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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 9, 2018

**Domestic Violence Hits the North Shore**

*A Safe Place domestic violence programs serve every Chicagoland community*

**LAKE COUNTY, IL** – Two deaths, one critical injury, one arrest. Shocking incidents last week due to two disputes involving domestic violence. No, these disputes did not take place in low income Chicago neighborhoods. They happened in Lake Forest and Highland Park, cities ranked #6 and #10 respectively on the Illinois per capita income list in 2011.

Domestic violence happens among all ethnic groups and all cultures, among all ages, all income levels, all faiths and all education levels. For some people, their social, economic or cultural background may make it harder for them to get help. This includes victims with elevated social status, which is one of the greatest barriers preventing victims from seeking help.

Victims in communities like Lake Forest and Highland Park are the doctors, lawyers, judges, and business owners. They are the ones who may believe that domestic violence only happens to people in other communities. They may be more physically isolated from their neighbors or feel minimized by family members. They may have a higher level of education that increases shame and self-blame.

The two deaths in Lake Forest on January 3, occurred between a woman and a man who had ended their relationship three months before. The stabbing in Highland Park was by a man who shared a home with the victim.

“My heart goes out to the victims and their families who are suffering and have been suffering. But it also goes out to all of us. Domestic violence is a serious social problem and national health concern that

impacts us all, no matter where we come from. And it, unfortunately, is not going away,” said Pat Davenport, CEO of A Safe Place.

Since 1978, A Safe Place has been Lake County’s sole provider of services exclusively addressing domestic violence, serving individuals throughout the Chicagoland area including Cook, McHenry, and Kenosha counties. The organization’s lifesaving programs and services for victims of domestic violence and their children, include crisis support, housing, legal advocacy, counseling, community outreach, and education to prevent future abuse. Last year, A Safe Place entered 2,997 Orders of Protection for victims of domestic violence into the court system and served over 14,000 individuals that came from each and every community.

“For 40 years, we have seen victims come to us from every community. Some just call for information or with a question. Some come seeking counseling for themselves or their children. Others need immediate, lifesaving help, and shelter. We are the largest and most comprehensive and full service domestic violence organization in Chicago and the North Shore area,” said Davenport.

A Safe Place has facilities and resources throughout the county. At the Lake County Courthouse, staff assist victims with filing orders of protection and advocate for and encourage those who choose to testify. In Lake County, a 35-bed emergency shelter and 30 scattered houses in the southern part of the county including Deerfield and Winnetka provide safe spaces, food, clothing, and community resources. In Zion, the 40 apartment housing facility has on-site counseling, advocacy, and life skills assistance. In Mundelein, the Family Visitation Center provides supervised visitations and monitored custody exchanges. In Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Lake Zurich, Round Lake, Waukegan, and Gurnee, satellite support groups in English and Spanish help victims and children share their experiences and process their emotions. And at middle and high schools throughout the county, staff educate teens on healthy relationships.

Because of the comprehensive range of lifesaving programs and services at A Safe Place, 94% of the survivors who left the emergency shelter last year did not go back to their abusers, as of their six-month check-in. Even though, in the United States, on average, a domestic violence victim will return to their abuser 7-8 times before either making it to lasting safety or dying.

“The first client at our emergency shelter was from Lake Forest. It is time to bust the misconception that violence does not happen in quiet or affluent communities. It is time to recognize that domestic violence is a global disease and it is important that we all stand up, say something, support each other, no matter who we are or where we come from,” said Davenport.

At the A Safe Place Gala last October, the keynote speaker Meg Dhamer, a Lake Forest resident and small business owner, shared her story of domestic violence, how it affected her and her children, and how lucky she was to have help and encouragement from A Safe Place and resources from family and friends to help her get on her feet.

“A Safe Place helped me to make it on my own and start a new life. It is in the moments that you can’t think straight, when you feel so helpless it’s hard to breathe, when you’ve lost all hope, that A Safe Place saves your life,” Dhamer said.

For more information about A Safe Place and domestic violence awareness, visit [www.asafeplaceforhelp.org](http://www.asafeplaceforhelp.org) or call (847) 731-7165. Or call the 24-hour Help Line at 1-800-600-SAFE or (847) 249-4450.

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*Founded in 1978, A Safe Place is the leading advocate for eliminating domestic violence in northern Illinois, and is Lake County, Illinois' only provider of services exclusively for victims of domestic violence. A Safe Place provides emergency shelter, permanent housing, a 24-hour crisis line (847-249-4450), court and non-legal advocacy, individual, group, and children's counseling, art therapy, family visitation services, batterer intervention services; and community outreach, prevention education, and professional training. Our service area includes Lake, McHenry, and northern Cook counties in Illinois; however, our clients come to us from across the state, region, and country. For more information about A Safe Place, visit [www.asafeplaceforhelp.org](http://www.asafeplaceforhelp.org), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).*