

For Immediate Release

Date: October 1, 2009

Contact: Shawn Flaherty

Creative Strategies PR

703-554-3609

**Hotline Calls Spike at Local Women's Shelter, Highlighting
Importance of October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month
*Doorways Launches Two Prevention Programs Aimed at Young Women***

ARLINGTON, Va.—As Domestic Violence Awareness Month kicks off, [Doorways for Women and Families](#), Arlington's leading provider and advocate for victims of homelessness, violence and abuse, is experiencing a 56 percent increase in hotline calls this year, a sign that domestic violence prevention remains exceptionally important. In response, Doorways is launching two programs in October—The Red Flag Campaign and Healthy Relationships seminars—targeted to helping young women break the cycle of domestic violence.

“The economy is definitely putting more women at risk of abuse. Our phones are ringing off the hook with women asking for help. Unfortunately, due the recession, we are also seeing more women afraid to leave their abusers because they don't think they can make it on their own,” explained Linda Dunphy, Doorways' executive director. “That's why it is more important than ever to educate women—especially young women—about healthy relationships, so we are targeting our October efforts to them.”

Dating violence on college campuses is an epidemic affecting 33 percent of women between the ages of 16-24 nationally. With a Verizon Foundation grant, Doorways is partnering with area colleges on [The Red Flag Campaign](#), a dating violence awareness effort that educates young adults about how to recognize the warning signs of dating violence as well as the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

As part of the campaign, Doorways will be offering dating violence awareness classes at several local universities starting in October, including Northern Virginia Community College, George Mason, Marymount and the Art Institute of Washington. The campaign also includes partnerships with these schools' Women's Centers, poster and flag displays, monthly movie events and discussions about healthy relationships and dating violence, brown bag discussions, and faculty and student group outreach.

The second program Doorways is offering in observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month is Healthy Relationships and Parents 101, a free seminar on October 14th from 7-8:30pm at Doorways' headquarters. The seminar is designed to help parents learn to spot the warning signs of teen dating violence, talk to their children about healthy relationships, and find helpful resources.

More information about domestic violence prevention, including instructions on how to sign up for these programs, is available on [Doorways](#) web site or by calling 703-522-8858.

ABOUT DOORWAYS FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

For 30 years, Doorways for Women and Families, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, strives to end homelessness and family and intimate partner violence by offering safe shelter and housing, life changing support services and community advocacy. Recognized as a well-managed leader and innovator, Doorways has received numerous accolades, including the Washington Post's Excellence in Nonprofit Management, Charity Navigator's Four Stars for financial responsibility and *Washingtonian Magazine's* Great Charities list. www.doorwaysva.org