

First Lady Mary Pat Christie Names Partners for Women and Justice Co-Founder Jane Hanson A New Jersey Hero For Efforts To Empower Domestic Abuse Victims

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Trenton, NJ – After leaving a position in the private sector, Jane Hanson wanted to make a difference. In doing so, she co-founded Partners for Women and Justice in Montclair, a non-profit that provides legal assistance and guidance to women endeavoring to break away from abusive relationships and begin a new life for themselves and their children. Ten years later, the organization has assisted thousands by empowering and providing hope to low-income women and victims of domestic violence. Today, First Lady Mary Pat Christie honored Jane Hanson as a New Jersey Hero for her leadership and commitment to improve and protect the lives of women and children in the state.

"I am so deeply inspired by the work Jane and Partners for Women and Justice are doing to help women who may not be able to advocate for themselves," said Mrs. Christie. "Domestic violence and abusive relationships are perilous actions that no woman or child should ever have to endure. Partners for Women and Justice is providing an important safety and support mechanism to keep victims and their children safe while helping them to rebuild a successful life without violence. I am proud to name Jane Hanson a New Jersey Hero."

Since 2002, Partners for Women and Justice has offered quality legal assistance in domestic violence and family law matters to low-income, abused women in Essex, Morris and Union counties. The organization also provides guidance to promote financial competence and independence. Staff works with pro-bono attorneys to serve clients in a variety of ways, including protective orders, visitation arrangements and fair awards of child and spousal support. Over time, this work has translated into millions of dollars of free services to women in need.

"I am humbled by this recognition. It really belongs to our clients who have the courage to say 'Enough, no more' and who risk standing up against an abusive partner, to our tireless and dedicated staff who on a daily basis, advocate for our clients and their children, to our many volunteer attorneys who are committed to the idea of equal access to justice, to the dedicated trustees who have guided and led Partners for Women and Justice, and to the many funders and donors who make it possible for us to do our work," said Jane Hanson, Executive Director and co-founder of Partners for Women and Justice. I am also grateful to the First Lady for her interest in shedding light on the still pervasive problem of domestic violence and the need to help vulnerable women and their children find safety and peace."

According to the 2010 Domestic Violence Offense Report prepared by the New Jersey State Police, there were 74,244 domestic violence offenses reported by the police in 2010, a 1 percent increase compared to 2009. Overall, females were victims in 75 percent (55,919) of all domestic violence offenses. Wives comprised 18 percent of that total and ex-wives were 3 percent of the reported domestic violence offenses in 2010. Children were involved or present during 31 percent of all domestic violence offenses occurring in 2010.

During her visit, Mrs. Christie met with clients and participated in a roundtable discussion about the obstacles they face and the types of assistance they are receiving from Partners for Women and Justice. For more information about Partners for Women and Justice, visit www.pfwj.org/

New Jersey Heroes is an initiative of First Lady Mary Pat Christie that showcases the positive and unique ways people and organizations are impacting New Jersey and their communities. To nominate a hero, go to <http://newjerseyheroes.org> and follow the application instructions and submit the person you believe is a true New Jersey Hero.

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