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Ramapo College and the County of Bergen Partner with County and Community Organizations for May 24 Spring Domestic Violence Awareness Symposium

MAHWAH, NEW JERSEY – Ramapo College of New Jersey, in partnership with the County of Bergen and a number of county and community-based organizations, will host a Spring Domestic Violence Awareness Symposium on May 24 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Moderated and organized by New Milford Councilman **Matthew S. Seymour**, the symposium will take place in the Trustees Pavilion on the College’s campus at 505 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430.

The Symposium will feature a distinguished group of panelists from Bergen County, Ramapo College, and beyond who will participate in a roundtable discussion on the available resources for victims of domestic violence. The guests include:

- **Marie-Danielle Attis, MPA**, Office of Violence Prevention, Ramapo College of New Jersey
- **Bergen County Sheriff’s Office**
- **Allison Bressler, MA**, A Partnership for Change
- **Taylor Craney, Esq.**, Center for Hope and Safety
- **Jessica Gomperts**, Bergen County Prosecutor’s Office
- **Christa Madler, MSW, LSW**, NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency
- **Juan Carlos Morel and Laura Melendez**, Alternatives to Domestic Violence (ADV), Bergen County Department of Human Services
- **Simaza Sadek, MSW, LSW** and **Jesselly De La Cruz, DSW, LCSW** of the YWCA Northern New Jersey’s healingSPACE

“Violence against women is on the rise, and, sadly, first year college students are one of the most vulnerable groups associated with this growing problem. To that end, Ramapo is committed to help heighten the awareness of domestic violence for our college community and our neighbors across Bergen County,” said **Dr. Cindy Jebb, President of Ramapo College**. “We look forward

to welcoming the community to Ramapo College for this impactful evening on such an important topic.”

Domestic violence is a significant public health issue that has many individual and societal costs, and the data is startling. According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 35.8% of New Jersey women and 27.4% of men within the state have experienced intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner rape, and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes. In a recent study, the Council on Criminal Justice (CCJ) found that since the start of the pandemic, domestic violence has increased by 8%. Even more significant, about 35% of female domestic violence survivors and more than 11% of male survivors experience some form of physical injury related to partner violence, some which can result in death.

“When it comes to this important issue, many of my local constituents and communities have expressed a need for awareness and help because they feel trapped and isolated,” said Seymour. “These programs bring together a who’s who of experts from our region who deal with a number of aspects of domestic violence, with the goal of providing a comprehensive overview of the services, advocacy and assistance available to victims.”

There are also many other negative health outcomes associated with domestic violence, including conditions affecting the heart, digestive, reproduction, muscle and bones, and the nervous system, as well as addictive behaviors. Survivors can experience mental health problems such as depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the healthcare costs of domestic violence, over a victim’s lifetime, is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men.

“Domestic violence is a growing national issue. The abuser’s systemic pattern of power and control impacts not just their victim, but can extend to the entire family unit and even into the neighborhood,” said **James Tedesco, Bergen County Executive**. “It is our responsibility to join with other government agencies, community organizations and partners, and experts in our community to educate the public, build awareness, and to let them know that there is help available if they find themselves in a similar situation.”

“Every day we work to ensure that perpetrators of domestic violence are brought to justice, but we do so much more than that. Our Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy works closely with local agencies to provide services and support to survivors of domestic violence,” said **Bergen County Prosecutor Mark Musella**. “We are also honored to participate in important events like this symposium to raise awareness of domestic violence and to share vital resources with the community.”

For more information on the Spring Domestic Violence Awareness Symposium, email mseymour@newmilfordboro.com.

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About Ramapo College

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice; is recognized as the state's top college on the list of Best Disability Schools by *Great Value Colleges*; was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondeNast Traveler*; and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others.

Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by CollegesofDistinction.com, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in Victoria Media's *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Applied Mathematics, Business Administration, Contemporary Instructional Design, Computer Science, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice.