



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 1, 2015

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, NEW YORK CITY
POLICE DEPARTMENT AND QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
ANNOUNCE EXPANSION OF ANTI-STALKING PROGRAM TO QUEENS**

In first year of program's implementation on Staten Island, law enforcement identification of stalking cases increased 233 percent

QUEENS—Today, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, in collaboration with the New York Police Department and Queens District Attorney's Office, announced the expansion of the Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking (CAPS) program to Queens. The CAPS program aims to increase the identification and reporting of stalking incidents, enhance stalking arrests and prosecution, and link stalking victims to services through OCDV's Family Justice Centers and High Risk Domestic Violence Response Teams.

The program's proven success on Staten Island – where specially trained police officers, District Attorney's Office legal and support staff, and advocates worked together to more than double the number of identified stalking cases during the first year of the initiative in 2014 – is setting in motion a citywide expansion of the program. OCDV and NYPD paired with the Queens District Attorney's Office to rollout the program in four precincts – the 101, 103, 105 and 113 precincts – all of which have a high incidence of domestic violence.

“Domestic violence is a stain on our city, and inspired approaches to rooting it out, like CAPS, are critical as we work toward a DV-free New York,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “In its first year with the program, law enforcement on Staten Island identified nearly two and a half times the number of stalking cases in the borough than the year before. The troubling but true data on stalking tells us that the more cases identified by law enforcement, the fewer homicides we'll suffer in this city. I am confident that the capable and committed people at the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the Queens District Attorney's Office and the NYPD will make the same commitment to reducing stalking in Queens.”

“By placing the emphasis on early intervention, rather than waiting until stalking behavior escalates, the CAPS initiative has helped to increase the safety net for victims of intimate partner stalking on Staten Island,” said **Rosemonde Pierre-Louis, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence**. “I am confident that this strong and effective homicide

prevention model will work to provide the same benefits to residents of Queens, and I am proud to work on this critical initiative hand-in-hand with the New York Police Department and the Queens District Attorney's Office."

The CAPS initiative is a homicide prevention program, linking stalking victims to critical services before the pattern of behavior escalates to physical assault or homicide. National statistics find that 54 percent of homicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by their intimate partner. Since launching CAPS in June 2014 on Staten Island, stalking cases identified by NYPD increased by 233 percent in the borough. This success is driving the City to expand the program to Queens, with the intent of ultimately implementing the anti-stalking program in all five boroughs. The Washington D.C.-based Stalking Resource Center of the National Center for Victims of Crimes believes the CAPS program is a model program that could be replicated in other communities across the country.

"The NYPD is deeply committed to addressing domestic violence. This collaborative effort provides an opportunity to save lives and stem violence by strategically identifying harmful behavior before it escalates," said **Police Commissioner William Bratton**. "When we can work together to stop stalking, we know we are preventing future crimes and sometimes even death."

"Research studies have shown that a majority of domestic violence homicide victims were previously stalked by their assailants. While we have always prosecuted these cases very aggressively and will continue to do so, we are encouraged that with the expansion of the Mayor's CAPS program, fewer women will become homicide victims," said **Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown**.

"Domestic violence has no place in our society and New York City will continue to stamp out domestic violence in all of its many forms," said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "Stalking, intimidation, and fear are some of the earliest symptoms of domestic violence and the sooner we can intervene as a city, the better we can connect survivors with the tools and resources they need. The Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking is a proven model to prevent escalated violent behavior and I know this program will improve many lives in Queens as it has in Staten Island."

"Our city must do everything possible to prevent domestic violence before it happens. This important anti-stalking initiative has proven results, and its expansion to Queens will go a long way to raise awareness and help bring down alarming rates of homicide," said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. "I applaud the Mayor and Office to Combat Domestic Violence for bringing this program to Queens, and look forward to its expansion to the entire city."

"I applaud Mayor de Blasio's efforts to expand the anti-stalking program in New York and combat domestic violence in Queens. Working together with Mayor de Blasio, the NYPD and the Queens District Attorney's Office we can decrease instances of domestic violence and keep our families safe from harm," said **Congressman Steve Israel**.

"I am pleased that our law enforcement agencies have teamed up with the Mayor to expand the CAPS program and bring it to Queens. Stalking is dangerous, illegal and devastating to its

victims, but it can also lead to more serious crimes like physical assault, domestic violence and homicide,” said **State Senator James Sanders Jr.** “Cutting it off at the root is the best way to prevent horrific consequences and the CAPS program does exactly that. It also links victims with essential services, which is so important when it comes to crimes like stalking, where people are often terrified to come forward.”

“I would like to thank the Mayor’s office for taking real steps to expand preventative measures against domestic violence and homicides in New York City. We in Queens want to see our families protected before violence begins. Expanding the CAPS program to our borough will help the NYPD and Queens District Attorney’s office do just that,” said **Assembly Member Michael DenDekker.**

“The expansion of the CAPS program will provide the necessary support and assistance to help the many women and families in our community guard against domestic violence,” said **Assembly Member Catherine Nolan.** “I would like to thank Mayor de Blasio, Queens District Attorney Richard Brown and the NYPD for coordinating on this wonderful program that will save so many lives.”

