Domestic Violence Awareness Month

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Serving low-income clients in all 100 counties of North Carolina

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For Immediate Release

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Legal Aid helps light the pathway to peace

RALEIGH, N.C., October 9, 2014 – While recent high-profile incidents continue to fix the nation's attention on the problem of domestic violence, Legal Aid of North Carolina is doing its part locally during Domestic Violence Awareness Month to shine a light on the critical ways Legal Aid can help victims escape from violence.

Throughout October, Legal Aid's field offices around the state will display purple lights in their windows to mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month and symbolize the ways that committed and compassionate Legal Aid attorneys can help light a pathway to peace for victims of violence. The effort is inspired by a campaign launched by the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

"Everyone knows that uneasy feeling you get when walking down a dark path," said TeAndra Miller, head of Legal Aid's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Practice Group. "Because you fear the unknown, you may walk very gingerly, start down the path and turn around or freeze in your tracks. Some victims have shared that they experience similar feelings when they are ready to seek assistance to end the violence. We want people to know that we are one of many lights – an important light – that can lead victims down the lit pathway to peace."

Every year, Legal Aid's domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, working in partnership with shelters and other service providers, help thousands of North Carolinians secure protective orders against their abusers, protect custody of their children, defend their housing and essential property rights, and address issues of employment, immigration, education and more.

"Legal Aid lawyers are the unsung warriors in the fight against domestic violence," said Miller. "With no fanfare and often no recognition, Legal Aid advocates are on the front lines everyday representing victims and ensuring they have real, viable opportunities to escape their abusers with their safety, property and family intact."

FOR LEGAL HELP IN N.C.

Legal Aid of North Carolina
1-866-219-LANC (5262)
www.legalaidnc.org/apply

Legal Services of Southern Piedmont
704-376-1600
www.lssp.org

Pisgah Legal Services
1-800-489-6144
www.pisgahlegal.org

FOR OTHER SERVICES

N.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence
919-956-9124
www.nccadv.org

N.C. Coalition Against Sexual Assault
919-871-1015
www.nccasa.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
www.thehotline.org

United Way

LSC

The role played by civil legal aid lawyers in the fight against domestic violence is not often in the spotlight, but a 2003 study by two economics professors found that the increase in the availability of civil legal aid in the 1990s, when federal funding for legal aid programs was at its peak, was one of the primary factors explaining the sharp decline in domestic violence incidents during that decade.

"Because legal services help women with practical matters such as protective orders, custody, and child support they appear to actually present women with real, long-term alternatives to their relationships," wrote Amy Farmer and Jill Tiefenthaler in Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence, published in the April 2003 issue of Contemporary Economic Policy.

Throughout October, Legal Aid advocates will be hosting, co-hosting and attending outreach events across the state to help raise awareness of the problem and spread the word about the help that is available. The events include a candlelight vigil in Greenville, documentary screening and panel discussion in High Point, march and rally in Wilmington, training session for law students in Raleigh, and a community summit in Durham. The full list of events is attached.

Domestic violence victims who need help should contact their local domestic violence or sexual assault agency. Visit the websites of the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault for more information.

Domestic violence victims who need legal help should call our toll-free Helpline at 1-866-219-LANC (5262), fill out our online application or contact their local office.

Other civil legal aid organizations in the state that can help domestic violence victims include Legal Services of Southern Piedmont in Charlotte and Pisgah Legal Services in Asheville.

Legal Aid of North Carolina's work would not be possible without the help of our supporters in the legal community and beyond. If you are an attorney who would like to provide pro bono service to Legal Aid clients, contact your local office for more information. Support our work by making a donation during Domestic Violence Awareness Month at www.legalaidnc.org/donate.

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Legal Aid of North Carolina is a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people in order to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity. Learn more at www.legalaidnc.org or find us on Facebook or Twitter.

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Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Calendar of Events

OCT. 1 | Nags Head: Ribbon on the Ridge
In what has become an annual event, domestic violence advocates, survivors and supporters unfurled a huge purple ribbon – the symbol of domestic violence awareness – on the highest point of Jockey's Ridge in the Outer Banks to mark the beginning of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Learn more.

OCT. 1 | Greenville: Domestic Violence Awareness Month Candlelight Vigil
Local officials, advocates, law enforcement officers and community members gathered together to show support for the families of domestic violence victims. The vigil was held at the Pitt County Courthouse and featured remarks by Deborah J. Monroe, an author, advocate and survivor of domestic violence. Learn more.

OCT. 1 | Wilmington: Silent Witness Exhibit
Legal Aid advocates in our Wilmington office participated in the Silent Witness Exhibit at Innis Park, where advocates, family members and local officials gathered to remember women who were killed by an intimate partner. The exhibit included life-size representations of victims and readings of their stories. Learn more.

OCT. 3 | High Point: Screening of "Telling Amy's Story"
The High Point Police Department and the High Point Victim's Justice Center presented a free screening of Telling Amy's Story, a critically acclaimed documentary about a Pennsylvania women murdered by her husband in 2001. Tiffany Atkins, an attorney in Legal Aid's Greensboro office, joined representatives from the Guilford County District Attorney's Office, High Point Police Department and Family Service of the Piedmont for a panel discussion about domestic violence in High Point following the screening. Learn more.

