**October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

Valley Mayors Commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness Month with the AVON Program for Women & Justice at O'Connor House

Marking the importance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Valley mayors are stepping up and helping to raise awareness about the significant impact that domestic violence has on our community.

City of Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton attended a press conference at the City of Phoenix Family Advocacy Center on October 4 with Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers to commemorate the month. Mayor Stanton recognized the positive steps that the Phoenix Police Department has taken to train officers about recognizing and handling domestic violence situations, which represent around 42,000 of the calls that police respond to each year.

The press conference also unveiled an interactive Web map showing locations where victims can find outreach and advocate services. This tool was developed through:

**Take Action:**

Pledge to Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

**Events:**

"Wear Purple Day"
Plan to raise awareness for domestic violence by wearing purple on Wednesday, October 24

Let your colleagues and friends know to participate!

O'Connor House Salon Series:
Human Trafficking in Arizona
Date: Friday, October 26
4:00 - 5:30 PM
Join Our Guest Lecturers:
Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, ASU professor of clinical social work
&
Lieutenant James Gallagher, Phoenix Police Department
As they discuss this important issue and its prevalence in Arizona.

O'Connor House
1230 North College Ave
in Tempe
Space is limited * RSVP to info@oconnorhouse.org
a collaboration between the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Avon Program for Women & Justice at O'Connor House. Victim advocate services are a key area of focus for our Program moving forward.

On October 5, 2012 Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell helped to launch our Program's pledge to Speak Out Against Domestic Violence. We hope to secure 50,000 signatures over the next year from elected officials, community leaders, employers and the community at large pledging take action and take the pledge to Speak Out Against Domestic Violence:

I pledge to speak out against domestic violence by:
- Speaking up for those who are victims of abuse in my family, community, and at work, or school;
- Encouraging and supporting policies that protect victims of domestic violence, and hold people who abuse responsible; And,
- Setting an example for my family, friends and community by fostering a safe environment.

Victims and Families Share Stories from AZ Diamonbacks Game

Several weeks ago, we hosted a booth at the Arizona Diamondbacks game to share our posters and raise awareness about domestic violence in the state. Our booth volunteer Salomae Schroeder talked with many guests and provided them with information. Several of the guests she spoke with sent in letters, which we wanted to share to let you know that together we are making a difference.
difference in the lives of domestic violence victims and their families in our community.

"My sister was killed by her abusive boyfriend a few years ago. Our family tried to get her to leave, but she didn’t and now is gone. I’ve been angry at her for not leaving, but when I spoke to the person at your booth she helped me to realize that my sister could not leave. Today is the first day that I feel at peace with myself, and have prayed for my sister to forgive me. I feel a burden lifted." Thank you - Bill

"My 23-year old daughter is in a physically and verbally abusive relationship with her high school sweetheart. For years I’ve tried to convince her to leave, including threatening her. I spoke with your representative at the game and received good advice that I have to stop threatening her, and let her make the decision. I brought home a poster and gave it to her. The next evening my daughter came and told us that she called the hot line on the poster and she will be getting help and leaving her boyfriend. Words cannot explain how I feel right now knowing my daughter has a future. I know my daughter made this decision. I am grateful for your rep’s advice to change my approach and let her make the decision." Thank you - L

"A few nights ago I attended the game with my husband, his business partner and his wife who has confided in me that her husband is very abusive. Many times I’ve tried to help her leave, but she makes excuses for him and says he promised to not do it again.”

"While we at the game we went to find your booth where the woman listened patiently to my friend. She was extremely compassionate and told my friend that it was not her fault that her husband treats her that way and that she is not responsible for his behavior and she deserves to be happy. Most importantly she said that if a man loves you he won’t beat you.”

"The next morning my friend called and asked for the number
from your postcard, saying she was making the call. A few minutes ago I heard from her and she told me that she left today and that she is in a safe place and will be getting the help she needs. Thank you so very much” - T

The Avon Program for Women & Justice:
The Avon Program for Women and Justice was established in 2009 by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and it is funded by a grant from the Avon Foundation. The program convenes a diverse and multi-disciplinary group of participants and experts from across the state to examine the issue of domestic violence and to build collaborations for improving policies and positively impacting the services available for victims. The Program engages Arizona leaders and the community using a civil, fact-based process to develop and implement creative but practical solutions to resolve difficult and often divisive problems. However, the Avon Program for Women and Justice does not provide direct domestic violence services.

If you are in need of help, call 911 or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233