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## National Domestic Violence Awareness Month Puts Spotlight on Shelter Capacity Levels

**Tulsa's DaySpring Villa inches closer to record-breaking capacity levels for 2009.**

TULSA, OKLA., September 29, 2009 – With the approach of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, DaySpring Villa, one of two domestic violence shelters in the Tulsa metro area, and Oklahoma's only certified faith-based shelter for battered and homeless women and children, is seeing little change in the large number of women seeking refuge from their abusers this year.

Since January, the shelter has experienced a 23.24 percent increase over 2008 in the volume of women and their children escaping violence within the home. The shelter currently houses 20 women and 17 children, and works with 20 others who participate in its non-residential program. DaySpring Villa has sheltered more than 5,400 battered and homeless women and children since 1995.

DaySpring Villa Director Wilma Lively attributes the increase of women seeking shelter this year to the added stress in families likely due to financial and employment issues as a result of the depressed economy. Phone calls to the shelter tend to double and triple toward the end of the month when bills, rent and mortgages become due.

"We've definitely seen more women from upper middle-class families this year," Lively says. "The interesting thing is their problems aren't all that different from those who come from lower incomes. They just have more zeros behind them."

On the national stage, domestic violence statistics continue to increase with one in every four women experiencing some sort of violence by a partner or loved one during their lifetime. Domestic Violence Awareness Month was established in 1995 to promote awareness and prevention of domestic violence, and to educate communities through intervention, education and advocacy.

“Domestic Violence Awareness Month actually serves two purposes,” Lively says. “It reminds us that domestic violence is a very real problem, affecting very real lives right here at home. Oklahoma ranks fourth in the nation for domestic violence homicides. But it also works to encourage those being abused by a partner or a loved one to seek help and learn how to break the cycle of violence.”

Unlike other domestic violence shelters in Oklahoma, DaySpring Villa describes itself less as a “time out” and more as a fresh start for both mother and child. The shelter offers numerous programs for women and children that foster independent living and parenting, as well as continuing education, job training, and placement. “Our approach is treating the whole person—physically, emotionally and spiritually,” Lively says. “There’s nothing more gratifying than watching a woman and her children leave here truly healed and ready to begin their lives again.”

DaySpring Villa is funded solely through donations by churches, businesses and individuals. The shelter offers accommodations for up to 53 women and children. To learn more about DaySpring Villa, visit our Website at [www.DaySpringVilla.com](http://www.DaySpringVilla.com) or call 918.245.4075.