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MEDIA RELEASE

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RELEASE**
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WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AWARD

On October 23, 2009 Chief Jeff Spaulding and Lieutenant Misty Budzinski (*pictured*) attended the Annual Awards Luncheon sponsored by the Maryland Networks Against Domestic Violence in Columbia. Governor Martin O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown also attended the event which recognized individuals and organizations from around the State who excelled in their contributions to the safety and well-being of victims of domestic violence across the State. During the awards ceremony the Westminster Police Department was presented with the *2009 Lethality Assessment Award*.



Lethality assessment is a tool used by police officers and crisis workers to determine the potential for future serious violence or death in a relationship. Officers handling domestic violence incidents are required to screen victims utilizing a lethality assessment tool – a survey of 11 validated questions. Those victims screened as being at “high risk” of future violence, based upon their answers to the questions, are immediately placed in phone contact with a domestic violence counselor who speaks with them about their circumstances and discusses safety planning and the resources available to the victim. The assessment process is being used around the country with excellent results.

The Westminster Police Department was selected for the award because they successfully screened 93% of the domestic violence victims that they encountered during the previous

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year – 56% of these victims subsequently participating in follow-up services with local domestic violence counselors provided through a partnership with Family and Children Services of Central Maryland. The Department’s success rates were the highest in the State for the past year. This was the third year for the Lethality Assessment Award Program in Maryland. The Harford County Sheriff’s Office and the Anne Arundel County Police Department were the two previous recipients of the award.

Additional information relating to the Maryland Lethality Assessment Program can be obtained from the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence website (www.mnadv.org) or by contacting them at (800) MD-HELPS.

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