



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EVE, Inc. and LEGAL SERVICES OF SOUTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN AWARDED AVON FOUNDATION SPEAK OUT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GRANT FOR HELPING CHILDREN OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence and Legal Service Providers Unite to Protect Child Victims

(Lansing, MI/January 6, 2009) – The Avon Foundation for Women has awarded a **\$50,000.00** one-year grant to EVE, Inc. and Legal Services of South Central Michigan for a program that assists children who have been exposed to domestic violence. *Not Seen, Not Heard: Helping Children of Domestic Violence* is an ongoing awards program under the auspices of the Avon Foundation Speak Out Against Domestic Violence initiative, and EVE, Inc. and Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) is among one of the 15 grant recipients selected from among 400 applicants nationwide.

As a grant recipient of *Not Seen, Not Heard: Helping Children of Domestic Violence*, the **Bright Light for Families** program, a collaboration between EVE, Inc. and LSSCM, will address reducing and protecting children in our community from trauma around the issue of family separation and divorce in cases where parents or caretakers are victims of domestic or dating abuse. Award criteria stemmed around the organization's ability to offer innovative legal and support services to achieve justice and safety for victims and improve the ability of a custodial parent to manage parenting in a safe way; develop or expand a model of collaboration focused on assisting with child safety; increase legal training and direct services in the court process to reduce the traumatic experience of children witnessing and experiencing violence; and provide free technical assistance to attorneys in order to reduce the traumatic experience of separation and divorce on children.

This vital program will also increase access to legal consultation and assistance of survivor parents who are court ordered to participate in parenting time, increase emotional and physical supports for children and parents during the ordered parenting time, and increase knowledge of the legal community on the effects of domestic violence on children and the role the legal community can play in decreasing the trauma of domestic violence, separation and divorce.

Carol Kurzig, President, Avon Foundation for Women, noted that "EVE, Inc. and Legal Services of South Central Michigan are delivering critical services to the often forgotten victims of domestic violence – the children who witness it. We are proud to support their efforts to help end the cycle of violence."

Since 2004, \$14 million has been awarded by the Avon Foundation to almost 400 agencies across the U.S. to address issues that perpetrate and trigger violence by domestic partners. Studies suggest that up to 10 million U.S. children witness some form of domestic violence annually, and research indicates that those who witness

or experience domestic violence are more likely to be victims or perpetrators in adulthood. The program such as **Bright Light for Families** will help end this cycle of domestic violence by coordinating response models between domestic violence agencies and child abuse agencies, as well as provide counseling and mentoring programs.

“We are extremely proud that the Avon Foundation for Women shares our mission to help children of domestic violence and has chosen to support our efforts to help children in Ingham County. With these funds we will be able to create an environment that protects and nurtures vulnerable children who have been victims of domestic violence while empowering and protecting the survivor parents, by way of support and resources,” says Ms. Susan Shoultz, Executive Director, EVE, Inc.

EVE, Inc. (End Violent Encounters)

EVE, Inc. provides shelter and supportive services for the victims of domestic violence while seeking to end domestic violence through public awareness and community education. EVE, Inc. services are free to survivors of domestic violence and include 24-hour crisis support, emergency shelter, personal protection order assistance, counseling, non residential services, children’s program, dating violence prevention and community education.

Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM)

Legal Services of South Central Michigan is a non-profit organization that provides free legal advice and representation to low-income persons and senior citizens in certain civil legal cases. Legal Services supports cases related to family law, housing, public benefits, consumer issues and seniors.

The Avon Foundation for Women and Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

This year’s funding for the Avon Foundation for Women *Not Seen, Not Heard: Helping Children of Domestic Violence* funding has totaled more than \$800,000 in grants for 15 organizations. The initiative is part of the Avon Foundation **Speak Out Against Domestic Violence** program that launched in 2004 to help end the cycle of domestic violence, which affects one in three women globally. Through 2009 over \$14 million has been awarded worldwide to nearly 400 domestic violence organizations for awareness, education, direct services and prevention programs. Funds have been raised through special products sold by Avon Sales Representatives and special events.

The Avon Foundation for Women is a 501(c)(3) public charity and a leader in the causes of breast cancer and domestic violence, and also supports emergency disaster relief. Avon Foundation for Women and Avon global philanthropy have awarded more than \$725 million in over 50 countries for these causes.

For More Information

For more information on the **Bright Light for Families** program at EVE, Inc. and Legal Services of South Central Michigan, please call Susan Shoultz, EVE, Inc. Executive Director at (517) 372-5976 or Lori Pourzan, Legal Services Co-Managing Attorney at (517) 394-3121. For more information about domestic violence services, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or online at www.ndvh.org.

To learn more about the Avon Foundation Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program visit www.avonfoundation.org, where you can also access the free printable Domestic Violence Resource Guide in English and Spanish.

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