



Met Council Partners With NYLAG

New York, NY – August 25, 2003 - Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty recently partnered with the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) to provide free legal services for victims of domestic violence. This pioneering partnership formalizes the long-standing relationship through which Met Council, a not-for-profit that offers many programs to combat Jewish poverty, has referred numerous clients from this at-risk population to NYLAG, a not-for-profit law office that provides free civil legal services for low income New Yorkers.

"This is a vital service to our community," said William E. Rapfogel, Met Council's CEO. "Far too often, domestic violence goes unreported, especially in the Jewish community. Women are often embarrassed or otherwise reluctant to seek help, further endangering themselves and their children. And when they finally get the courage to seek help, the cost of legal services keeps them from getting the assistance they need."

Rapfogel continued: "This program allows us to help women who are trying to get their lives back in order and restore their family's safety and dignity. We are proud to be able to partner with NYLAG to provide these vital services."

Faye Zakheim, CSW, who heads Met Council's Family Violence Outreach Program said, "This pilot program is an important part of the Met Council's initiative to prevent family violence. It's not enough to refer a victim for legal services if they can't afford to pay for them. Our commitment is to see our clients through to the end of the legal process and try to help them stabilize their lives."

"NYLAG is extremely pleased to be a part of this collaborative effort to ensure that no victim of domestic violence, regardless of income, lacks the legal resources necessary to combat their batterers in court," said NYLAG Executive Director Yisroel Schulman. "Through this partnership, NYLAG hopes to continue our 13 year history of providing free, quality legal assistance to low income New Yorkers of all backgrounds."

"UJA-Federation and our network agencies, such as Met Council and NYLAG, are committed to assisting the victims of domestic violence so we can help turn despair to dignity, helplessness to hope," said John S. Ruskay, Executive Vice President & CEO, UJA-Federation of New York. Both, Met Council and NYLAG are beneficiary agencies of UJA-Federation.

Met Council coordinates a network of Jewish Community Councils located throughout New York City with an array of programs designed to meet the needs of the poor, working-poor, middle class and immigrant residents of New York. For more information about Met Council's family violence initiative, call Lizzie Livingston, CSW, at 212-453-9618.

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