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Contacts:  
Susan Berryman Rodriguez  
404.870.9605 or 404.273.0008  
susan@padv.org

## Domestic violence survivor honored at sold out event PADV 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Hearts with Hope

ATLANTA, February 21, 2008 -- At 4 feet 10 inches, Carrie Kerr may be diminutive in stature, but not in spirit. A domestic violence survivor and an outspoken advocate for PADV, Kerr is eager to share her story in the community to help raise awareness about domestic violence.

Kerr will be honored with the *Purple Heart with Hope* award at PADV's 20<sup>th</sup> annual *Hearts with Hope* gala on February 23. She is being honored for her courage and determination to escape her abuser. "I was a victim. I am a victim no more. I am a survivor, like a phoenix, rising from the ashes of my former life," said Kerr.

Shortly after her honeymoon, Kerr began living in constant fear. Her husband trained her on "his way" of doing everything. If she forgot "his way," he meted out the punishment. A prisoner in her own home, Kerr was afraid to leave and afraid to stay. She often felt that she deserved his mistreatment.

One of the worst incidents she experienced was also the one that helped her realize that he would kill her if she stayed. Dissatisfied with how she had cleaned the house, he picked her up by the neck and slammed her against the wall. Tears streaming down her face, Kerr's silent eyes pleaded for mercy. He strangled her until she lost consciousness. When she awoke, she found herself naked and in bed next to him. Bruised and sore, Kerr had been raped.

Kerr escaped her abusive husband while visiting her parents, but at an enormous cost. Her ex-husband retains custody of their son. Though her physical torment is over, Kerr is still struggling. She is currently fighting for custody of her son in another state, a long and expensive ordeal.

“If it weren’t for organizations like PADV, women like me wouldn’t survive,” said Kerr. “I’m grateful for the emotional support and financial assistance PADV has provided me with over the years.”

“Carrie’s steadfast commitment to self-sufficiency and her relentless drive to gain full custody of her son is an inspiration to all who have crossed her path,” said Cathy Willis Spraez, president and chief executive officer of PADV. Carrie Kerr is being honored with the fourth annual Purple Heart with Hope award.

John and Cammie Rice are the HWH co-chairs and are joined by a host committee of executives from diverse companies including: Verizon Wireless, Wal-Mart, Rock-Tenn, KPMG, Georgia Pacific, PINK magazine, AGL Resources, CompuCredit, Kilgannon, ING, AGSI, Emory University, Carestream Health, Scientific Games, Cisco, RE/MAX Metro Atlanta, UBS and many others.

More than 690 people are expected to attend the sold out black-tie *Hearts with Hope* 2008 event at the InterContinental Buckhead on February 23, 2008. The event includes a VIP reception for patrons and sponsors, cocktail hour/silent auction, dinner/live auction, and entertainment. PADV expects to surpass its \$500,000 fundraising goal.

In Georgia, 30 percent of women and girls will be abused by their partners at least once. Consider these facts:

- Georgia ranks seventh in the nation in the rate of men killing women.
- Domestic violence is the leading causes of injuries for girls and women in Georgia.
- Intimate partner violence results in 2 million injuries every year.

#### **About Partnership Against Domestic Violence**

Partnership Against Domestic Violence is the largest and one of the oldest nonprofit domestic violence organizations in Georgia. For more than 30 years, PADV has been providing professional, compassionate, and empowering support to battered women and their children in metro Atlanta. Support includes a 24-hour crisis line, two emergency shelters in metro Atlanta, transitional housing, support groups, legal advocacy, and a teen dating violence prevention program. To learn more about domestic violence and PADV programs and services, please visit [www.padv.org](http://www.padv.org).

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