



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2021

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### **VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA ISSUES 2020 HOMICIDE REPORT**

*30 Victims of Intimate Partner Homicide Remembered During Domestic Violence Awareness Month*

SAINT PAUL – On October 1, Governor Walz issued a proclamation declaring October Domestic Violence Awareness Month. That same morning, Violence Free Minnesota, the statewide coalition of over 90 programs working to address relationship abuse, released the *2020 Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota* at a press conference featuring champions working to end gender-based violence, including Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan.

“Today we honor the 30 known people we lost last year due to intimate partner violence. My heart is with everyone who has experienced the disappearance or loss of a loved one,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. “While this violence can happen to anyone, in any community, we know that it disproportionately impacts people and communities who are already experiencing crisis. Solving issues of intimate partner violence is complex and will require early prevention interventions such as teaching our youth healthy relationship skills, addressing racial and socioeconomic inequities in housing and employment, and pursuing racial and criminal justice reform while providing safety and healing for survivors. There is so much more work we still need to do, but together we can get it done.”

The *2020 Homicide Report* provides an overview of Minnesota’s 30 known victims of intimate partner homicide alongside policy recommendations to end relationship abuse. Violence Free Minnesota has published its annual documentation of intimate partner homicide for over 30 years. Thus far in 2021, at least 21 people have been killed due to intimate partner violence in Minnesota. Two of the most recent victims were added to the count this week, following intimate partner homicides in St. Paul and Bloomington.

The report states that of the 30 known victims, 21 were killed by a current or former intimate partner, and all but one identified as women. Nine family members and bystanders are included as they were murdered in domestic violence related situations. Of those, four were friends or family members attempting to intervene and three were children under the age of two, killed alongside their mother. Four women were pregnant at the time of their murder and at least 20 minor children are now left without a parent due to intimate partner violence.

“After more than 30 years, the purpose of our report remains the same,” said Meggie Royer, Violence Free Minnesota’s Youth and Prevention Program Manager. “To illuminate a tremendous loss of life, to memorialize and center the names and lives of victims, and to push us all to take greater action to end relationship abuse in Minnesota, for ourselves and every subsequent generation.”

In addition to Lt. Governor Flanagan, the press conference to release the *2020 Homicide Report* included perspectives from Kassy Podvin, Prevention Outreach Coordinator of Anoka County Public Health; Domestic Abuse Project executive director Amirthini Keefe; and remarks from Tamara Stark, Senior Director of Housing and Youth Development at Tubman.



Particular emphasis was placed on the need for sustained funding for programs working to support victims of relationship abuse and their children, as barriers to safety have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Housing and financial stability were named as acute barriers to safety.

Minnesota's programs working with victim/survivors of domestic violence will host in person and virtual awareness events throughout the month of October to draw attention to the issue.

The *Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota* is the only document of its kind in Minnesota. A copy of the report can be found at [www.vfmn.org](http://www.vfmn.org). If you are a victim experiencing abuse, please contact DayOne at 866-223-1111 to connect with services.

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