



Utah Domestic Violence Council

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UTAH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNCIL – NEWS RELEASE

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Domestic violence deaths paint tragic picture in 2006

Salt Lake City, Utah – Domestic violence continues to shatter countless lives in Utah. Using information gathered from public sources, the Utah Domestic Violence Council (UDVC) identified 28 domestic violence related deaths in 2006. Guns were used in 20 fatalities. Two fatalities resulted from stabbings and another from strangulation. One woman died 24 hours after being brutally struck by blunt force, strangled, and then held under water, allegedly by her husband. She was one of 14 victims who died at the hands of a cohabitant—a current or former intimate partner or a close family member—as were two mothers, each killed by a son.

Other deaths included nine suicides related to domestic violence. In one high profile case, a man shot himself in front of a former girlfriend and witnessed by her neighbor, and the neighbor's ten year old child. Another suicide occurred during a police standoff, following a reported abduction, when a man shot and killed himself, injuring his former girlfriend with the same shot.¹

It is crucial to recognize that domestic violence occurs in all communities, ethnic groups, and cultures—without respect to sexual preference, disability, or age. According to Ned Searle, Director of the Utah Office of Violence Against Women and Families, “Children are particularly traumatized by this type of violence and its long term effects.” Sixteen

¹ When domestic violence related suicides do not appear in public sources, they are not included by UDVC. The Utah Department of Health Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee report includes suicides as determined by the Utah State Office of the Medical Examiner.



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children were present at seven homicides related to domestic violence. In one incident, two boys, ages 8 and 11, watched in terror as their mother's boyfriend assaulted her. After the 11 year old ran for help, the 8 year old saw his mother fatally shot in the back as she fled. This incident was also witnessed by a seven year old child in the neighborhood. Another case involved three children ages 10, 14, and 16 years who discovered the lifeless bodies of their mother and father, following a murder suicide. According to a Sheriff's spokesman, the children were "... not doing too well. They're taking it pretty rough."

These senseless deaths with their tragic consequences indicate a need for more public awareness. Warning signs of domestic violence include: intimidation and put downs, public humiliation, controlling behavior, blaming others, isolation from loved ones and friends, interference at work, stalking, threats, abuse of animals, violence outside the home, multiple protective order violations, and more.

Be aware that although domestic violence can become deadly at any time, research indicates an increased risk of death when guns are accessible. Guns were used in 71% of all domestic violence related deaths in 2006. Other signs of heightened risk include use of amphetamines by the abuser, physical violence that has increased in frequency and severity, forced sex, threats of suicide, and violence against children.

If you suspect that someone is being abused, share your concerns for their safety and urge them to tell someone. If you are a victim of abuse, call the Utah Domestic Violence Link Line at 1-800-897-LINK (5465) for resources near you. All calls are confidential and caring advocates will help identify alternatives that can help keep you and your children safe. Remember, there's no excuse for abuse. End domestic violence by breaking the silence.

View the full 2006 Domestic Violence Related Deaths Report on the Utah Domestic Violence Council website located at www.udvc.org. Annual reports are updated as new case information (such as legal dispositions, etc.) becomes available.