



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCES OFFENDERS TO PAY SHARE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM COSTS

Kingston, NY (January 12, 2010) - Ulster County Executive Mike Hein is pleased to announce that EVOLVE, an important domestic violence prevention and education program, will be able to continue. The County Executive's redesigned proposal to fund the program calls for domestic violence offenders to now pay for a share of the program costs. Those monies would be obtained through a fine imposed at sentencing, in much the same way that DWI education and prevention programs are funded.

"Domestic violence is a terrible scourge on the people of our community and it often impacts those who are the most vulnerable. The EVOLVE program has played an important role in educating and counseling offenders. That being said, the burden of paying for the EVOLVE program should not rest solely on the shoulders of taxpayers. It makes perfect sense to have individuals convicted of domestic violence help fund their own treatment," said County Executive Hein.

EVOLVE was in the budget of the Ulster County's Community Corrections Program (CCP) and was administered by contract with FAMILY of Woodstock, Inc., a multi-human services nonprofit organization, based in Kingston, New York. The Community Corrections Program was a larger, non-mandated program that was eliminated in the County's 2010 budget. The County Executive, however, recognizes the importance and value of continuing the EVOLVE program, as an effective means of preventing the incidences of domestic violence and he has developed an alternative funding proposal, which includes the sentencing surcharge.

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Michael Berg, Executive Director of FAMILY of Woodstock, said, "Family of Woodstock is very pleased that the County Executive has acknowledged the importance the EVOLVE program plays in the County's effort to prevent domestic violence. The new funding stream will allow EVOLVE to run at its current level, while it seeks to obtain additional funding to sustain it through 2010."

In the Fall of 2009, County Executive Hein issued a proclamation designating the month of October as "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" and the County Office Building was illuminated in purple lights, in conjunction with a national awareness campaign. A Domestic Violence Awareness Night was also held to kick-off the month-long campaign and featured speakers from the human services, law enforcement and justice administration communities, along with several domestic violence victims who shared their personal stories with the audience.

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