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KCSDV Hosts State's First Primary Prevention Conference

Topeka, KS, 2/09/2015 – Don McPherson, member of the College Football Hall of Fame and activist, will be in Topeka on Tuesday to lead-off the state's first conference on primary prevention of sexual and domestic violence. McPherson will speak to men's role in preventing sexual and domestic violence. Also presenting at the conference is Jeffrey Bucholtz, Director of We End Violence and award winning instructor and public educator, who will address the importance of collaboration in prevention. Gayle Holmes Payne from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will lay out the current state of national primary prevention efforts. McPherson, Bucholtz, and Holmes Payne are just three of many speakers at the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence's (KCSDV) conference titled "Reweaving our Social Fabric: Engaging to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence," taking place at the Topeka Ramada Downtown Hotel and Conference Center on February 10 and 11.

Co-sponsored by Westar Energy, Schumaker Family Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, and Dawn and Larry DeArmond, more than 200 people are registered to attend. The conference is part of the KCSDV's 12th Annual *Safe Homes, Safe Streets* event.

"In order to truly end sexual and domestic violence, we have to include primary prevention in our work and look at ways to stop this violence before it occurs," says Joyce Grover, executive director of KCSDV. "We've been addressing primary prevention in communities for years and this conference gives us the opportunity to take the conversation to a state level."

Also among the conference presenters are Melissa Ruth, Clinical Psychologist, and Maria Villagomez Aguilera and Dalton Tiegs, both youth activists, with the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence. Ruth, Villagomez Aguilera, and Tiegs will talk about engaging youth in social change and prevention.

The conference has three tracks: engaging men and boys, engaging schools and campuses, and engaging communities. In addition to the plenary sessions, participants can choose from more than 20 breakout sessions.

"This conference is critical to moving the work forward," says Grover. "Support for victims and survivors is still key to our work, but we must also push primary prevention forward if we are to change the attitudes and beliefs that allow violence against women and girls to continue. We are excited about these next steps."

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Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at www.kcsdv.org.