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Soroptimist International of Hays honored with Award

Coalition awards its Community Ally of the Year Award

Topeka, Kan., February 20, 2014— Soroptimist International of Hays, Kansas has received the Community Ally of the Year Award by the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV).

The service club was awarded the honor during KCSDV's 11th Annual Safe Homes, Safe Streets Awareness Day and Sunflower Safety Breakfast event in Topeka in February. Olivia Becker, President of Soroptimist International of Hays, attended the event and accepted the award on the club's behalf.

Since 1995, KCSDV has been recognizing outstanding advocates and allies who are working to enhance victim safety, to increase perpetrator accountability, and to prevent and eliminate sexual and domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking in Kansas.

"Soroptimist International of Hays has been an ally to us and our work for over 20 years," said Charlotte Linsner, executive director of Options: Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, Inc., an agency serving victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Cheyenne, Decatur, Ellis, Gove, Graham, Logan, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Russell, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Thomas, Trego, and Wallace counties. Options nominated Soroptimist International of Hays for the award.

"Their mission of providing public service to the community is solidified through their many projects which include education and mobilization, awareness and prevention efforts, leadership, and helping Options continue to provide domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy services," said Linsner. "They are extremely dedicated women who support Options and the betterment of life for victims."

"Options has a small staff with a huge service area of 18 counties in northwest Kansas," said Joyce Grover, executive director of KCSDV. "Soroptimist International of Hays continues to support Options, helping advocates provide life-saving services to victims. It is this type of community service organization that deserves the Community Ally of the Year Award," said Grover.

Soroptimist International of Hays regularly helps Options with their community service, education, and awareness events, including the Walk-Away-5K, the annual garage sale, the "Walk A Mile in Her Shoes" event on Fort Hays State University campus, and much more.

"Options' board of directors and staff cannot begin to thank each and every Soroptimist member for their dedication to our agency, willingness to act when asked, and their understanding of victims' needs. We congratulate them on receiving the 2014 Ally of the Year Award from KCSDV," said Linsner.

Other award winners at this year's event included Shirley Collins from Overland Park for the Outstanding Advocate of the Year Award; Helen LaValley from Overland Park for the Volunteer of the Year Award; and Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation's Victim Services Program project called SAFESTAR for the Project of the Year Award.

Photos available upon request.

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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.

Options: Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, Inc. is a member of KCSDV and provides services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Cheyenne, Decatur, Ellis, Gove, Graham, Logan, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Russell, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Thomas, Trego, and Wallace counties. Learn more at <http://www.help4abuse.org/>.