



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2020

VIOLENCE FREE MINNESOTA ISSUES 2019 HOMICIDE REPORT

21 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. The same morning Violence Free Minnesota, the statewide coalition of over 90 programs working to address relationship abuse, released the 2019 *Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota*. The report provides an overview of Minnesota’s 21 victims of intimate partner homicide in 2019 alongside recommendations for community responses to end domestic violence.

“Every victim has a story beyond the story of their murder. It is the story of where they found joy and meaning in their life,” said Violence Free Minnesota communications director Becky Smith. “We publish this report to remember the victims and choose to use whatever power we have to change our state, our communities, and our relationships to create a violence free Minnesota.”

The report states that of the 21 known victims 16 women were killed by a current or former intimate partner. Five family members and bystanders are included as they were murdered in domestic violence related situations. Of those, three were family members attempting to intervene and two were children shot alongside their mother in their front yard. At least 23 minor children are now left without a parent due to intimate partner violence. Thus far in 2020, at least 22 people are known to have been killed due to domestic violence in Minnesota.

“We know that these deaths are not solely the result of individual acts of violence, but a culmination of collective and widespread failures across multiple systems,” said Smith. “If systems – such as housing, healthcare, and education – were to incorporate the recommendations within the 2019 Homicide Report, we know victims and our communities will be safer.”

A virtual press briefing was held to mark the beginning of Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the release of the 2019 *Homicide Report*. The press conference included perspectives from Minnesota Community Care Behavioral Health Consultant Carolina Melguizo Gentry; Ivette Izea-Martinez, Co-Director of Family Advocacy and Community Engagement at Casa de Esperanza; and remarks from Pheng Thao, 2018 Bush Fellow, founder of ManForward, and co-director of Transforming Generations.

Thao addressed the pressing need for culturally responsive programming to change abusive behaviors. Violence Free Minnesota recommended the state legislature invest in Domestic Abuse Transformation Programming (DATP) to transform behavior, prevent future violence, and increase safety.

Minnesota’s programs working with victim/survivors of domestic violence will host 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.vfmm.org. If you are a victim experiencing abuse, please contact DayOne at 866-223-1111 to connect with services.

###