



United States Department of Justice

# Office on Violence Against Women

*Working Together to End the Violence*

## Office on Violence Against Women

**DIRECTOR CINDY DYER**

### **Transcript of 2008 Domestic Violence Awareness Month Message**

Hello, I am Cindy Dyer, Director of the Office on Violence Against Women at the United States Department of Justice.

During October, designated as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2008, I urge you to renew your commitment to raising awareness and preventing this serious crime. Domestic violence continues to impact women, children, families and communities across the country and around the globe. The Office on Violence Against Women is dedicated to formulating national policy and sharing promising practices as we work together to address this serious crime.

In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act, landmark legislation, to address violence against women. Subsequent reauthorizations of the Act have enhanced its scope and we as a nation have learned more about effective intervention and prevention strategies. The expansion of the Act recognizes that the crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking impact the lives of women, and their children and families, throughout a woman's life span. We have also confirmed that specific groups—such as teens, those with disabilities, and women later in life—may be more vulnerable than others.

The 2005 reauthorization of the Act has focused attention on the need to intervene early in the lives of our teens, who are just beginning to explore intimate partner relationships as they begin dating. Healthy relationships begin at a young age. Teens face unique challenges as they learn dating behaviors in the new digital era. Research indicates that as many as twenty percent of young girls and teens have experienced some form of dating violence.

The Office on Violence Against Women is proud to support and co-sponsor with the Family Violence Prevention Fund a national education and awareness campaign targeted towards youth. Expected to launch in early 2009, this new campaign will help teens and youth recognize the signs of controlling behavior and abuse. At the Office on Violence Against Women, our goal



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is to promote healthy relationships and prevent dating violence, and future domestic violence, before it even starts.

Please join us during the month of October 2008 to help raise awareness and give a voice to all that may be victimized by violence. Through our shared resources and collaboration we can continue to make sure we are directing help and support to all of those suffering from domestic violence, whether adult or teen victims. Thank you for doing your part to assist us as we move forward to combat the crime of domestic violence.

Thank you for visiting our website and for commemorating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month with us and fellow advocates around the country. You can find resources, links to organizations, and posters that you can use to promote awareness in your own community. Thank you for doing your part to raise awareness.