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First Lady Mary Pat Christie Supports Domestic Violence Awareness As Drumthwacket Goes Purple Thursday October 19

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

 Tags: [First Lady](#)


Trenton, NJ – First Lady Mary Pat Christie announced today that Drumthwacket, the Governor's Official Residence in Princeton, will *Go Purple* Thursday evening, October 19 to show her support of domestic abuse victims and their families during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic abuse is a repetitive pattern of behaviors, including—physical abuse, sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse, and economic deprivation – utilized to maintain power and control over an intimate partner.



Drumthwacket Goes Purple for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

abuse.”

“*Go Purple Thursday* is an opportunity to raise awareness, support survivors and take a stand against domestic violence by wearing or displaying the color purple,” said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. “It’s critically important that we dispel the stigma associated with domestic abuse so that its victims and survivors can speak openly about their experiences without judgement and to empower them to rebuild their lives with confidence. During my tenure as First Lady, I’ve had an opportunity to see some amazing organizations in action aiding domestic abuse victims with vital advocacy and assistance services. It’s that commitment that is providing victims and their families with real hope and a chance for a life free of

According to the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, on average 24 people per minute are victims of physical violence and abuse. Over the course of one year that number equals more than 12 million women and men. Additionally, one in four women have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner, while one in seven men has experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime.

In New Jersey, there were 61,659 domestic violence offenses reported by police in 2015, a one percent decrease compared to the 62,055 reported in 2014, according to a 2015 report on domestic violence prepared by the New Jersey State Police. Assaults accounted for 43 percent (26,413) and harassment accounted for 43 percent (26,338) of the reported offenses in 2015. Overall, females were victims in 74 percent (45,778) of all domestic violence offenses. Additionally, children were involved or present during 28 percent of all domestic violence offenses occurring in 2015.

Through her New Jersey Heroes Foundation, First Lady Mary Pat Christie has honored four organizations for their commitment and advocacy on behalf of domestic abuse victims, including:

Jane Hanson co-founded *Partners for Women and Justice* in Montclair, a non-profit that has provided legal assistance and guidance since 2002 to women endeavoring to break away from abusive relationships and begin a new life for themselves and their children. The organization has assisted thousands by empowering and providing

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hope to low-income women and victims of domestic violence in Essex, Morris, and Union counties. 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. For more information about *Partners for Women and Justice*, visit www.pfwj.org/

Asia D. Smith, a survivor of domestic violence herself, is the founder and CEO of *Purple R.E.I.G.N.*, a non-profit advocacy agency specializing in programs and services for those impacted by physical and sexual assault. Smith works daily to heal and empower victims, especially those in underserved communities and operates in partnership with the Bessie Mae Women's Health Center in East Orange to provide a comprehensive range of services that includes: preventative strategies, crisis intervention counseling, advocacy, and educational workshops. For more information visit purple Reignss.org/ or call 973-93PURPL (78775).

Cathy Stephens, who also had a personal experience with domestic violence, is director of client services for *Jersey Battered Women's Services* (JBWS services) in Morristown. For nearly four decades, JBWS has worked to protect victims of domestic violence and their families, serving more than 20,000 people through myriad services, including residential services, community counseling, and legal advocacy. For more information, visit www.jbws.org/

Katelyn Darrow, founder of *Angels of God Clothing Closet* in Pitman, along with her mother and sisters, were victims of domestic violence, escaping from their abuser in the middle of the night, with only the clothes on their backs. Years later, tragedy struck again when a house fire displaced her family. Darrow started the 501(c)(3) organization in 2009 at the age of 12, to give back to those in need in her community who helped her family through tough times. *Angels of God Clothing Closet* has assisted more than 27,000 families since 2009 and has grown the non-profit into a true community outreach organization. For more information, visit <https://angelsofgod.org/>

While domestic violence is considered to be a chronically under-reported crime, there are tools that people in New Jersey can use to take action.

New Jersey's Department of Children and Families has in place an array of programs that provides shelter, a phone hotline, and emergency response. Information and referral, counseling, support groups, children's advocacy services, community education, as well as financial, legal, housing, and general advocacy also are available. The Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline, **1-800-572-SAFE, (7233)** operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to serve domestic violence victims and provides information about domestic violence services.

Governor Christie has proclaimed October 2017 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in New Jersey. A copy of the Governor's Proclamation is attached.

Photo Caption: Drumthwacket Goes Purple for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

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