

Program to help combat domestic violence

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(Photo: Journal file)

Hyde Park Supervisor Aileen Rohr and Family Services' CEO Brian Doyle have secured funding through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to strengthen the criminal justice response to domestic violence in Hyde Park.

The effort will be made through increased collaboration by strengthening the response to domestic incidents through two approaches: 1-Establishment of a Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) Project and 2-Implementation of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP).

"We are thrilled to have this funding as yet another tool in our arsenal to protect victims of domestic violence," Rohr said in a written statement. "We are fortunate to have Family Services as partners in this endeavor."

In the aftermath of a rise in domestic violence homicides in the county beginning in 2010, Dutchess County engaged in a system-wide review to enhance practices to prevent domestic violence, resulting in the formation of the High Risk Case Management Project and the Lethality Assessment pilot project. Coordination among agencies to identify domestic violence and provide an identified response for victims in order to avoid potentially lethal cases is critical to this effort, according to officials.

"We are so very impressed by how Supervisor Rohr and police Chief Paolilli have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to sharply reducing if not eradicating domestic violence in the Hyde Park Community," Doyle said in a written statement.

The funding allows for the establishment of DART and LAP and includes the addition of an advocate within the Hyde Park Police Department who can work with victims. The advocate, who is an employee of Family Services Domestic Violence Services and will work out of the Hyde Park Police Department, will lend expertise to the police department for the identification and preparation of cases which in the past might have been lost due to reluctance on the part of victims or perceived lack of actionable evidence by the police officer.

The project builds upon existing knowledge and programs, and expands it by offering guidance and access to key resources to victims and police officers in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident, officials stated.

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