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Census Reveals a Snapshot of Violence in America:

Hard economic times mean greater danger

(February 11, 2009) Washington, DC – On one day in America over 20,000 victims of domestic violence and their children fled their homes because they feared for their lives. Hungry and afraid, they left most of their possessions behind looking for a safe place to sleep and a new start. These victims were met by domestic violence advocates who all too often struggle to meet their most basic needs. Housing, food and safety are just the beginning for someone who must begin again. This is just one of the statistics gathered from the latest survey conducted by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV).

Every year NNEDV conducts a 24-hour survey of domestic violence programs across the country to capture a snapshot of domestic violence and service providers in the United States. Despite the many victims that received services, an additional 8,927 requests for assistance were unmet because of limited funding.

“The current economy is very troubling for us,” said an advocate from a Texas domestic violence program. “In this coming year, we’re worried private donors will give less because of the economic downturn. We’ll have to cut hours and staff, which will prevent us from providing a full range of services in our rural area.”

“During a time of economic uncertainty, when there are not enough jobs and even less resources, domestic violence victims are directly affected,” said Sue Else, president of NNEDV. “Right now, victims are unable to meet even their most basic needs. As employment opportunities and safe housing becomes increasingly scarce women and children are left more vulnerable to violence.”

Released today, the National Census of Domestic Violence Services reported that on September 17, 2008, despite difficulty in raising funds for core services, domestic violence programs nation-wide provided services to 60,799 adults and children in just one day. Additionally—

- Over 20,300 adults and children sought refuge in emergency shelter.
- More than 10,000 adults and children were living in transitional housing.
- Over 30,300 adults and children received non-residential services, such as counseling, legal advocacy, and children support groups.
- Over 21,500 domestic violence hotline calls were answered.

As in years past, this year’s census paints an appalling picture of the problem. But even more disturbing is another picture: the frightening reality of a bad economy that hits victims of domestic violence especially hard.

The National Census of Domestic Violence Services is available online at www.nnedv.org/census.

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About NNEDV

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing public education, training and technical assistance to maintain and develop the professional expertise of advocates working to end domestic violence. NNEDV strives to strengthen advocates as organizers and activists in the tradition of social change movements. For more information, please visit www.nnedv.org.