



Media Contacts:

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
media@niwrc.org

Candy Keown
Communications Coordinator, AKNWRC
candy.keown@aknwrc.org

Mallory Black
Communications Manager, StrongHearts
mblack@strongheartshelpline.org

For Immediate Release
October 1, 2019

Native Advocates Kickoff Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Lame Deer, MT - Every October, advocates and communities from across Indian country and the United States rally together in honor of survivors of domestic violence and support abuse prevention as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). This month, the [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#) (NIWRC), the [Alaska Native Women's Resource Center](#) (AKNWRC) and the StrongHearts Native Helpline (StrongHearts) are calling on advocates, Tribal leaders, reservation and urban Indian community members, service providers and Native organizations to rise up in support of the movement to prevent and end domestic violence, which disproportionately affects millions of American Indians and Alaska Natives each year.

Recent conversations around rape and sexual assault continue to gain international attention, and Native survivors said #MeToo by sharing their own experiences of abuse and sexual assault in Tribal, urban and village communities. Every day, families from across Indian country share heart-wrenching stories of their missing and murdered loved ones, whose cases are often left unresolved. To date, more than 5,000 people have reached out to the [StrongHearts Native Helpline](#) for critically-needed support for [intimate partner violence](#), as Tribes and villages continually go underfunded for vital domestic violence services.

This summer, U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced the [reauthorization of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act](#) (FVPSA), the only federal funding source dedicated to addressing domestic violence as a public health issue and ensuring the provision of domestic violence shelters, supportive services, specialized services for children exposed to domestic violence, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, and the StrongHearts Native Helpline.

On October 15, 2019, NIWRC, StrongHearts and AKNWRC will recognize the 35th anniversary of the FVPSA, the first Federal commitment creating a pathway to safety for survivors of domestic violence and their children. First signed into law in 1984, the FVPSA further provides a dedicated funding stream through a 10 percent set aside under its appropriation reaching approximately 252 federally-recognized Tribes and tribal organizations annually, through non-competitive formula grants. When Tribes have the resources to create and establish their own Tribal domestic violence programs, shelters or safe homes, it provides Native victims of

domestic violence and their children the support, advocacy, and emergency services they need to escape violence. Tribal leadership and advocacy of sovereign nations has been a critical part of the FVPSA Program's beginning and continuation for the last 35 years.

"The safety and security of Tribal communities is continually at risk when Native survivors go without the life-saving support services they need," said Lucy Simpson, Executive Director of the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center. "We all know that our Indian communities are vastly under resourced. We need more funding for our Indian communities, period."

Nationwide, Native women and men experience domestic violence and sexual assault at [alarming rates](#), with more than four in five Native people having experienced some form of violence in their lifetime and more than half experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner in the past year. To bring awareness to the issues of [violence in Indian country](#), NIWRC, AKNWRC and StrongHearts urge individuals to believe survivors, speak out about abuse and share supportive resources with their loved ones and communities.

"Domestic violence goes against our ancestral ways, and we refuse to allow abuse to be normalized in our villages and communities," said Tami Truett Jerue, Executive Director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center. "Together, our voices are stronger and more powerful when united in ending domestic violence, and we will continue to turn the tide as more community members join the movement to end violence against Native women and children every day."

###

About the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

The National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, Inc. (NIWRC) is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to restoring the sovereignty of Native nations and safeguarding Native women and their children. The NIWRC supports culturally grounded, grassroots advocacy and provides national leadership to ending gender-based violence in indigenous communities through the development of educational materials and programs, direct technical assistance and the development of local and national policy that builds the capacity of Indigenous communities and strengthens the exercise of tribal sovereignty. www.niwrc.org

About the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) is dedicated to strengthening local, tribal government's responses through community organizing efforts advocating for the safety of women and children in their communities and homes, especially against domestic and sexual abuse and violence. Through the voices, languages, and teachings of tribes, survivors and advocates, and in partnership with our allies and other stakeholders, the AKNWRC provides a voice at the local, statewide, national and international levels for life-saving changes needed in laws, policies, and social norms. www.aknwrc.org

About the StrongHearts Native Helpline

Created by and built to serve Tribal communities across the United States, the StrongHearts Native Helpline is a culturally-appropriate, anonymous, confidential and no-cost service dedicated to serving Native American survivors of domestic violence and dating violence, along with their concerned family members and friends. By dialing 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483), callers can connect one-on-one with knowledgeable StrongHearts advocates who can provide immediate support and a connection to Native resources to enable survivors to find safety and live lives free of abuse. StrongHearts is available daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CT. Callers reaching out after hours may connect with the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) by selecting option 1. www.strongheartshelpline.org.