



The comprehensive resource on domestic violence

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Ohio DV Fatalities/p. 1 of 2

ODVN releases third annual Ohio domestic violence fatality review

(Columbus, Ohio) “Liar, disrespectful, bad temper, big ego, back stabber” are the words of an 18-year-old Guernsey County victim on a Pros and Cons list contemplating ending her relationship with a violent partner. He ended her life with a .357 Ruger, one of sixty-nine tragic cases ending ninety-one lives in unnecessary death due to domestic violence.

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, 2017 to June 30, 2018. 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 Wednesday, October 10, 2018 at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Twenty-one of the ninety-one fatalities were perpetrators who committed suicide in connection with a fatal incident, all males. Other fatalities included forty-five female victims, fourteen male victims (many of whom were third-party victims) and eleven perpetrators who were killed in incidents, most commonly by responding law enforcement officers. The number of fatalities also reflects three law enforcement officers killed in domestic violence incidents during the period, three children under five years old, an 18-year-old young woman, and an adult daughter killed alongside her mother. Jo Simonsen, Family Systems Advocacy Program Director with ODVN, will brief attendees on additional statistical findings. “While the numbers overall are down from last year’s 116 fatalities in eighty-four cases, the numbers of law enforcement and child fatalities has risen in fewer overall cases this year,” she reports. “As we calculate the toll of domestic violence for the period, we know each day in Ohio survivors are making their own careful calculations for safety,” Simonsen continues. “We can see from our review that at least 46% of these victims had ended the relationship or were in the process of ending the relationship. Protection orders, safety planning, strong public policy and training for professionals on indicators of high danger, such as strangulation, are critical to saving lives.”

Ohio DV Fatalities/p. 2 of 2

Highlighting such best practices around domestic violence service provision, prevention, awareness and education, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network recognizes individuals and organizations that have taken leadership roles in creating positive change for domestic violence survivors. ODVN will honor two individuals with the 2018 Croucher Family Award for Outstanding Leadership: Ruth Downing and Robin Bozian.

Ruth Downing has been a registered nurse for over 40 years and a forensic nurse since 1999, leading a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program for seven years. Downing has been active at the county, state, national and international levels addressing violence in communities. Her work spans domestic violence, sexual assault and trafficking. She formed Forensic Nursing Network Inc., to broaden the scope of education for health care professionals and mentor forensic nurses in rural areas of Ohio. Through this program, Downing offers a comprehensive training for nurses to become SANE certified. She is a national leader in promoting the understanding of the devastating impact of strangulation on victims of interpersonal violence serving on the advisory team for the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention at the Family Violence Justice Center Alliance in San Diego.

Robin Bozian is currently serving as the Project Managing Director for Southeastern Ohio Legal Services in Athens. Bozian is responsible for administering numerous grants including a US Department of Justice Legal Assistance to Victims program since 2005 and the Victims of Crime Act grant since 2012, greatly expanding legal services to low income victims in Southeast Ohio. She has been a driving force in her Washington County community establishing and maintaining services for domestic violence survivors through her service, since 1982, on the board of Eve, Inc. which operates the Washington County emergency shelter, transitional housing, supervised visitation and other supportive programs for domestic violence survivors. Most recently she was instrumental in bringing the national domestic violence lethality assessment program (LAP) to Washington County.

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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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