

UTAH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNCIL – PRESS RELEASE

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Murder suicides on the rise, taking a toll on domestic violence related deaths

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 30, 2011

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – Every year domestic violence takes a terrible toll in Utah, 2011 was no exception. There have been thirty-three domestic violence-related deaths. An epidemic of murder suicides emerges in Utah in 2011, leaving families, friends, neighbors and communities devastated. Nineteen of the total deaths were a result of nine perpetrators taking the lives of ten victims before killing themselves.

The tragic loss of loved ones due to domestic violence affects not only the victim and perpetrator but also children, extended families, neighborhoods, and communities. This year’s thirty-three fatalities from January 1st through December 31st include fourteen domestic violence related homicides, six cohabitant homicides, four dating relationship homicides, and nine perpetrator suicides. Victims have ranged in age from 19 to 82 years old. Guns were used in 20 of the 33 fatalities. There were no child fatalities.

It is crucial to recognize that domestic violence occurs in all communities, without respect to income, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual preference, age or disability. Domestic violence adversely affects all of society and must be met with zero tolerance. Recognize risk factors—physical violence that increases in frequency and severity, threats with weapons or threats against your life, attempted strangulation, controlling behaviors, forced sex, threats of suicide, violence against children or animals, and violence outside the home, among others.

“Domestic violence is not just a family problem; it is a community issue,” according to Annette Macfarlane, Chair of the Utah Domestic Violence Council Public Education Committee, “so to increase public

awareness information on domestic violence-related deaths is collected from public sources and continuously updated by the Utah Domestic Violence Council.” “This report is evidence that people can die when domestic violence occurs.” “However, this is also an opportunity to educate our communities, friends, family members, employers, and those living in violence that help is available.” The 2011 Year-to-Date Domestic Violence Related Death list will be made available on the Utah Domestic Violence Council website at www.udvc.org on January 3, 2012. Other domestic violence related information is currently available on that website.

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, tell a friend, a neighbor, a family member or co-worker. **For immediate help call 9-1-1.** If you decide to leave a violent relationship, never threaten to leave, and do not act alone. Call the Utah Domestic Violence Link-Line at 1-800-897-LINK (5465) or your local domestic violence shelter for help. Your call is confidential and could save lives. You can be referred to an advocate who will help you create a safety plan and help find shelter for you and your children. If you are an abusive partner, there is also help available for you through the Link-Line. End domestic violence by breaking the silence.

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The Utah Domestic Violence Council (UDVC), a nongovernmental, nonprofit statewide organization, is recognized nationally as the State Domestic Violence Coalition in Utah. We operate under the philosophy that domestic violence is a crime, it is preventable, victims/survivors are not to blame, perpetrators are responsible for their own actions, and the most effective way to reduce domestic violence is through a coordinated community effort. UDVC’s mission is to create a state where domestic violence is intolerable.

The UDVC comprises of 36 voting members with a 12 member Board of Directors. Four working committees and eight workgroups focus on collaborative efforts in public awareness, training and education; best practices for domestic violence shelter programs and treatment providers; cultural competency; and advocacy/public policy.

Annual UDVC Domestic Violence-Related Deaths Press Conference

Date: Tuesday, January 3, 2012

Time: 9:00am

Location: Utah State Capitol Rotunda

Speakers:

Annette MacFarlane, UDVC Public Education Chair and Executive Director New Hope Crisis Center, Brigham City

Kendra Wyckoff, UDVC Interim Executive Director