**Candlelight Vigil Honors Those Impacted by Domestic Violence**

New Brunswick, NJ (October 9, 2014) – Women Aware, the lead domestic violence agency in Middlesex County, New Jersey, hosted their annual Candlelight Vigil at Monument Park in downtown New Brunswick. The public event recognized and honored those who have been impacted by domestic violence.

Through its annual Candlelight Vigil, Women Aware hopes to shed light on the issue of domestic violence. October 9, 2014 marks the 30th anniversary of the federal government's first response to domestic violence, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. This anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on lives transformed by the services provided by domestic violence agencies.

A domestic violence survivor who had been helped at Women Aware offered to share her experience. “The truth hit me hard when one day my five year old son asked me a question, ‘Mommy, does God forgive Daddy for pulling you by your hair across the floor?’ He was three when this incident happened,” she shared. “My eyes were opened and… I decided the time had come to get out.”

She continued, “I entered the Women Aware Safe House in March 2011 and immediately received compassion and support from each and every staff member I came in contact with. Their help gave me a feeling of empowerment and a confidence I could make it on my own.”

“Three and a half years later, I am still working and living independently,” she concluded. “My future is no longer one of pain and fear, but of joy and hope and peace and I’m excited about life.”

Approximately 150 vigil participants gathered and many raised candles to present a united front against domestic violence. Among them were the members of the Community Fellowship Mass Choir. The group contributed through their music, performing a cappella renditions of several praise songs, emphasizing the message “You can make it”.

Several local elected officials were in attendance, including Freeholder Carol Barrett Bellante and Councilwoman Elsie Foster-Dublin of Highland Park. Also present was Charmaine Thomas, Assistant Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

Women Aware’s Executive Director, Phyllis Adams, encouraged all attendees to continue working towards a just society, “Together we can create something beautiful.”

**About Women Aware**

Women Aware is the state-designated lead domestic violence agency. Founded in 1979 as a 501(c)3 non-profit, the organization served over 1,300 men, women, and children in 2013. Women Aware offers comprehensive services to assist survivors of domestic violence at every stage as they move beyond abuse. Services include a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, support groups, children’s trauma therapy, batterer’s intervention counseling, and permanent supportive housing apartments. All services are free, confidential, and available in multiple languages.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, call the hotline at 732-249-4504.

**Contact**

To learn more, contact:

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