



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Commemorates Domestic Violence Awareness Month by Securing Funding for Key Service Providers

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(Buffalo, NY) – State Senator Chris Jacobs (60<sup>th</sup> SD) marked Domestic Violence Awareness Month by announcing two state grants for service providers that provide assistance to victims and their families across Western New York. The Family Justice Center of Erie County and Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services of Buffalo will each be the recipient of a \$25,000 public protection grant to further their respective missions.

“When people are in a time of crisis, they need to know that they have safe and secure options where they and their families can be protected,” said Senator Jacobs. “I cannot think of a better way to shine a very important light on the lifesaving prevention and treatment services available to victims of domestic violence than by allocating funds to these two wonderful organizations.”

The Family Justice Center of Erie County provides free services to domestic violence victims and their children to help them safely escape abuse. One method they employ to assist victims in getting orders of protection from the court system is their “courtroom in a closet”, which enables victims, with the support of an advocate, to appear in court via video conference from a safe, secure location. The group intends to use their funding to expand this element of their programming.

“Thanks to Senator Jacobs’ determination to end abuse, this critical funding will allow our clients to secure emergency orders of protection from the safety of our beautiful centers via Skyping with Family Court,” said Family Justice Center Executive Director Mary Murphy. “Our experienced, passionate advocates help traumatized clients draft petitions for orders or protection, provide customized safety plans and link them to everything they need on their journey to hope, healing and safe havens. The Senator’s efforts will save lives,” Murphy added.

Crisis Services, Erie County’s only 24 hour Crisis Center, provides trauma informed crisis response services addressing issues around trauma, suicide prevention, emergency mental health, rape, domestic violence and elder abuse. Crisis Services’ Advocate Program, Erie County’s designated Rape Crisis Center and a New York State approved domestic violence provider, offers crisis intervention, supportive counseling and safety planning to domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. They will use their funding to support staff positions in their Advocate Program, including two sexual assault and domestic violence advocates

that are co-located at various college campuses across Erie County.

“We are thrilled at the support that Senator Jacobs has shown Crisis Services, specifically the efforts of the Advocate Program, and we are pleased that his funding will support our newest initiative on college campuses locally,” said Jessica Pirro, Crisis Services Chief Executive Officer. “In addition to providing intervention, support and advocacy, since co-locating on campuses we have collaborated with students, faculty and staff to prevent these crimes from happening through the use of evidence informed prevention education strategies.”

The Erie County Sheriff's Department Works closely with both Crisis Services and the Family Justice Center, and Sheriff Tim Howard joined the press conference to promote Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the importance of all of the stakeholders working together to combat this problem.

“The deputies, detectives, and Domestic Violence Unit of the Erie County Sheriff's Office work closely with these organizations to aid victims and I want to thank Senator Jacobs for providing them with additional funding,” said Sheriff Timothy B. Howard. “While October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, our efforts in preventing domestic violence incidents are year-round, and this funding will help these organizations and my agency be even more effective in combatting domestic violence.”

“Eradicating domestic violence and breaking the cycle of abuse requires education, enabling survivors to take back control of their lives and holding the offenders accountable,” said Jacobs. “The Family Justice Center and Crisis Services, with support from law enforcement agencies like the Erie County Sheriff's Department, have proven over the years that they are uniquely positioned to be very effective in these core phases of client support,” the Senator concluded.