



The comprehensive resource on domestic violence

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***“We will never be the same.”***

## **ODVN releases second annual Ohio domestic violence fatality review**

(Columbus, Ohio) “She’s dead. He’s got the gun in his hand!” is one of many powerful statements from witnesses in twelve months of calls to 911, and begins to tell the story of Ohio’s domestic violence fatalities. “He’s only a danger to himself.” “This guy is going off!” “It’s okay, baby, I promise it’s going to be okay;” each a different case with deadly results. Days, months and even years after the calls, Ohio families struggle in the aftermath of violence. An aunt providing a victim impact statement in a Sandusky County case this year described her attempts to answer her grieving nieces’ questions: “We have no answers...we will never be the same.”

To increase public awareness of the frequency of domestic violence fatalities, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) will release its summary of fatality statistics compiled from media reports spanning July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. The release is in conjunction with observances of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. ODVN will hold its annual Press Conference and Community Awareness event on Tuesday, October 3 at the Ohio Statehouse from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The program will include remarks from Detective Ron Kennedy of Akron, a surviving brother of domestic violence homicide victim Kristi Bice.

This year’s review found 115 fatalities in 83 cases of deadly intimate partner violence. Nearly one-third of fatal cases involved a suicide, and all of the cases of homicides-with-suicides involved guns. Nineteen people who are considered third parties to the relationship were among those killed. Jo Simonsen, a program director with ODVN, will brief attendees on additional statistical findings. “The numbers are higher than last year’s and are a jarring reminder of the ongoing horrific scope of domestic violence throughout the state. It is imperative that Ohioans have a clear accounting of the toll on families and communities,” says

Simonsen. “‘We will never be the same;’ these deaths cannot be undone; they cannot be unseen. Making the truth more visible is a necessary step toward finding strategies that may prevent future tragedies.”

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By highlighting best practices around domestic violence prevention, awareness and education, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network encourages individuals and organizations to take leadership roles in creating change. ODVN will honor one individual and two organizations with the 2017 Croucher Family Award for Outstanding Leadership.

**The Honorable Jerry Ault** of Mansfield Municipal Court will be recognized as a pioneer for implementing domestic violence specialty courts, which are used as models by the Supreme Court of Ohio. Judge Ault's domestic violence court increases collaboration between the court and community service providers. Perpetrators, post-conviction, comply with strict supervision and treatment requirements. Over 100 law enforcement, court personnel and advocates have visited Judge Ault's courtroom to learn his innovative approach to justice.

**Central State University and Paul Mitchell the School** (Columbus and Cleveland campuses) will be honored for demonstrating commitment to the health and safety of their students and communities. Each organization has implemented ODVN's *Creating Safer Ohio Campuses* project on their respective campuses. Dr. Stephanie Krah, Vice President for Student Affairs at Central State University, and Tammy Marinis, Chief Compliance Officer for Paul Mitchell the School Columbus, will accept the awards on behalf of their schools. *Creating Safer Ohio Campuses* connects data with decision-making for prevention of and response to relationship and sexual violence for a group of Ohio campuses participating in the initiative.

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Ohio Domestic Violence Network is the state's leading voice for domestic violence survivors and their allies. Founded in 1989, ODVN serves as a critical source for education, public policy and professional training. ODVN's advocacy extends to survivors, domestic violence agencies, the judicial system, healthcare, government and other organizations.

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