marlene Castro



Domestic Violence Awareness Month Toiletry Drive: A Drive to Success

According to Safe Housing Partnerships (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2024), 57% of women experiencing homelessness reported that domestic violence was the primary factor contributing to their situation. For many women contemplating the decision to exit a domestic violence relationship, obtaining housing assistance through safe houses and shelter services is often a crucial step. Financial constraints and limited resources can severely hinder the healing process for victims, leaving them to struggle even with necessities such as soap, toothpaste, and other essential personal care items.

October marked Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a perfect opportunity to extend support and compassion to those affected by domestic violence. Throughout that month of awareness, the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Vic-

tim Services Branch focused on easing the difficulties encountered by a local shelter in Washington, DC. They organized a department-wide toiletry drive aimed at providing essential hygiene products to women who are victims of domestic violence and currently experiencing homelessness. This drive achieved significant success, thanks to the generous contributions from MPD members.

All collections received were donated to Calvary Women's Services for the benefit of their clients. As a leading organization in the fight against homelessness, Calvary Women's Services inspires hope and transforms the lives of those they serve. They provide a comprehensive array of services, including transitional and permanent supportive housing, therapy and mental health support, employment placement programs, as well as education and life skills coaching.

Through organizations such as Calvary Women's Services, survivors of domestic violence are equipped with essential resources and the empowerment necessary to rebuild their lives and regain independence. Sarah Cannington, the Community Engagement Manager at Calvary Women's Services, expressed, "We are profoundly grateful for this generous donation, as our shelves were becoming bare." It is therefore imperative for the community to support these efforts and, more importantly, to seek these services when needed. If you or someone you know requires information regarding domestic violence resources, please visit thehotline.org or contact **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** for assistance.

—Ashley McHenry

