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## **Atlanta nonprofit increases fundraising goal by 42 percent during a recessionary year**

*Organization that benefits battered women and  
their children sets its sights on \$1M goal*

ATLANTA, September 3, 2008 – Despite the economic downturn, Partnership Against Domestic Violence is increasing its fundraising goal by 42 percent. The organization’s signature fundraising event called *Hearts with Hope* raised a record-setting \$700,000 in February 2008. The 2009 gala will be led by co-chairs **Suzanne Sitherwood, president of Atlanta Gas Light, and her husband Guy Griswold, principal of Blue Ridge Strategies**, who have pledged to help PADV reach its goal of \$1 million. The *Hearts with Hope* gala will be held at the *InterContinental Buckhead Hotel* on February 21, 2009.

“Despite an economic recession, I’m optimistic that with support from Atlanta’s strong corporate leadership, the \$1 million fundraising goal set for PADV is attainable,” said Sitherwood. The forecast for nonprofit giving is promising. According to Giving USA, philanthropic giving has not declined during a recession for the last half century. In fact, nonprofit giving goes up during economic slumps. “The favorable outlook for nonprofit giving coupled with PADV’s compelling, urgent need should help us meet the ambitious goal,” said Griswold.

During a recent host committee reception held at AGL corporate headquarters, an impassioned Sitherwood spoke about the values of self-reliance, independence and strength of character that her father instilled in her as a young woman. She credited her success to her father and expressed excitement to be involved with PADV, an organization committed to empowering domestic violence survivors by providing them with the support, resources and tools for economic self-sufficiency and independence.

“Suzanne and Guy are natural choices to serve as co-chairs for *Hearts with Hope* because of their proven leadership in philanthropy and their commitment to community involvement,” said Cathy Willis Spraetz, president and chief executive officer of PADV. “They recognize that PADV has an enormous impact on our community that is tangible and palpable – simply put, we transform lives.”

Sitherwood and Griswold are joined by a host committee of executives from diverse companies including GE, Verizon Wireless, Rock-Tenn, KPMG, The Coca-Cola Company, IBM, Cisco, PINK magazine, Sutherland Asbill & Brennan, and many others.

The gala raises more than half of PADV’s general operating budget annually. With these funds, PADV provides quality programs and services in support of Atlanta-area battered women and their children.

More than 600 people are expected to attend the black-tie *Hearts with Hope* 2009 event. The event includes a VIP reception for patrons and sponsors, cocktail hour/silent auction, dinner/live auction, and entertainment. Tickets to the event are \$350 per person and sponsorships range from \$5,000 to \$75,000. For information or tickets, visit [www.padv.org](http://www.padv.org).

In Georgia, 30 percent of women and girls will be abused by their partners at least once. In the U.S. a woman is battered every nine seconds. Consider these facts:

- There were 78 domestic violence homicides in Georgia in 2006.
- Last year, PADV served more than 660 women and children in its two shelters and 3,000 women and children in the community.
- Intimate partner violence results in 2 million injuries every year.

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#### **Background on Suzanne Sitherwood**

Suzanne Sitherwood was named president of Atlanta Gas Light, Chattanooga Gas, and Florida City Gas and senior vice president, Southern Operations for AGL in November 2004. A graduate of Southern College of Technology with a bachelor’s degree in industrial engineering technology, Sitherwood also holds a master’s degree in business administration from Brenau University.

She currently serves on the Governor’s Energy Policy Council, Governor’s Task Force on Transportation and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board. Recently, Sitherwood has been appointed board chair of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, general co-chair of the GA Initiative, and co-chair, GAC. Sitherwood is a member of the Leadership Atlanta’s Class of 2006, and in 2007 she was the recipient of the Atlanta Woman’s Magazine 2007 Power Women’s Award and in 2001 was also a recipient of the “Divas” award by Business to Business Magazine.

#### **Background on Guy Griswold**

Guy Griswold is founder and principal of Blue Ridge Strategies (formally Griswold Lesser Public Affairs). A graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology with a degree in civil engineering, Griswold spent 24 years with Procter and Gamble.

He is a board member of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, chairman Governmental Affairs Tax Committee. Married to Suzanne Sitherwood with one grown son, Griswold is an avid outdoors person who enjoys running, hiking, cycling and hunting.

**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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