

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Women's Fund and Domestic Violence Council (DVC) to Join Forces Against Violence

OMAHA—The Women's Fund of Omaha and the Domestic Violence Council (DVC) announced today that the two nonprofit organizations will join forces in a merger, as part of an effort to further improve the ways in which our community addresses domestic violence and sexual assault.

"The Women's Fund exists to bring research, resources and awareness to issues that impact women and girls in our community, and domestic violence and sexual assault have been priorities for us since our inception in 1990," says Michelle Zych, Executive Director of the Women's Fund. "The DVC has done incredible work on this front over the years, and we believe that joining forces will strengthen our efforts and improve the lives of women and girls."

In anticipation of the merger, the Women's Fund has hired Christon MacTaggart to serve as the domestic violence/sexual assault response coordinator. MacTaggart has spent the last 15 years working in a variety of roles to enhance the response to domestic and sexual violence at both the local and state levels and is passionate about systems change through community collaboration. Zych says this will enhance their focus and reinforce the organization's long-standing commitment to ending violence against women.

The Women's Fund has a history of tackling similar issues.

"Our Sex Trafficking and Adolescent Health projects use research and best practices to shine a light on the impact of sex trafficking and STDs in our community, while convening stakeholders to the table to develop and implement sustainable solutions. Our approach with domestic violence and sexual assault will be the same," Zych says, adding that sex trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault often overlap, and that incidents in all three areas are too high in our community. "This is an opportunity to join forces and ultimately change the landscape of violence against women and girls in our community."

Since its inception, the Women's Fund has not been a service provider. Zych says the Women's Fund will continue this tradition, and will not be providing domestic violence and sexual assault services. "Our community has many quality service providers for victims and survivors," she says. "What we will do is provide the research and resources needed to better coordinate our community's response to domestic violence and sexual assault—from law enforcement to prosecution to critical services for victims and survivors."

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### About the Women's Fund of Omaha

The Women's Fund of Omaha is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Omaha-area women and girls. As a trusted expert in the community, the organization identifies critical issues, funds innovative solutions and influences dynamic change. Since its beginning in 1990, the Women's Fund has supported local agencies with nearly \$10 million in grants for programs that address the most pressing issues as identified by its research, and has established its own programs to meet unaddressed needs. It is the only foundation that provides grants exclusively to programs for Omaha's women and girls, and is the leading organization researching issues concerning Omaha women and girls in order to raise awareness and drive change. For more information, visit [www.OmahaWomensFund.org](http://www.OmahaWomensFund.org).