

Hurricane Sandy NJ Relief Fund Partners with Verizon, Department of Children and Families, and the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women To Support Domestic Violence Programs and Services

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(Trenton, NJ) - Today, New Jersey First Lady Mary Pat Christie joined officials from Verizon, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women (NJCBW) at 180 Turning Lives Around in Hazlet to announce a new partnership to address domestic violence. The partnership seeks to increase public awareness of domestic violence programs and services, especially among those most affected by Superstorm Sandy.

Today's announcement was made at 180 Turning Lives Around, Inc., a Monmouth County based non-profit organization that provides comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. They received a grant award of \$157,000 from the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund for mental health and counseling services related to the storm. The award allowed 180 Turning Lives Around to provide support to more than 400 families and conduct outreach to over 200,000 students in 352 schools affected by Hurricane Sandy

"Domestic violence affects 1 in 4 women in their lifetime and over 3 million children each year." said First Lady Mary Pat Christie, chair of the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund. "Don't let a member of our community become another statistic. I commend these organizations for spotlighting this difficult issue and proudly count 180 Turning Lives Around among the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund's more than 80 grantee partners supporting the recovery efforts in storm impacted communities."

Anna Diaz-White, executive director of 180 Turning Lives Around, Inc., said: "Hurricane Sandy unleashed devastation in our community that runs deeper than the obvious physical damage that the storm created. Depression, anxiety, violence and abuse have increased as the months have passed and families struggle to deal with the after-effects of the storm. We are so grateful to partner with the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund, the Verizon Foundation/ Verizon Wireless and the State's Department of Children and Families to address the increased needs of domestic violence victims, many of whom were affected by Sandy."

The partnership's efforts are being funded through a \$30,000 Verizon Foundation grant and a \$20,000 Verizon WirelessHopeline grant. The NJCBW'S plans include, improving its website, developing domestic violence awareness and prevention brochures, and producing a video public service announcement featuring First Lady Mary Pat Christie promoting New Jersey's domestic violence services for victims, survivors and their families.

"This generous Verizon Foundation and Hopeline of Verizon grants and the ongoing support of DCF and foundations such as the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund, enables NJCBW to increase the community's awareness of available resources, inform survivors that they are not alone, and ensure there is a safe place for them to go, wherever they live in New Jersey," said Jane Shiva, NJCBW's interim executive director.

NJCBW is a statewide association that provides leadership, support and resources on the prevention of violence against women in New Jersey.

Verizon has a long history of supporting domestic violence abuse victims. Since 2000, Verizon and the Verizon Foundation have provided more than \$65 million in grants to domestic violence prevention organizations and shelters across the county. They have funded training for healthcare practitioners and law enforcement officials; supported initiatives that encourage adult men to serve as role models to young men; and assisted in programs that teach teens about healthy relationships and prevention of teen dating violence.

Through its HopeLine initiative, Verizon Wireless puts the company's technology - and the nation's most reliable network - to work in the community by turning no-longer-used wireless phones and accessories into support for domestic violence victims and survivors.

Pat Devlin, president of Verizon Wireless' New York Metro region, said: "Superstorm Sandy sadly brought physical and emotional damage to many New Jersey families, and Verizon continues to work every day to support their long road to recovery. Thanks to the generosity of our customers who recycle their old cell phones through our Hopeline program and our Verizon Foundation, we are able to help non-profit organizations like 180 Turning Lives Around so they can continue to provide the critical services that many domestic violence survivors need in order to move forward from an unhealthy relationship. We hope this initiative will empower New Jersey's domestic violence survivors and their families who have been most affected."

DCF Commissioner Allison Blake said, "Families affected by natural disasters face enormous stress that can outstretch their ability to cope. We know from previous natural disasters that the product of this stress, which includes an increase in the incidence of domestic violence, can be seen for up to two years after a disaster. Thanks to Verizon's support to the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, information and awareness of domestic violence programs and services will reach an even greater audience, especially those affected by Superstorm Sandy."

DCF is dedicated to ensuring the safety, well-being and success of children, youth, families and communities. DCF's Division of Family and Community Partnerships oversees the state's domestic violence programs. There is at least one DCF-designated lead domestic violence program, including a shelter with a 24-hour hotline and response, in each of New Jersey's 21 counties. Information and referral, counseling, support groups, financial, legal, housing, children's services, community education and general advocacy are also provided. To learn more and to view a list of services by county, visit:

<http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/families/dfcp/index.html>.

The New Jersey Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The toll-free number is 1-800-572-SAFE (7233).

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