“Stalking is a serious assault and may result in severe injury or even death. And like many forms of domestic violence, stalking is a crime of power, control, and manipulation,” said **Assembly Member David Weprin.** “To that end, I applaud the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the Queens District Attorney’s Office, and the New York City Police Department for their effort to expand this vital CAPS initiative to Queens where it will severely reduce stalking and other violent crimes in our home borough.”

“Thousands of New Yorkers, irrespective of their gender, have been stalked by an acquaintance or stranger on one or more occasions. In some cases, these incidents escalate in violence, leading to precarious choices or situations that endanger the lives of innocent individuals. Women represent the majority of New York City’s 8.4 million residents and the survivors of violence who fear for their own safety at home, school, or in the workplace,” said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo, Chair of the Committee on Women’s Issues.** “The underreporting of crimes and incidents such as stalking often makes it challenging to apprehend the perpetrators who seek to harm others. The Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking ensures that law enforcement authorities and our justice system work collaboratively to streamline access to critical information and services that will save thousands of lives.”

“It is very important to protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse and to train our force on how to identify and handle conduct that constitutes stalking. I am very pleased to have this anti-stalking initiative come to Queens and am looking forward to the good work it will do,” said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland.**

“Domestic violence is a systemic societal ill with far reaching collateral consequences that affect too many children and families. We know that identifying patterns of abuse early can protect victims from emotional, financial, and physical trauma. I am thankful to the Queens DA, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, and the OCDV’s Family Justice Center for recognizing the need to expand the successful Coordinated Approach to Preventing Stalking

program in the 101, 103, 105 and 113 precincts,” said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**. “This anti-stalking initiative will make victims and their families safer, bring swifter justice to perpetrators, and provide invaluable specialized training to our officers. I thank Mayor Bill de Blasio, Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis, and Queens District Attorney Richard Brown for their leadership and commitment to holistically addressing domestic violence services and prevention and working to eliminate domestic violence in our City. Thank you all for being champions and incredible upstanders!”

“Too often, stalking is an over-looked precursor to heinous acts of assault and murder,” said **Council Member Rory I. Lancman, Chair of the Courts & Legal Services Committee**. “Expanding the CAPS initiative to Queens ensures that our law enforcement officers have every tool they need to reduce intimate partner violence and keep victims safe. I applaud the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the NYPD and Queens District Attorney Richard Brown for their collaboration on this program.”

“It is great to see a program that has had such a positive impact in other parts of the city come to Queens. All individuals deserve safety. Identifying and preventing stalking cases is a major part of this for partners throughout our city. There is a high correlation between stalking and other criminal activities that this program will aim to prevent,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller**. “This is an opportunity to shine a light on domestic violence issues that exist within our community and address a serious problem in a holistic manner.”

“It is wonderful news that the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence is expanding its anti-stalking program into Southeast Queens and Far Rockaway,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “Domestic violence is a serious issue that needs to be addressed in our communities and identifying stalking cases is a great way to prevent these violent crimes before they escalate. I would like to thank Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Rosemonde Pierre-Louis, the NYPD and District Attorney Richard Brown for making this commitment to reduce violence in Queens.”

“Stalking is such a complex crime that no one agency, no one professional can address all the needs of a stalking victim. The CAPS program embodies a truly collaborative response that enhances victim safety and offender accountability,” said **Michelle Garcia, Director of the Stalking Resource Center at the National Center for Victims of Crimes**. “The CAPS program clearly demonstrates that with increased training, criminal justice professionals and victim service providers are better able to recognize and respond to stalking, thereby enhancing victim safety and increasing offender accountability.”

“Safe Horizon is proud to continue our partnership with the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence in this life-saving effort by expanding to Queens,” said **Ariel Zwang, CEO of Safe Horizon**. “Stalking is a serious crime that can lead to death. Research demonstrates that more than half of women murdered by an intimate partner were previously stalked by that offender. By identifying stalking behavior early on and responding aggressively with a coordinated approach, we can save lives.”

As part of the initiative's implementation in Queens, specialized training will be conducted for NYPD police officers, members of the District Attorney's office, and community partners on how to identify stalking behavior, better understand stalking statutes, recognize the role technology plays, engage in risk assessment and safety planning, and work with victims to document and preserve evidence of stalking incidents.

Stalking victims identified by law enforcement will be referred to the NYC Family Justice Center in Queens where clients will have access to comprehensive wraparound services, ongoing safety planning, and interagency coordination and rapid response around high risk cases.

About the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), established in 2001, oversees the citywide delivery of domestic violence services, develops policies and innovative programs, and works with diverse communities, City agencies, community-based organizations and local leaders to raise awareness about domestic violence and strengthen the safety net for victims and their children. For more information on services offered by OCDV, please call (212) 788-3156.

###