

For Immediate Release

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LawHelp Works to Stop the Cycle of Violence, Offers Free Legal Tools & Resources
Marks Domestic Violence Awareness Month by connecting survivors and advocates with information

New York – October 13, 2014 – October marks National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time when we look to raise awareness of this issue. While recent media coverage has brought domestic violence to the forefront of the national discussion, many still do not know how pervasive it is or what to do about it. Statistics show that 1 in 3 women experience physical violence by an intimate partner and every year more than 3 million children witness domestic violence in their homes.

LawHelp (www.LawHelp.org) is a national network of nonprofit legal information websites dedicated to providing free online legal resources to individuals with limited means. LawHelp helps individuals find free legal aid in their communities, answer common legal questions, and access self-help tools. LawHelp includes resources to help domestic violence survivors identify abusive behavior, obtain orders of protection, protect their children and access assistance related to housing rights and public benefits. LawHelp also includes resources focused on specific populations such as immigrants, and many resources are available in languages other than English. Those working with domestic violence survivors are encouraged to visit LawHelp.org and use these resources to serve and support survivors.

“Survivors of domestic violence may not know where to turn for critically needed legal assistance and, often cannot afford to hire an attorney,” said Liz Keith, Program Director at Pro Bono Net. “LawHelp can easily be accessed from anywhere, for example at a computer at a public library, to find referrals for free legal services, information about legal rights, and, often, free online forms and other tools for self-help.”

Developed 13 years ago by Pro Bono Net, a national nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to justice, LawHelp assists more than 4.7 million visitors per year. Many LawHelp sites include links to LawHelp Interactive, a free, online system for completing legal forms, allowing survivors and advocates to quickly and easily find and complete needed documents. Examples include Riverside, California’s File and Fax Order of Protection project that enables survivors to electronically fax in their petitions to the court and New York’s e-file program, which gives advocates the tools to e-file petitions on behalf of their clients. LawHelp and LawHelp Interactive have been developed with support from the Legal Services Corporation.

Attorneys looking to get involved in the fight against domestic violence can visit the National Domestic Violence Pro Bono Directory (www.probono.net/dv), which offers a range of pro bono opportunities including filing an order of protection, doing research for advocacy, and providing legal help to immigrant survivors of domestic violence.

About Pro Bono Net

Pro Bono Net is a national non-profit organization dedicated to increasing access to justice for the disadvantaged. Through innovative technology solutions and expertise in building and mobilizing justice networks, Pro Bono Net transforms the way legal help reaches the underserved. Comprehensive programs including www.probono.net, www.lawhelp.org and www.lawhelpinteractive.org, enable legal advocates to make a stronger impact, increase volunteer participation, and empower the public with resources and self-help tools to improve their lives.