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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 EXPANSION OF A UNIQUE INTERPRETATION PROGRAM IN THE 109TH PRECINCT

Advance Preview of Multilingual Domestic Violence Public Service Announcements

Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez was joined by the New York City Police Department, Language Line Services, and community organizations at Flushing Town Hall to announce the expansion of the Language Line Pilot Project from the 115th Precinct in Queens to 109th Precinct, which includes Flushing, College Point and Whitestone, Queens. Honorable Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall, Council Member John C. Liu, State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, and Consul General of Pakistan Muhammad Haroon Shaukat also attended. New Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in Chinese, English, Korean, and Spanish and program outreach materials in 16 languages were previewed. The PSAs will air on local and ethnic television and radio stations beginning next month. Part of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's ongoing commitment to reducing domestic violence, this innovative program equips police officers who investigate domestic violence incidents with cellular telephones that have live, immediate access to over 150 languages through Language Line Services.

"Domestic violence is an underreported crime and immigrant victims may be less likely to report abuse due to language barriers or cultural differences," said Commissioner Jimenez. "Building on the success of the program in the 115th Precinct, we are pleased to bring this important service to the 109th Precinct where 50% of residents are foreign-born and 63% speak a language other than English in their homes."

"Language Line Services has provided over-the-phone interpretation to police, fire and emergency service organizations for over 20 years. We, and our dedicated interpreters, are passionate about speaking for people who cannot speak for themselves. This is why our company and employees are proud to play a role in the Mayor's efforts to combat domestic violence," said Dennis Dracup, President and CEO of Language Line Services.

Funded through a U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence

Against Women grant, the Language Line Pilot Project ensures instant, on-scene language interpretation to enhance the ability of police officers to more accurately establish facts in domestic violence incidents. The program gives a voice to victims who otherwise may 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.

Focus groups held by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence in 2002 identified language barriers as an obstacle for immigrant victims seeking domestic violence assistance. This outreach encourages residents to reach out for help from the police and community based organizations regardless of immigrant status and/or language capability. All police officers in the precinct have received training on how to use the new Language Line cellular telephones as well as culturally sensitive interview skills. Last year, 70% of family related homicide victims had no known prior contact with the police.

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 are urged to 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 compared with the year before. Domestic violence is a crime in New York City and batterers will be held accountable.