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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Information and Resources Workshop to Assist Homeless Victims of Domestic Violence**

*County of Santa Clara and Community Agencies Partnering with INNVISION  
to Address the Needs of Underserved Population*

**SAN JOSE-CALIF.**— Today, the County of Santa Clara Domestic Violence Information and Resource Collaborative, in partnership with INNVISION will host a **Domestic Violence Information and Resource Workshop**. The goal of today's workshop is to connect victims and families who are homeless or currently residing in shelters with more than 30 agencies, services and resources throughout Santa Clara County.

"Many victims are not sure if what is happening to them is considered domestic violence; they do not know how to report incidents and where to get help," said Supervisor Don Gage, Vice Chair of the Board's Children, Seniors and Families Committee. "We have assisted hundreds of victims and individuals through these workshops. We will continue to provide this service because the needs in this area are significant and quite complex."

Census figures indicate that 92 percent of homeless women have experienced severe physical and/or sexual assault at some point in their lives. Results from the 2004 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey found nearly one in three respondents had experienced domestic violence during their lifetime (a low estimate due to under-reporting of such incidents).

"A major cause of homelessness in Santa Clara County is domestic violence," said Esther Peralez-Dieckmann, Director of the County's Office of Women's Policy. "A partnership between the DVIR Collaborative and INNVISION is crucial to help the victims."

**-more-**

In 2007, Santa Clara County had four domestic violence-related deaths and the District Attorney brought charges on 3,162 cases; this equates to 60 brand new cases of domestic violence each week in Santa Clara County. Children were present in 827 cases, 88 of the victims were pregnant and 66 victims were teenagers.

“Even though less than 10 percent of our clients admit to it, we suspect that approximately half of the 16,000 clients we serve annually have dealt with domestic violence issues,” said Lorena Collins, senior director of Program Services at INNVISION. “This partnership will better equip our clients to recognize the signs of a domestic violence relationship and to seek resources and support that is available to them.”

The County of Santa Clara Domestic Violence Information and Resources Collaborative has conducted seven workshops of this type in the past 16 months to expand awareness and promote resources and information about domestic violence. This is the first time homeless victims are the focus of the workshops.

Participating agencies on today’s workshop include more than 30 public and community agencies, including the County of Santa Clara Office of Women’s Policy, Office of Senator Elaine Alquist, Office of Assembly member Joe Coto, Mental Health, Social Services Agency, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation, Sheriff, Criminal Domestic Violence Court, Family Court, Drug Court, Delinquency Court, Dependency Court, Child Support, substance abuse counseling and emergency services. Representatives will share resources and answer questions about navigating the court system, working with law enforcement, housing and shelter, immigration/legal/tax services, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and emergency and social services.

The Domestic Violence Information and Resources Workshop will take place today, Tuesday, May 27, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at INNVISION’s Georgia Travis Center, located at 297 Commercial Street, San José.

**WARNING: To protect confidentiality and safety of victims, still or video cameras will NOT be allowed at the workshop.** Reporters are encouraged to conduct interviews prior to the event to inform residents of the services that will be provided.

Parking, child supervision, dinner, interpreters in Spanish and Vietnamese will be provided at no cost to participants. Free Transportation available, if needed. To schedule a ride, or for more information call (408) 299- 5135 or email [dvirworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:dvirworkshops@gmail.com)

**Services at Domestic Violence Workshop and Resource Fair include representatives from:**

- INNVISION
- County of Santa Clara Social Services Agency
- District Attorney's Office
- Public Defender's Office
- Probation Department
- **Courts:** Criminal Domestic Violence Court, Family Court, Drug Court, Delinquency Court, Dependency Court and Child Support Court. Judges and commissioners will be present to answer questions
- Immigration services
- Legal services – advice and assistance with your forms
- Housing resources
- Domestic violence agencies and Batterers intervention programs
- Children's counseling services – including information about free services for your children and First 5
- Drug and alcohol counseling services
- Employment benefits
- TANF (Temporary Assistance For Needy Families), food stamps, CalWorks – including application forms
- Victim Witness – learn if you qualify for money to move
- Dozens of other resource information tables

**Background on the Domestic Violence Information and Resources Collaborative**

Through the work of the Domestic Violence Council’s Court Systems Committee, originally chaired by Judge Len Edwards, a significant need was identified to better inform victims of domestic violence about the process of reporting and connecting with support and resources to break the cycle of violence. As funding for domestic violence community education and prevention has continued to dwindle, the Superior Courts, led by Judge Erica Yew, engaged a small group of volunteer stakeholders to organize and begin a series of public workshops to provide basic information to community members in the hopes that potential victims of domestic violence could learn more about how the system works and how to connect with help and resources.

In the fall of 2007, the Santa Clara County Office of Women’s Policy partnered with the Superior Court to convene the core planning group and provide coordination and support to expand public awareness and participation in these workshops. Over the last 16 months, 7 workshops have been held across Santa Clara County and attendance has grown from approximately 60 participants and providers to 200 in the most recent workshop. Outreach has also been expanded to underserved communities.

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