

## **UTAH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNCIL – PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Domestic Violence Deaths Have a Ripple Effect in Communities**

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(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The uncle of James Valdez received a call from his niece claiming that her brother, James, may have just committed a murder. The uncle went to the apartment where Valdez and his girlfriend, Maralee Andreason, were living. When no one answered the door, he stated that he got a sick feeling and called police. Valdez was booked into the Salt Lake County jail without bail on charges of homicide after admitting that he beat Ms. Andreason to death.

Every year, domestic violence impacts Utah neighborhoods and families. During the first half of 2010, eight people died due to domestic violence. The tragic loss of loved ones due to domestic violence affects not only the victim and perpetrator but their children, extended families, neighborhoods and communities. This year's eight fatalities from January 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> include four cohabitant homicides, one perpetrator suicide and three domestic violence related homicides. Victims ranged in age from 36 years to 73 years old.

It is crucial to recognize that domestic violence occurs in all communities, without respect to income, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual preference, age or disability. Risk factors include—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.

“In the previous year, 4731 individuals lived in domestic violence shelters and domestic violence transitional housing to stay safe.” according to Moises Prospero, Chair of the Utah Domestic Violence Council, “ In order 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 mid-year report of the Utah Domestic Violence Council is evidence that people can die when domestic violence occurs.” The full 2010 Year-to-Date Domestic Violence Related Death list and other domestic violence-related information is available on the Utah Domestic Violence Council website located at [www.udvc.org](http://www.udvc.org).

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse, tell someone. **For immediate help call 9-1-1.** If you decide to leave a violent relationship, make a plan ahead of time, and do not act alone. Call the Utah Domestic Violence Link-Line at 1-800-897-LINK (5465) 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 abuser, there is also help available for you through the Link-Line. Remember, there’s no excuse for abuse. End domestic violence by breaking the silence.