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Media Contact: Ashlee Wolf
Director of Philanthropy and Communication
Phone: (559) 487-1313; Mobile: (559) 916-5101
Email: ashlee@mmcenter.org

Marjaree Mason Center Warns of Rising Teen Dating Violence During Summer Break

FRESNO, Calif. (June 10, 2026) — As students begin summer break, the Marjaree Mason Center is raising awareness about increasing rates of teen dating violence and encouraging young people and families to seek support when needed.

Nationally, approximately 1.5 million high school students experience physical abuse from a dating partner every year. From May 2025 through May 2026, the Marjaree Mason Center served 245 individuals between the ages of 12 and 19 as the primary victim (individual experiencing domestic violence). This reflects a 40% increase compared to the previous year.

In addition, Marjaree Mason Center data shows that reports involving youth ages 12-19 consistently increase between April and August, with cases declining during the traditional school-year months of September through March.

Quarterly data also shows a continuing upward trend. During the first quarter of 2026, cases involving youth ages 12-19 increased by 71% compared to the same period in 2025 and by 20% compared to 2024.

As we enter the traditional summer break time period, the Marjaree Mason Center is urging parents and teens to be aware of warning signs and know what resources are available.

“Domestic violence is a pattern of power and control that one partner uses against another, said Leticia Campos, CEO of the Marjaree Mason Center. “When that power and control is lost, or when someone threatens to take it away by ending the relationship, it can be very dangerous, and potentially deadly, no matter what age you are. It’s important that we recognize the signs of abuse and never dismiss these unhealthy behaviors as ‘young love.’”

In addition to 24/7 confidential crisis response and support, the Marjaree Mason Center offers a weekly Legal Options class, which discusses the different types of restraining orders available and the court process for obtaining one. In the State of California, a domestic violence

restraining order may be filed as young at the age of twelve. The Center also offers a weekly Teen S.A.F.E. Group and a Support Group for family members or parents of someone in an abusive relationship.

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 their peers about the topic of domestic violence. 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. As budget cuts continue across school districts, the Majaree Mason Center encourages parents, guardians, and community members to advocate for the program at their school site.

For more information or to access support services, call the Marjaree Mason Center's 24-hour confidential helpline at (559) 233-HELP (4357) or visit www.mmcenter.org.

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About Marjaree Mason Center
For over 45 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, which has the highest per capita calls to law enforcement in the State of California, the Marjaree Mason Center provides safe 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, at the hands of her ex-boyfriend, a Fresno County Sheriff's deputy. 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 the Marjaree Mason Center, call the business center at 559.237.4706, or the 24-hour confidential emergency helpline at 559.233.HELP (4357) or help@mmcenter.org. To learn more, visit www.mmcenter.org.