

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 28, 2009

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## PILLARS RECEIVES TWO NATIONAL GRANTS TO HELP WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*Pillars' Constance Morris House unites with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago, the Avon Foundation for Women, and The Mary Kay Foundation to Protect Survivors*

Pillars has received two national grants totaling \$70,000 to support its efforts to provide shelter, counseling, and legal advocacy services to women and children affected by domestic violence.

The Avon Foundation for Women awarded a one-year, \$50,000 grant as part of its *Not Seen, Not Heard: Helping Children of Domestic Violence* program, under the auspices of the Speak Out Against Domestic Violence initiative. Pillars is among one of the 15 grant recipients selected from among 400 applicants nationwide. Pillars applied for this grant in partnership with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago. Since 2005, the agencies have offered innovative, holistic domestic violence services to women and children in west suburban Cook County. Pillars and the Legal Assistance Foundation will utilize the funds to reduce and protect children from trauma around the issues of domestic violence, family separation and divorce by expanding collaborative counseling and legal services. An attorney and therapist will provide services to women and families on site at the Maybrook Courthouse in the Fourth Municipal District of Cook County.

The Mary Kay Foundation awarded a one-year, \$20,000 grant as part of its annual \$3 million national domestic violence grant program. Pillars is one of 150 domestic violence organizations participating in the program. The funds will be used to support general operations of Pillars' Constance Morris House, which provides shelter, counseling, and other supportive services to help women and children to build lives free of violence.

"We are so proud and grateful that the Avon and Mary Kay Foundations have recognized our efforts to help battered women and children," said Lynn Siegel, Pillars Vice President of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services. "Domestic violence is not going away and deserves very serious attention. There is a critical need for innovative programs to help battered women and children in our community, and these programs require substantial financial resources."

The current economic crisis has not only caused a decrease in funding for domestic violence services but can also be attributed to an increase in the need for domestic violence services. In May 2009, Mary Kay's Truth About Abuse survey revealed that three out of four domestic violence shelters in the U.S. report an increase in women seeking assistance from abuse since September 2008, a major turning point in the U.S. economy.

### About Pillars and Constance Morris House

The Pillars Community Services and Community Care Options merged in 2006 to form Pillars, one of the Chicago area's most notable nonprofit social service organizations. Pillars provides quality mental health services, social services, and education for people of all ages. Our service area spans 36 communities in the west and southwest suburbs of Chicago. For more than 30 years, Pillars' Constance Morris House

Domestic Violence Program has provided shelter, supportive services, and legal advocacy to thousands of women and children experiencing domestic violence, helping to rebuild their lives. To learn more about our services, please visit the Pillars website at [www.pillarscommunity.org](http://www.pillarscommunity.org). If you need domestic violence services and are in crisis, call our 24-hour hotline at 708-485-5254.

#### **About the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago**

For almost 50 years, the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAF) has provided poor people with free, first-class legal help in non-criminal matters so they have the same chance to get a just result as those who can hire the best lawyers in town. Each year LAF levels the playing field, making equal justice a reality for over 25,000 of the most vulnerable residents of Cook County – 70% of whom are women raising children on their own. Last year alone, LAF recovered or saved its clients over \$40 million. And it helped thousands of clients obtain benefits that are priceless: custody of a child, and order of protection that gives a survivor of domestic abuse peace and physical security, immigration benefits and a path to citizenship, or a stable educational placement for a child with special needs. LAF's website is [www.lafchicago.org](http://www.lafchicago.org).

#### **About the Avon Foundation for Women and Speak Out Against Domestic Violence**

The Avon Foundation for Women is a 501(c)(3) public charity and a leader in the causes of breast cancer and domestic violence, and also supports emergency disaster relief. Avon Foundation for Women and Avon global philanthropy have awarded more than \$725 million in over 50 countries for these causes. This year's funding for the Avon Foundation for Women *Not Seen, Not Heard: Helping Children of Domestic Violence* funding has totaled more than \$800,000 in grants for 15 organizations. The initiative is part of the Avon Foundation Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program that launched in 2004 to help end the cycle of domestic violence, which affects one in three women globally. Through 2009 over \$14 million has been awarded worldwide to nearly 400 domestic violence organizations for awareness, education, direct services and prevention programs. Funds have been raised through special products sold by Avon Sales Representatives and special events. To learn more about the Avon Foundation Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program visit [www.avonfoundation.org](http://www.avonfoundation.org), where you can also access the free printable Domestic Violence Resource Guide in English and Spanish.

#### **About The Mary Kay Foundation**

The Mary Kay Foundation was created in 1996, and its mission is two-fold: to fund research of cancers affecting women and to help prevent domestic violence while raising awareness of the issue. Since the Foundation's inception, it has awarded nearly \$22 million to shelters and programs addressing domestic violence prevention and \$13 million to cancer researchers and related causes throughout the United States. To learn more about The Mary Kay Foundation, log on to [www.marykayfoundation.org](http://www.marykayfoundation.org) or call 1-877-MKCARES (652-2737).

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