



For immediate release

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Spotlight on Teen Dating Violence

Teens eager to learn how to help friends who are in violent dating relationships

ATLANTA, March 13, 2010 – Groggy-eyed with that just rolled out of bed look, 150 teens, parents and volunteers turned out early on Saturday to learn about teen dating violence. The first annual *Spotlight On Teen Dating Violence: What's Your Role?* presented by Partnership Against Domestic Violence helped teens and parents identify the warning signs and discover what their role is in preventing dating violence. For many attendees the summit was an eye-opener, as one teen shared, "It changed my view of teen dating violence....this is definitely something I'll tell my friends about."

"Parents should know that their teens and pre-teens as young as 12-years-old are dating, even though they may not be aware of it," said Cathy Willis Spraez, president and CEO of Partnership Against Domestic Violence. "It's important to teach teens about building healthy relationships while learning to recognize abusive patterns."

Teens are inexperienced with dating relationships. And girls are also under a lot of pressure to have a boyfriend regardless of how he treats her. In fact, nearly 80 percent of girls who have been physically abused in their dating relationships continue to date their abuser.

As more teens begin dating at an earlier age, teen dating violence is becoming more prevalent. One in four teens report verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse in their dating relationship. Consider these facts:

- Thirty percent of all homicides of girls ages 15 to 19 are committed by their boyfriends.
- 1 in 3 teens reports knowing a friend or peer who has been physically abused by their partner.

PADV's *Spotlight On Teen Dating Violence: What's Your Role?* was held on March 13, 2010, at Clark Atlanta University. Beyonce, Hot 107.9 radio personality and teen survivor of dating violence, emceed the event.

PADV Background: For thirty-five years, PADV, the largest domestic violence agency in Georgia, has provided professional support, safe shelter and empowering advocacy to battered women and their children in metro Atlanta. PADV transforms the lives of thousands of domestic violence survivors and their children in metro Atlanta annually through violence prevention, emergency intervention and long-term advocacy. Operating the only state-certified domestic violence shelters in Fulton and Gwinnett Counties, PADV also offers a 24-hour crisis line, long-term housing, support groups, legal advocacy, corporate and community education and a teen dating violence prevention program. To learn more about domestic violence and PADV programs and services, please visit www.padv.org or call 404-870-9600.

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