

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Local domestic violence agency promoting events around dating violence prevention**

HAMPTON, VA<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>Transitions Family Violence Services, a domestic violence agency serving the Peninsula, is encouraging area groups and schools to hold events around National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week, from February 6 – February 10, 2006.

By unanimous consent, the United States Senate passed resolution S. Res. 275 designating the week of February 6 – 10 as National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week. On the website for the teen violence prevention group Break the Cycle, Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) championed the measure by saying “Teen dating violence – including physical, emotional, and sexual assault – is a reality for many American teenagers. Like drug abuse, it’s a reality which many parents may miss.” The resolution encourages national and local governments, public and private organizations and officials to promote activities in their communities that raise awareness about the unfortunate frequency of teen dating violence and prevention strategies.

Teen dating violence is a widespread and devastating problem. In a recent study, Liz Claiborne Inc. found that 1 in 3 teenagers report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their partner, and nearly 1 in 5 teenage girls who have been in a relationship said a boyfriend had threatened violence or self-harm if presented with a break-up. It also found that more than 1 in 4 teenage girls in a relationship (26%) report enduring repeated verbal abuse, and 80% of teens regard verbal abuse as a “serious issue” for their age group.

**Area schools and youth groups that are interested in having a speaker or conducting an event or presentation around teen dating violence should contact Julia Campbell at (757) 728-0025.**

Transitions Family Violence Services is the largest domestic violence agency in Virginia, providing comprehensive family violence services in Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and York County. Since 1977, Transitions has provided “*a pathway to safety . . . a source of hope*” to tens of thousands of women, children and men on the Virginia Peninsula. The agency offers comprehensive and intervention programs to help families with essential needs including emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, legal advocacy, childcare and children’s services. To date, Transitions has sheltered more than 15,000 victims of abuse for 150,000 nights and has provided outreach support to many thousands more.

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