



Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
320, 10310 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5J 2W4
Tel: (780) 456-7000

Media Release
For Immediate Release
April 19, 2010

Silent Witnesses Speak the Stories for Victims

(EDMONTON) - "*Every Victim Matters*" is the theme of this year's National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, taking place across Canada from April 18 to 24, 2010. Activities across the country are focusing on raising awareness of services available to victims of crime in Canada, as well as further exploring new ways to reach out to victims of crime to let them know their experiences matter.

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) is featuring their new Silent Witness exhibit to generate awareness about victims of domestic abuse. ACWS's exhibit features life-sized, free-standing, bright-red silhouettes, each bearing the name of an Alberta victim and the circumstances of their domestic-violence related murder.

"The Silent Witnesses help us understand that there are many victims of domestic violence living in every community in Alberta," said Carolyn Goard, Director of Member Programs and Services for ACWS, "and that domestic abuse can escalate and lead to the deaths of these victims and their children."

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters will commemorate the Week by airing PSA's about the Silent Witnesses on CTV, displaying the Silent Witnesses at locations in the downtown core and conducting media interviews to bring awareness to the issue. The Silent Witness exhibit is available for use by families and friends of victims and community groups wanting to raise awareness around the province. To call to arrange for an exhibit in your community, call ACWS at (780)456-7000.

Background:

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is an umbrella non-profit association comprised of 42 member shelters throughout the province. ACWS conducts action-based research projects, organizes training for frontline shelter workers and generates awareness about issues related to domestic abuse.

National Victims of Crime Awareness Week 2010 will be launched in Ottawa today by the federal Ministers of Justice and Public Safety, and victims, victim advocates and representatives working in the area of victim issues will gather for the fifth annual Federal Symposium hosted by the Government of Canada. For more information on National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, visit: www.victimswweek.gc.ca.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Christie Lavan, *Communications & Partnerships*
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
Tel: 780-456-7000 ext. 222
communications@acws.ca