

UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:

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United Way of the Midlands Recognizes Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence and/or sexual assault will affect one in three women¹ and one in seven men² at some point in their lives. In recognition of October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is raising awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence in our community.

"We want people to know that domestic violence happens more often in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro than many people assume," said Heather Tomczak, UWM director, community impact. "Last year alone, local organizations received more than 11,000 crisis calls related to domestic violence."

As part of the effort to raise awareness, UWM has produced a Community Spotlight video featuring Tomczak and Elizabeth Power, director of marketing and public relations at the Women's Center for Advancement. The video will be released on the organization's website and social media platforms. UWM will also support the effort to create awareness by sharing a series of social media posts, developing website content and sponsoring an Omaha World-Herald story about domestic violence.

"Change starts with awareness," said Tomczak. "When our community understands domestic violence and its impact on individuals, we can work together to help survivors get the support they need."

Outside of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, UWM has developed a number of partnerships that raise awareness in order to ensure community members can better meet the needs of survivors. For example, through its involvement in Omaha's Trauma Informed Community initiative, UWM is working together with community partners to ensure every organization or person that comes into contact with a victim of trauma will be able to recognize, understand and respond to that trauma appropriately.

With the support of generous donors, UWM also invests in four local programs that provide support to survivors of domestic abuse through safe shelter, counseling and legal services: Domestic Violence Services – The Shelter at the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Omaha, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program – The Phoenix House at the Catholic Charities Diocese of Des Moines/Council Bluffs, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Program at Heartland Family Service and Domestic Abuse/Sexual Assault Safety Services at the Women's Center for Advancement. Last year, these programs provided more than 17,000 services to support survivors of domestic violence.

"To anyone who is experiencing domestic violence, we want you to know help is out there," said Tomczak. She encouraged anyone in need of domestic violence or sexual assault services to call the Women's Center for Advancement 24/7 hotline at 402-345-7273, the Catholic Charities 24/7 Hotline at 402-558-5700, the Heartland Family Service 24/7 Hotline at 800-523-3666 or the Catholic Charities Des Moines 24/7 Hotline at 712-328-0266.

For more information about UWM's efforts to support individuals who have experienced domestic violence, please visit <http://www.unitedwaymidlands.org/old-investment/crisis-intervention/>.

About the United Way of the Midlands

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands is not only focused on addressing our community's human needs today; it is focused on what can be, and what should be. It is building on today's strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. United Way is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, United Way is COMMUNITY STRONG. We invite you to visit www.UnitedWayMidlands.org for more information.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

2 The National Domestic Violence Hotline. Get the Facts & Figures.