



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

PRESS RELEASE

Aug 17, 2011

Contact: Ruth Villalonga (OCDV)
212-442-0490
rvillalonga@cityhall.nyc.gov
www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence

**MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAUNCHES NEW
COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORT TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE AND ENCOURAGE VICTIMS TO SEEK HELP**

Outreach launched in communities with recent family homicides

On Wednesday, August 17, 2011, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) announced a localized community outreach effort to raise awareness about domestic violence and promote services available to victims – starting with areas in Brooklyn, where domestic violence homicides have occurred this year. OCDV Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez was joined by Inspector Kathleen O'Reilly, Commanding Officer of the New York City Police Department, Domestic Violence Unit, and Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Fatima Shama.

Community outreach will begin August 17, 2011 in Brighton Beach, Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay. It will include a round table discussion with local media, distribution of public education materials at major transit hubs, shopping and entertainment areas, and radio public service announcements in Spanish and Russian broadcasted by SBS Spanish Radio and Radio Davidzon. In addition, the Mayor's Office will provide ongoing education sessions with local community groups and community based organizations providing information about domestic violence and services available to victims in the city.

“Sadly, all too often we find that victims of domestic violence homicides never reached out for help,” said OCDV Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez. “We want to let domestic violence victims and their families know that help is available and encourage them to call the police and visit one of our New York City Family Justice Centers.”

“Since 2004, the NYPD's Domestic Violence Unit has conducted over half a million home visits where officers check in on victims and abusive partners,” said Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly. “However, if we don't know that there has been a domestic violence incident in the first place, there is no way for us to help protect victims or remind their assailants

of the consequences of repeated abuse. That is why this community outreach effort is so important.”

This new outreach complements an ongoing citywide public education campaign that began last year and included the distribution of posters and palm cards emphasizing that everyone has the right to a healthy relationship, encouraging New Yorkers to learn about services available to victims of domestic violence. Posters and palm cards have been placed in over 1,000 business locations citywide, including pharmacies, supermarkets, check cashing places and wireless cell phone stores, while more than 1,000 posters were distributed for posting at City agencies. The materials connect victims not only to information available through the City’s 311 information line but also to the City’s Family Justice Centers, one-stop domestic violence service centers operated by OCDV, as well as to 911 for emergencies.

This outreach is part of the City’s continued effort to encourage domestic violence victims to reach out for help. It also helps to inform the community about services available so friends, family and neighbors can direct victims to assistance.

“The Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence and the NYPD are performing an invaluable service today: putting a public face to the assistance available to victims of domestic violence,” said City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “It’s vital for New Yorkers to know that if they are being abused in their own homes, there is help available to them. These police officers, city agencies, and nonprofits are there to help them out of a terrifying situation.”

“It takes a community to combat domestic violence; it’s about being there for the victim and letting them know they are not alone and there are places they can turn to for help,” said Council Member Julissa Ferreras, Chair of the Women’s Issues Committee. “If we are ever to make inroads in combating domestic violence we need to include our family, friends, neighbors and strangers and that is what this outreach is all about- including our community partners- we can’t be silent.”

“For far too long, violence in the home has been whispered about, danced around or simply ignored,” said Council Member Peter F. Vallone, Jr. “We have to let people know that they don’t have to live and suffer in silence – there are many options for help.”

“This outreach and engagement strategy is a great opportunity to reach immigrant communities to ensure their understanding of domestic violence and access to services,” said Fatima Shama, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Services. “We aim to serve people in the languages they speak and provide services regardless of immigration status.”

The City currently operates three Family Justice Centers, in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. Since 2005, when the City opened the Brooklyn Center at 350 Jay Street, the Centers have collectively recorded 138,000 visits, with a daily average of over 130 visits. Services available at all of the Centers include safety planning, civil legal information, assistance with filing police and probation reports, counseling and support groups, prosecution of domestic violence crimes, services for the elderly and/or disabled, assistance with accessing emergency shelter and housing, job training, resume assistance, English as a Second Language classes, language interpretation services, child care, and counseling for children who have witnessed domestic violence. Services are available to victims regardless of their language or immigration status.

The New York City Family Justice Centers are a public-private partnership through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector, www.nyc.gov/fund.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please call 311 or the City's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-621-HOPE for more information. In an emergency call 911.

###