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***CUT IT OUT SALONS AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE***  
**MARKS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF AWARENESS-BUILDING**  
**AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF ABUSE**

*Sometimes, only her hairdresser really knows... Now entering its fifth year, CUT IT OUT Salons Against Domestic Abuse has grown exponentially through its steady funding and its logical reason for being. More than 90 percent of victims of violence are women, and women usually see their salon professional more often than any other professional. The salon is a sanctuary where secrets are sometimes whispered to trusted confidants who happen to be their stylists.*

Birmingham, AL (June 23, 2008) -- *CUT IT OUT* has been hailed from coast to coast as an innovative solution to a chronic and difficult problem – raising awareness of the epidemic of domestic abuse and getting victims the help they need. The program, which educates salon professionals to recognize signs of domestic abuse in their clients and safely refer those clients to local resources for help, is entering its fifth year this month. Currently in place in all 50 states, the program has recently gone international with the launch of *CUT IT OUT* in Australia.

*History: CUT IT OUT*, launched in the State of Alabama in 2001, was created by program founder Dianne Mooney and The Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham with help from the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In 2003, the initiative was refined, expanded, and launched nationally with the support of an advisory board comprised of the nation’s leading domestic violence experts, sponsorship by *Southern Living At HOME* and oversight by the National Cosmetology Association. In 2006 *CUT IT OUT* broadened its reach with the creation and distribution of over 2,000 training manuals to every state Attorney General’s office, every state domestic violence coalition, and other service providers across the country. To date, nearly 40,000 salon professionals have been educated by the *CUT IT OUT* program.

“Our investment in breaking the cycle of violence has been tremendously rewarding as more and more salon professionals are becoming equipped with information and skills to recognize and refer clients to resources for help,” said Dianne Mooney, program founder. Women of all races and demographic backgrounds are equally vulnerable to violence by an intimate partner, and during the past five years, many hundreds of victims have found safe haven thanks to a salon professional who has been educated by *CUT IT OUT*,” she continued. Since about one in three American women report being abused at some point in her life, there is still much to be done. “Our goal is to expand to every salon and cosmetology school in the country in order to raise awareness of domestic violence and to spread the word that there’s no excuse for abuse,” said Mooney.

Since the national launch in 2003, more than 400,000 posters for salon restrooms and nearly 3 million safety cards have been distributed to salons throughout the country. The materials all refer victims to the National Domestic Violence Hotline number for help, who, in turn, refer victims to local resources. Services and materials are available in both English and Spanish, and are provided at no cost to the recipient.

*Why the salon?* Perhaps it's the culture of the salon industry and the atmosphere in the salon itself: nurturing, caring, with a heart for giving back to the community. And the sheer numbers in the industry speak to the enormous potential of the *CUT IT OUT* program to touch peoples' lives: "There are 300,000 salons in America, and 3,000 cosmetology schools. Clients usually see their hairdressers at least every six weeks, and trust and confidence are built up over time," said Gordon Miller, Executive Director of the National Cosmetology Association. "*CUT IT OUT* is changing lives," he continued.

San Diego County is one of more than 300 communities that have educated salon professionals to spot signs of domestic violence in their clients and safely refer them to local resources for help. San Diego County District Supervisor Pam Slater-Price said, "Salon professionals are in a unique position to recognize the signs and symptoms of domestic violence ... bald spots from their hair being torn out, bruises, isolation or low self-esteem." With *CUT IT OUT*, they learn how to gently guide distressed victims to seek help. Sometimes a haircut and a caring conversation could save a life.

For more information on the *CUT IT OUT* program, visit <http://www.cutitout.org>

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photography, posters, training materials, safety cards and interviews available upon request at (214) 252 - 0900