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Great Bend program director recognized nationally for sexual violence prevention

TOPEKA, KS, April 22, 2016 — April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In observance, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) recognizes the creativity and hard work of individuals around the country through its Visionary Voice Award. These awardees have demonstrated outstanding efforts to end sexual violence.

This year, Laura Patzner of Great Bend has received the 2016 Visionary Voice Award. Ms. Patzner was nominated by the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) and is one of 30 individuals across the country recognized for her efforts to address sexual violence and promote safe, healthy communities.

Ms. Patzner has advocated on behalf of survivors of sexual violence for most of her life. “Laura is one of our premier Kansas leaders in the anti-sexual violence work in this state and we are thrilled with this recognition of her life’s work,” said Joyce Grover, executive director of KCSDV.

Ms. Patzner has not only worked at the Family Crisis Center for many years but she has served in leadership roles on the state level as well. Ms. Patzner is responsible for the creation of the child advocacy center in the Great Bend area, offering another critical service for children who have been sexually abused. Ms. Patzner has worked to expand the reach of the Family Crisis Center’s sexual assault programming far beyond the Great Bend and Barton county areas and into all of the 10 counties that make up the service area of the program. Ms. Patzner has served on the Board of KCSDV as both a member and officer, has chaired the KCSDV peer-review accreditation committee, and was an integral leader in updating the sexual assault core services standards for Kansas programs. Over the years, Ms. Patzner has also served on state-level work groups and task forces sponsored by the offices of the Governor and the Attorney General. Currently, Ms. Patzner is the executive director of the Family Crisis Center with its main offices in Great Bend.

“Leaders like Laura are fundamental to the work to end sexual violence. I am confident Laura has positively impacted the lives of many, many Kansas survivors,” said Grover.

Ms. Patzner will be presented with the award at Family Crisis Center’s Red Shoe Event on April 26, at the Great Bend Community Theatre.

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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 kcsdv.org.

The Family Crisis Center is a member of KCSDV and provides services to victims of sexual and domestic violence in Barton, Pratt, Edwards, Ness, Rush, Pawnee, Stafford, Kiowa, Comanche, and Barber counties. Learn more at familycrisiscntr.org.