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News

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE JOINS LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERS TO ANNOUNCE NEW AND UNIQUE INTERPRETATION PROGRAM IN THE 115TH PRECINCT

*Immediate Language Line Interpretation for Victims Can Help
Police Save Lives*

Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence will join the Honorable Consul Generals of Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, the New York City Police Department, and local community organizations in announcing a new language access project in the 115th Precinct. Part of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's ongoing commitment to eliminating domestic violence, the Language Line Project equips police officers who investigate domestic violence incidents with cellular telephones that have immediate access to Language Line Interpretation Services in over 150 languages.

Funded through a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women grant, the Language Line Project ensures instant, on-scene language interpretation to enhance the ability of police officers to more accurately establish facts in domestic violence incidents. The pilot program gives a voice to victims who otherwise would be unable to communicate with the police in their own language. It also encourages victims of abuse to seek help from the police, while increasing batterer accountability.

To bring awareness of the program to the local Hispanic community, Commissioner Jimenez will co-host a community education event at the Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church, Thursday, April 22, 2004 at 7:00 PM. The goal of the meeting will be to provide Spanish-speaking residents with critical information about local domestic violence resources and to encourage residents to reach out to police and community based organizations for help regardless of their immigrant status and/or language capability.

"Domestic violence is an underreported crime and immigrant victims, in particular, may be less likely to report abuse than non-immigrant women due to language barriers or cultural differences," said Commissioner Jimenez.

This outreach effort will inform community members about the impact of domestic violence on children, families, and the community at-large. By speaking out against domestic violence

and by calling the police or the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline, community members can play an active role helping those most in need.

Focus groups held by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence in 2002 identified the language barrier as the leading obstacle to receiving domestic violence services. The precinct's 250 police officers have received training on how to use the new Language Line cellular telephones and on culturally sensitive interview skills. In the first month of the project, the Language Line was used 32 times for 8 different languages including: Spanish, Bengali, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Farsi, Sinhalese, and Russian.

Domestic violence is abusive behavior—emotional, physical, or sexual—that one person in an intimate relationship uses in order to control the other. Victims of domestic violence can be married, divorced, or dating. For help 24-hours a day, victims can call 911, the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline at 1(800) 621-4673 or 311.

Through the efforts of all New Yorkers to end family related violence, major domestic violence crime (murder, rape, and felony assaults) decreased by 10.8% in 2003. Domestic violence is a crime in New York City and batterers will be held accountable.