



# P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH**

The Missoula City/County Crime Victim Advocate Office (CVA) in partnership with the YWCA of Missoula and SARC (Student Assault Resource Center) are launching an **anti-stalking campaign as part of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October** by providing anti-stalking kits at all three locations. Anti-stalking kits are designed to assist victims of stalking with tools to help document stalking events and to provide resources and safety tips.

Although stalking is a criminal offense, it often goes unreported and, even when reported, can be hard to prove. It can also go hand-in-hand with intimate partner violence. According to the Stalking Resource Center, 3.4 million people over the age of 18 are stalked each year in the United States and 3 in 4 stalking victims are stalked by someone they know. In addition, persons aged 18-24 years experience the highest rate of stalking. “Unfortunately, the burden of proving stalking often lies with the victim,” says Erin Kautz, Crime Victim Advocate for the CVA program. “Anti-stalking kits can help give victims the means to document stalking that is occurring.”

Anti-stalking kits will be available at the Crime Victim Advocate Office at 500 N. Higgins St., Suite 201; YWCA of Missoula at 1130 West Broadway; and SARC at Curry Health Center, Room 108 on the University of Montana Campus at 634 Eddy Ave. Kits will be distributed free of charge to those in need. Crisis counseling will also be provided to individuals as needed. Kits will be available beginning October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

The Crime Victim Advocate program provides free and confidential assistance for victims of relationship violence, sexual assault, stalking and property crime by offering advocacy and resource information in civil and criminal matters. For more information call Kim Campbell at (406) 258-4904 or email [kcampbell@co.missoula.mt.us](mailto:kcampbell@co.missoula.mt.us) or Erin Kautz at (406) 830-3834 or [ekautz@co.missoula.mt.us](mailto:ekautz@co.missoula.mt.us). Anti-stalking kits are funded through the Office of Violence Against Women Community Defined Solutions Grant 2008-WE-AX-0018.

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