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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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## Alaska Recognizes February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month

**February 5, 2019 (ANCHORAGE, Alaska)** – February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month. According to the 2017 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1,911 high school students experienced sexual and/or physical dating violence. It is also known that 75% of parents have never talked to their children about domestic violence. Considering these alarming facts, every year during the month of February advocates join efforts to raise awareness about dating violence, highlight promising practices, and encourage communities to get involved.

This year, the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) is partnering with Sitka's Against Family Violence (SAFV) and supporting the hard work of the Sitka Youth Leadership Committee (SYLC). "The posters and stickers being printed and delivered to high schools throughout the state were developed and designed by SYLC," explained Ann Rausch, program coordinator, CDVSA.

SYLC is a group of youth from Sitka and Mt. Edgecumbe high schools who strive to promote positive values such as acceptance, diversity, and equity in their schools and communities. These materials were created to focus on healthy teen relationships. SYLC members attended in depth trainings about imagery in advertising and media to understand how to convey the best message possible. Everything from the background colors to the big, bold tagline came from the minds of youth leaders in SYLC.

According to Rausch, there are a variety of events happening throughout the state this February supporting teen dating violence awareness and prevention. One such event is "#Orange4Love Day", to spread awareness of teen dating violence.

We ask all Alaskans to Wear Orange on Tuesday, Feb. 12! "Our ultimate goal is to stop dating violence before it starts," expressed Rausch. "Strategies that promote healthy relationships are vital to that goal."

Today, on Feb. 5, Governor Mike Dunleavy issued a Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month Proclamation emphasizing the importance of recognizing this important issue (<https://gov.alaska.gov/newsroom/category/proclamations/>).

For additional resources, log on to [susuak.org](http://susuak.org), [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org), Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Facebook posts, or call the loveisrespect helpline at 1-866-331-9474.

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