



Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

For Immediate Release: September 17, 2014

Contact: Selvena N. Brooks | OCDVMedia@cityhall.nyc.gov | (646) 484-0774

Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic, New York City Police Department and Richmond County District Attorney's Office Announce Expansion of Successful Anti-Stalking Program in Staten Island

Since the launch of the anti-stalking program there has been a 250% increase in reported offenses.

(Staten Island, NY) Today, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), in collaboration with the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office (RCDA) announced the expansion of the Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) program to Staten Island's 122nd and 123rd Precincts. The CAPS program aims to enhance the identification, reporting of stalking incidents, stalking arrests and prosecution.

"The CAPS initiative has shifted the way law enforcement responds to stalking, placing an emphasis on preventive measures to combat this abusive behavior before it escalates to what is often lethal consequences," said **OCDV Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis**. "I want to thank the Richmond County District Attorney Daniel M. Donovan, Jr., NYPD Commissioner William J. Bratton, and the 120, 121, 122, 123 Precincts, along with our service partners for helping to make this a highly successful program."

"The Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) Program has allowed my prosecutors the opportunity to work with the NYPD and the Staten Island Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT), which is part of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, to better evaluate courses of conduct that constitute stalking," said **Richmond County District Attorney, Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.** "I am thrilled that OCDV Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis is expanding the program to include the borough's other two precincts. This enhanced method of identifying and prosecuting stalking cases will continue to help us tackle domestic violence here on Staten Island."

The CAPS initiative is a homicide prevention program, linking victims to critical services through DVRT before the stalking behavior escalates to physical assault or homicide. National statistics find that 54% of homicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by their intimate partner. Since launching CAPS in June 2014 at the 120th Precinct and 121st Precinct, there has been a 250% increase in stalking offenses reported to and identified by the NYPD.

"The NYPD is deeply committed to addressing the serious issue of domestic violence," said **Police Commissioner William J. Bratton**. "The opportunity to save lives and stem violence by identifying harmful behavior early, before it can escalate, is of paramount concern and one of the department's utmost priorities."

"I am so pleased of the work being done collaboratively by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the New York Police Department, and the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to address a pervasive offense that so often is unidentified," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**. "The increase we have seen as a result of the CAPS pilot program underscores why a

special focus on stalking is necessary. Increased identification of stalking cases is a preventive measure that will ultimately save lives.”

“Earlier this summer, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence launched the Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) program to increase reporting, arrests, and prosecutions related to stalking,” said **NYC Public Advocate Letitia James**. An estimated 3.4 million people are stalked annually, and women are three times more likely to be stalked than to be sexually assaulted. I am fully supportive of the CAPS initiative, and commend Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis for expanding this vital program in Staten Island.”

As part of the program’s expansion a comprehensive training was presented by OCDV, NYPD, RCDA and Safe Horizon to the Domestic Violence Prevention Officers (DVPOs) from the 122nd Precinct and 123rd Precinct. The training focused on identifying stalking behavior, understanding the criminal stalking statute, preserving and documenting evidence and engaging in safety planning conversations with victims.

“Stalking is a dangerous precursor to lethal acts of domestic violence,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “The Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking Program is an important initiative to help increase the reporting and arrest of stalking incidents and I thank the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Rose Pierre-Louis for her efforts to combat domestic violence and expand this program to every Police Precinct in Staten Island.”

“The CAPS initiative is important since stalking frequently leads to more heinous actions,” said **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo**. “This was a badly needed change in approach to stalking, enabling police to take a more proactive tactic to combat it. I was very pleased that the program was piloted here on Staten Island and am even more appreciative that the program is expanding to include all Island precincts.”

“In order to combat violence against women, we must recognize stalking as an indication of a more serious threat,” said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo, Chair of the Women’s Issues Committee**. “The inclusion of all Staten Island police precincts in the Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) initiative will help improve public safety citywide by preempting life-threatening situations. I commend OCDV Commissioner Pierre-Louis, NYPD Commissioner Bratton, and Richmond County District Attorney Donovan for their leadership in the expansion of this program.”

“Stalking is a serious crime that is seldom identified and rarely punished,” said **Council Member Vincent M. Ignizio, NYC Council Minority Leader**. Since stalking is by definition not an isolated incident, this is a great program to train our law enforcement personnel to examine patterns of stalking behavior that is often found in other domestic violence crimes like harassment, criminal contempt and assault. This information will be a valuable asset to District Attorney Donovan’s Office, the NYPD and the rest of the Domestic Violence Response Team to prevent violent offenses and fatalities by catching stalkers before it’s too late.”

“Without a true understanding of its tragic outcomes, stalking by an intimate partner is too often misidentified, and this has to stop,” said **Council Member Deborah Rose**. “I hope that the expansion of this pilot program – with its emphasis on training advocates, case managers and police officers to better identify stalking behaviors – to precincts across Staten Island will lead not only to increased reporting and arrests, but, most importantly, to the increased safety of our residents.”

Cases classified as stalking by the NYPD or RCDA, where an arrest has been made or where stalking charges have been added to a criminal complaint will be referred to the DVRT program where they will have access to wraparound services and ongoing safety planning.

“Stalking is one of the most reprehensible crimes we have on the books because it constitutes a near-constant and persistent threat to the quality of life of the victim,” said **Council Member Steven Matteo**. “I applaud the Mayor and our District Attorney Dan Donovan for collaborating on the CAPS program to ensure that this category of offence gets the laser-like focus it needs.”

“Safe Horizon is proud to partner with the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence in this critical effort,” said **Ariel Zwang, CEO, Safe Horizon**. “We are thrilled that the effort is now being expanded to two additional precincts in Staten Island. Research shows that three out of four females murdered by an intimate partner has been stalked by that offender in the year prior to the murder. By responding to stalking aggressively and using a coordinated approach, we truly can save lives.”

For more information on services offered by OCDV, please call (212) 788-3156.

###