OCT. 7 | Johnston County: Advanced domestic violence training for pro bono attorneys
This continuing legal education training focused on advanced issues in domestic violence law, including immigration, the intersection of criminal and civil domestic violence law, and the enforcement of domestic violence protective orders. Legal Aid staff facilitated a panel discussion involving a judge and representative from a law enforcement agency.

OCT. 9 | Wilmington: 25th Annual Take Back the Night March and Rally
This year's event began with a march through downtown Wilmington and finished with a rally in front of the Alton Lennon Federal Building on Princess Street. Mary Ann Lama, executive director of Domestic Violence Shelter and Services, which organizes the yearly event, will give welcoming remarks. J.H. Corpening II, chief district court judge for New Hanover County, will keynote the rally. Learn more.

OCT. 11 | Winston-Salem: Walk a Mile in Her Shoes
Advocates from Legal Aid of North Carolina will participate in this year's Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event in Winston-Salem. The event is a men's march aimed at raising awareness about rape, sexual assault and gender violence, and highlighting the role that men play in creating a solution. During the event, men walk a mile in women's high-heeled shoes. Learn more.

OCT. 13 | Wilmington: Panel discussion on helping domestic violence victims
Jim Morgan, a staff attorney in Legal Aid's Wilmington office, will be among the panelists discussing how to help victims of domestic violence. The event will be held at New Beginning Christian Church, 3120 Alex Trask Drive in Castle Hayne. It is sponsored by the church and YWCA of the Lower Cape Fear. Learn more.

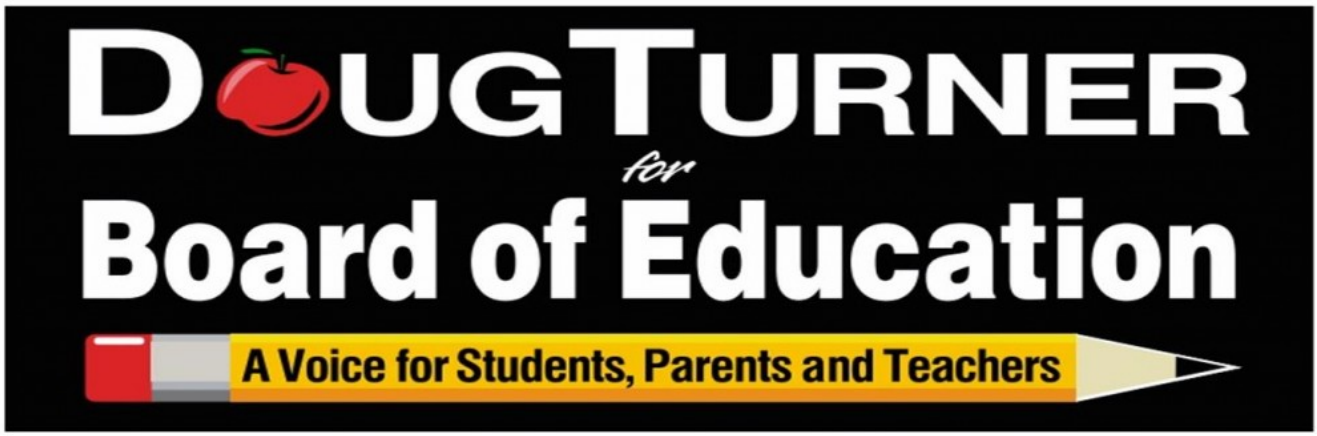
OCT. 16 | Winston-Salem: Home Free benefit to end domestic violence
Famed country music singer and domestic violence survivor Naomi Judd will keynote this year's Home Free benefit to end domestic violence in Forsyth County. The event is a partnership between Family Services, Inc. and the Children's Law Center of Central N.C. Learn more.

OCT. 22 | Domestic Violence Protective Order CLE
Legal Aid of North Carolina is partnering with the N.C. State Bar, N.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the law firm of Womble Carlyle to hold a continuing legal education training session for lawyers on representing domestic violence victims in protective order hearings. The training will be held at the firm's Winston-Salem office and broadcast to its offices in Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh and the Research Triangle Park. Learn more.

OCT. 23 | Durham Co. Domestic Violence Summit: Humanizing the Victim's Experience
The Durham Crisis Response Center and Legal Aid of North Carolina are holding the Durham County Domestic Violence Summit at the First Presbyterian Church on East Main St. The summit's goal is to humanize the domestic violence victim's experience for the Durham community, its officials, agencies, and first responders, while highlighting ways to improve society's response to survivors. Learn more.

OCT. 28 | Raleigh: Domestic violence training for Campbell Law students
Legal Aid advocates will provide training to Campbell Law students on general issues in domestic violence law and provide guidance on representing domestic violence victims.

OCT. 30 | Durham: Domestic violence training for lawyers
Legal Aid will hold a continuing legal education training session for members of the Durham bar association. The training will be a nuts-and-bolts course on representing domestic violence victims and update participants on developments in domestic violence law. Sherry Everett, an attorney in Legal Aid's Durham office, and Beth Froehling of Campbell Law will be the presenters. Participants will be asked to provide free or low-cost help to a Legal Aid client in lieu of paying for the training.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