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New Domestic Violence Court In Spokane

YWCA Spokane, the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition, and Spokane Superior Court Partner Under New Grant To Bring A Specialized Court To Spokane Focused on Addressing Domestic Violence.

Spokane WA - YWCA Spokane and the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition (SRDVC) received a \$550,000 Justice For Families grant from the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women this October, 2021, to create and implement a Domestic Violence (DV) Court in Spokane.

The Justice For Families grant will allow YWCA Spokane, SRDVC, and Spokane Superior Court to address domestic violence in a specialized court setting that will include alternative judicial processing. Trained legal advocates will provide trauma-informed support to victims. Judges and court personnel who understand the complex and dynamic aspects of domestic violence will be available and treatment options will focus on a therapeutic, whole family approach to domestic violence proceedings.

"This grant is an incredible win for Spokane", states **Annie Murphey**, Director of the SRDVC. "This specialized court is designed to respond to the profound impact domestic violence has on families in our community by ensuring victims have access to trauma informed advocates and offenders have the tools they need to reduce recidivism."

The SRDVC has been a hub for the Coordinated Community Response efforts between victim service agencies, law enforcement, and branches of the courts since the early 1990's. In support of the new DV Court, SRDVC will provide a Court Coordinator who prepares and delivers additional information for the Judge including input from victims, lethality assessment findings, firearm purchases, and initial assessment results. They will also work with grant and community partners to identify additional services and resources needed for family members in the household, including children and offenders.

Through this grant partnership, YWCA Spokane will provide free legal advocacy support that will offer victims safety planning services as well as help with accessing community resources including counseling, therapy, economic empowerment, shelter, and housing. YWCA's legal advocates will voice any victim concerns with an offender's progress, assist in filing for protection orders, and provide other forms of advocacy and support as needed by the victims.

"Our team at YWCA Spokane is excited to partner with the SRDVC and the Spokane Superior Court to bring this critical model of support to Spokane", states **Jeanette Hauck**, CEO of YWCA Spokane. "It facilitates is a holistic approach to addressing a prevalent issue in our community."

About Domestic Violence In Spokane

Residents of Spokane County bear a disproportionate burden of many forms of violence. The rate of domestic violence calls to law enforcement in the county is nearly twice the state level. This is a trend that has only worsened over time. Spokane has the highest rates of Domestic Violence in Washington State with over 3,300 reported domestic violence cases annually accounting for 25% of all criminal cases. Domestic violence is the number one call to law enforcement annually. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated isolation, stress, and issues of violence resulting in an increase of domestic violence cases in our court systems.

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Learn more about the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition at endtheviolencespokane.org. Learn more about YWCA Spokane at ywcasokane.org/impact. The Spokane community is encourage to join both organizations this October as they recognize National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.