



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Marjaree Mason Center Recognizes Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Fresno, CA — (January 31, 2024) — Every year, approximately 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner. In an effort to bring attention to teen dating violence in our community, the Marjaree Mason Center is once again actively participating in Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month with several activities taking place this February.

As part of ongoing prevention and education efforts, the Marjaree Mason Center continues to collaborate with Fresno County High Schools and Middle Schools to provide the kNOw MORE® Program, which initially began in 2009, to educate local youth on the long-lasting effects of abuse in teen relationships and provide a space for them to talk with peers about the topic of unhealthy relationships. The program is tailored to each school site and grade level and contains discussion guides designed to provide teens, advisors, teachers and parents with domestic violence education, awareness and prevention strategies and intervention techniques.

In addition to instruction provided, the Marjaree Mason Center works alongside school administrators and social emotional teams to help schools develop and implement policies and procedures to use when students experience teen dating violence and seek help. For example, resources for support, identifying safe and trusted adults, how to talk to a friend, and digital safety.

Today, kNOw MORE® Program is at 37 school sites across 6 school districts within Fresno County. During the 22-23 school year, the Marjaree Mason Center educated 1,989 students in Fresno County Middle Schools and High Schools.

February Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month activities included Wear Orange Day, Valentine's Day, dedicated Basketball games at local high schools, and proclamations issued from Fresno County Board of Supervisors and several City Councils within the County. The Marjaree Mason Center distributed close to 3,000 Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month orange shirts to High School and Middle School students, School Administration, Community Partners, and MMC staff.

Throughout the month, the Marjaree Mason Center will be sharing parent guides and resources to help prompt conversations at home about healthy relationships. Center staff are also conducting parent presentations through the month, as well as various trainings with community partners. A calendar was also developed including activities everyone can take part in throughout the month.

Over the last 18 months, three Fresno County teenagers have lost their lives to teen dating violence*. February is the perfect opportunity for those from throughout the community to talk to their teens about what healthy relationships are, how to set boundaries, and what to do if they ever feel un-safe. Love shouldn't make you feel insecure, scared, hurt, or anxious.

**Although suspects have been arrested and charged, trials are not yet completed for the three domestic violence homicides of teenagers over the last 18 months.*

No one is "too young" to experience teen dating violence.

For a full list of Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, please see below:

- February 1 – City of Fresno City Council Proclamation
- February 1 – Reedley High School Basketball Game dedicated to TDVAM
- February 2 – Bullard High School Basketball Game dedicated to TDVAM
- February 2 – Central East High School Basketball Game dedicated to TDVAM
- February 2 – Fresno High School Basketball Game dedicated to TDVAM
- February 5 – City of Firebaugh City Council Proclamation
- February 6 – WEAR ORANGE DAY
- February 6 – Fresno County Board of Supervisors Proclamation
- February 13 – City of Reedley City Council Meeting Presentation

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About Marjaree Mason Center

For over 40 years, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered safe housing and support services to adults and their children affected by domestic violence in Fresno County. As the only comprehensive domestic violence agency in Fresno County, the Marjaree Mason Center provides housing, legal services, counseling and education to survivors and youth. The Center was founded in 1979 after the murder of Marjaree Mason, a native of Easton. A graduate of Washington High School and Reedley College, Marjaree lived in Fresno for 31 years and was well known in the community.

To contact MMC, call the business center at 559.237.4706, the 24-hour confidential emergency hotline at 559.233.HELP (4357) or help@mmcenter.org, or learn more online at www.mmcenter.org.