



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## State and County Officials Make Concerted Effort to Stop Domestic Violence

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### STATE AND COUNTY OFFICIALS MAKE CONCERTED EFFORT TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*Senator Sue Serino and County Executive Marc Molinaro Join Together to Announce Funding for Critical Prevention Programs*

HYDE PARK, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park), Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro, local officials, members of law enforcement, Family Services, Inc. and

victims' advocates came together in front of the Hyde Park Police Department today to announce the restoration of critical funding to help stop the cycle of domestic violence and prevent local incidences of abuse.

At the urging of local officials and Family Services, Inc., Senator Serino announced that she was able to successfully secure \$75,000 to bolster the area's Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), while County Executive Marcus Molinaro announced that he was able to provide Family Services with the funding it needs to keep two domestic violence workers in the District Attorney's Office. The announcements mean that the City and Town of Poughkeepsie, the City of Beacon, and the Town of Hyde Park all benefit from an outreach worker who would be on-call the moment an incident of domestic violence is reported.

"Because it wreaks havoc on both family and community, I consider domestic abuse to be a particularly heinous crime," **said Senator Serino.** "Its cyclical nature speaks directly to the need to make the issue a priority. Victims and their families are often traumatized by the acts of violence and it's critical that highly trained personnel be there to assist the victim during a time of crisis. I am incredibly proud to deliver on behalf of the effort to provide local law enforcement the resources they need to ensure that our families and our communities are safe."

**Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said,** "Dutchess County has been a leader with an innovative and coordinated approach to domestic violence prevention. When Family Services was faced with the potential loss of one of the Victims Advocates based in the District Attorney's Office, the County was able to step in to ensure funding to maintain this vital resource, and will continue to do so in the 2016 County Budget. The funding Senator Serino has secured for Family Services will provide an even greater reach of service for the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART.) Sen. Serino continues to be a staunch advocate for

services like domestic violence prevention, veterans and mental health services and our community is grateful.”

In the past four years, there have been seven domestic homicides in Dutchess County and local police agencies respond, on average, to over ten incidents of domestic violence per day, while even more go unreported.

To reduce these startling rates, currently, serious domestic violence cases are being addressed by the innovative program and partnership between Family Services and the Town of Hyde Park Police Department through DART and LAP. Specifically, the \$75,000 in state funding will work to bolster that partnership.

DART is a multidisciplinary response to domestic violence that includes a team of professionals who address specific cases in order to improve victim safety and offender accountability. LAP complements DART by working as a prevention strategy to reduce domestic violence homicides and serious injuries by utilizing evidence-based lethality assessments at the scene of an incident and connects victims immediately with vital services. Working together, the services provided by these two programs positively impact victim safety and support, as well as increase the likelihood that the victims remain positively engaged in the criminal justice process.

**Brian Doyle, CEO of Family Services remarked:** “On behalf of the victims of domestic violence and the community at large, we are extremely grateful to Senator Sue Serino, County Executive Marcus Molinaro and Legislative Chair, Rob Rolison for their ongoing support as evidenced in these most recent examples of funding, both new and restored. There is no doubt that the close collaboration between our advocate, Melissa Massarone, and the Hyde Park Police, led by Chief Paollili makes for a greater degree of safety for individuals and the community at large.

"This critical new funding will enhance the criminal justice response to domestic violence and increase the safety of victims through a rapid, coordinated effort among law enforcement, victims' advocates, and the district attorney's office. I am proud to have worked alongside our partners at the local, county, and state levels to enhance both DART and our victim-identification survey tool, the Lethality Assessment Program. Thank you to Senator Serino for delivering the funding necessary to keep DART's four current jurisdictions operating without interruption, connecting victims to services and holding offenders accountable so that they cannot abuse again," said **Rob Rolison (District 8 -- City of Poughkeepsie), Chairman of the Dutchess County Legislature.**

**Aileen Rohr, Hyde Park Town Supervisor** said, "The Town of Hyde Park is pleased to be able to provide another tool in the tool box of our police department as they address ways to prevent domestic violence and assist victims. Our experience during this last year with a Domestic Violence officer has demonstrated the value of this important service to our families and our community and we are very grateful that this position has been funded for a second year".

**Hyde Park Chief of Police, Eric Paolilli, spoke directly to the program's importance** saying, "As Chief of the Hyde Park Police Department, I've seen first-hand the devastating and widespread effects domestic violence can have on our community as a whole. Helping victims of domestic violence comes with a particular set of challenges and this funding will provide us with a critical resource that will go a long way in helping us to improve public safety and protect local families."