

WRC

Women's Resource Centre

(Hamilton, Bermuda – October 9, 2008) The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) today announces that they are launching a new website to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which occurs around the world in October each year.

The website – www.wrcbermuda.com – aims to help victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by linking them with helping services in the Bermuda community. “The Women's Resource Centre has had a website for some time now,” explains Kathy Harriott, Executive Director, “but it wasn't the helping tool we knew that it could be. For some people, just realizing they are victims of abuse is a difficult process, and we wanted our website to serve as a first point of contact for people seeking more information or looking for help. For many victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, it can be difficult to seek help, whether because of fear or because of a desire to remain anonymous. Our website allows victims to research information and seek help in a way and at a time that is comfortable for them.”

In Bermuda, domestic violence and sexual assault are serious crimes, but they often go unreported. As a result, accurate statistics are hard to come by. Research in other jurisdictions suggests that as many as one in four women are affected by domestic violence in their lifetime. There are a number of different definitions of domestic violence but, generally, domestic violence is physical, psychological, sexual or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

“All forms of domestic violence have to do with the abuser's need for control,” says Ms. Harriott. “The abuse is never the victim's fault, although the abuser often makes them believe it is. Domestic violence is repetitive and life threatening, and it tends to worsen over time. Our goal in creating this new website is to put as much accurate information out there as possible, including an explanation of the different forms of domestic violence, information about our confidential hotline, facts about victim's rights, and tips for developing a safety plan when you are in an abusive relationship.”

Domestic Violence Awareness Month evolved from the first Day of Unity observed in October 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence in the United States. The intent was to connect battered women's advocates across the nation who were working to end violence against women and their children. In October 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed.

In Bermuda, the WRC is marking Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a “Take Back the Night Walk” on October 24 which will depart from Albouys Point at 7 p.m. For more information, contact the WRC on 295-3882.

- Ends -

Note to Editors:

The Women's Resource Centre is a non-profit, registered charity providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and support for other issues women may be trying to resolve. The Women's Resource Centre was founded in 1987 as the Rape Crisis Centre, a crisis intervention service for survivors of sexual assault. In 1992, the organisation's name was changed to the Women's Resource Centre to reflect an expanded service offering which included a counselling programme, 24-hour crisis hotline and a community education programme. In 1994, the Court Advocate Programme was established to provide protection through the courts to victims of domestic violence. The Family Reunification Programme was established in 1998 to provide assistance to parents of children in foster care. This programme has since been replaced with parenting programmes and individual counselling.

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