

# ON THE HOMEFRONT

*10 Years*

UNITED IN BREAKING THE CYCLE  
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



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## HomeFront's 10th Anniversary A Testament to Collaboration

What began as a four-year national demonstration project with a handful of staff, HomeFront has flourished into an independent agency that strives to prevent domestic violence and abuse in our community.

Now celebrating its 10th year, the initial concept that evolved into HomeFront has a storied history in Calgary. The formation of the Calgary Domestic Violence Committee (CDVC) in 1981, and more recently, the establishment of the Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence initiated by then Mayor Al Duerr in 1990, together helped lay the groundwork for the community-based collaborative model that drives HomeFront today.

Kevin McNichol, executive director of HomeFront, credits the past work of local practitioners who recognized the importance of providing individuals with a safe, coordinated and effective response in crisis situations.

"We've accomplished many things over the years and we need to acknowledge our early work as having been critical to laying the foundation for the success we've realized to date," he says.

McNichol says one of those

accomplishments is the reduction of the domestic violence re-offence rate by two-thirds. He says this is a significant achievement that highlights the tremendous efforts made by those working on the frontlines to address domestic violence.

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*"We need to acknowledge our early work as having been critical to laying the foundation for the success we've realized to date."*

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"We hang a lot of [our] success on this one stat – the dramatic reduction in re-offence rates, but it's so much more than that," he says. "It doesn't happen without the continuing support of all of those partners and players being at the table delivering their services and benefitting the client."

The establishment of Alberta's first specialized domestic violence court – one that is comprised of the Crown, police, Legal Aid, probation and caseworkers to better assess each case to avoid future offences –

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Thank you to **Dennis Potharst** for volunteering his time to write the Spring issue of *On the HomeFront*.

### HomeFront

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has undoubtedly helped to lower re-offence rates and is a major milestone for HomeFront. Other notable achievements include prevention initiatives such as the Early Intervention and Outreach Program and the Partner Support Program and the more recent creation of the Domestic Conflict Response Team with the Calgary Police Service.

A focus on treatment initiatives for offenders is another key success, according to Dawn Tinling, who has been a HomeFront Board of Director for nearly 10 years.

“It’s not just focused on punishment, it’s more about how do you stop the cycle of violence, get treatment for the offenders and keep families together,” Tinling says.

“I think it’s a cycle that HomeFront has shown can be broken.”

McNichol adds Calgary’s former Chief Crown Prosecutor Jerry Selinger, the namesake behind the annual HomeFront Selinger Awards, was instrumental in encouraging open dialogue and communication between social agencies and the police, which assisted HomeFront in carrying out its mission.

“That really became embodied in the spirit of HomeFront and its creations and he was certainly a champion and leader,” McNichol says.

A reception to celebrate HomeFront’s 10th anniversary will take place on June 9 as part of the Second Annual Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Conference at the University of Calgary. Alberta Children and Youth Services Minister Yvonne Fritz will be on hand to mark the special occasion. **HF**

## It’s Never too Late to Say Thanks!



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Thank you to our 2009 HomeFront Selinger Award Sponsors.

## Hi- 5 10/11 Club Officers Provide Crown with Solid Case



witnesses, seizing relevant evidence and liaising with other departments to have photographs taken of all injuries, the officers involved in this case carried out a complete investigation in order to provide the Crown with a solid case. A total of five charges have been laid against the accused.

With no plans to reconcile with the accused, the victim is currently working with community agencies and is doing well. **HF**

The Christmas season turned out to be anything but joyous for a woman and her infant child. Having previously left her common-law spouse due to continuing domestic violence, the woman and her child returned to their home on Christmas Eve hoping her spouse would be different. However, shortly after arriving home, she found her spouse intoxicated and thus decided to leave again. The accused refused to let them leave, and began to assault the woman while she was holding the child, who was inadvertently struck in the scuffle. Both the woman and the infant suffered injuries. An adult child in the home at the time intervened, and was able to remove the child to a safe location and contact police. The victim, however, continued to be assaulted by her spouse.

Officers from District 4 arrived to find the victim and the child injured, while the accused had passed out. They ensured the immediate safety of the victim by providing her with all necessary resources, including the assistance of Child Services.

By conducting thorough interviews with the victim and

# HomeFront Hosting Domestic Violence Conference

HomeFront is proud to announce the Second Annual Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Conference from June 9-11, 2010 at the MacEwan Conference and Event Centre in Calgary.

Hosted by HomeFront and the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, the two-day conference focuses on research, discussion and strategies to identify and prevent occurrences of domestic homicide in the community.

A number of keynote speakers will be in attendance. Award-winning author and sociologist Dr. Neil Websdale will address the issue of familicide in society, which has seen increased prevalence in recent years. In addition to Websdale, other noted experts speaking at the event include Dr. Peter Collins with the Forensic Psychiatry Unit of the Ontario Provincial Police, Dr. Rebecca Dobash and Dr. Russell Dobash, both professors at the University of Manchester in the U.K. and Dr. Stephen Hart from the department of psychology at Simon Fraser University.

The upcoming conference is an opportunity for HomeFront to showcase the role collaboration can play in effectively addressing domestic violence and ultimately preventing domestic homicides. Over the last ten years, HomeFront has worked determinedly to reduce the recidivism rate by 66 per cent and helped to improve the lives of nearly 18,000 victims and their children, with their successful collaborative model.

As conferences provide excellent networking opportunities and engaging discussions, HomeFront looks forward to co-hosting this exclusive conference and creating new partnerships to collectively address this issue across Canada.

For more information on the conference and to register, please visit [www.homicideprevention.com](http://www.homicideprevention.com). **HF**



*2nd Annual Canadian*  
**Domestic Homicide**  
**PREVENTION**  
C O N F E R E N C E



**Save the date! June 9-11, 2010**

**A Conference to Enhance Research, Practice Collaboration & Prevent Domestic Homicides**  
MacEwan Conference and Event Centre, Calgary, AB

To register visit [www.homicideprevention.com](http://www.homicideprevention.com)



**Co-Hosts:** Alberta Justice (Crown), Calgary Corrections (Probation), Calgary Counselling Centre, Calgary Police Service, Child and Family Services Authority, I-TRAC, RESOLVE Alberta, and YWCA Sheriff King Home.

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