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For immediate release

Wayne County awards local groups to empower victims of domestic violence

(WAYNE COUNTY) – Four non-profits received Wayne County Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) grant funds to assist victims of domestic violence, Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano announced today.

The non-profits are: the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in Dearborn; First Step, with offices in Plymouth, Taylor and Redford; Vista Maria in Dearborn Heights; and the YWCA in Inkster.

Wayne County awarded a total of \$2 million in grant funds.

“In these challenging economic times, statistics show that domestic violence increases,” Ficano said. “We want to empower the lives of women and men in this county who are victims of domestic violence so they may begin again with a sense of safety, hope and dignity.”

According to a 2005 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study, one in four women and one in nine men are victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives.

ACCESS plans to purchase and rehabilitate vacant homes for victims of domestic violence. The Wayne County Land Bank will assist ACCESS with the project.

ACCESS provides a wide range of human and cultural services as well as advocacy work for the Arab-American community and the greater community as well.

“We would like to thank Wayne County and Mr. Ficano for their support,” said Andrea Awada, president of Access.

The Plymouth-based First Step, which provides shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence, will construct new housing units in the city of Wayne.

The YWCA and Vista Marie will use their awards to purchase and rehabilitate houses to use as transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.

“These are important projects to support,” said Tukia Mullin, chief development officer of Economic Development Growth Engine. “To provide safe havens for victims of domestic violence cannot be overstated.”

According to a 2004 Allstate Foundation National Poll on domestic violence, 43 percent ranked fear that the abuser will find the victim as the number one reason a victim would not leave his/her abuser.

“What happens during hard economic times is that victims of domestic abuse have less options out there and cannot get away from their dangerous setting,” said Judy Ellis, executive director of First Step. “These funds will allow us to provide help to otherwise desperate situations.”

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dispersed \$3.9 billion in NSP funds around the country to help governments stabilize areas hardest hit by foreclosed and abandoned properties. Under the Housing Recovery Act of 2008, Wayne County received \$25.9 million in February 2009 to address vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties.

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