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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPEN ARMS ASKS MEN TO “WALK A MILE IN HER SHOES®”

FINDLAY, Ohio (4/15/2009) – Open Arms Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Services proudly presents Walk A Mile In Her Shoes®: The International Men’s March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence on Saturday, April 25, 2009. Hancock County men and boys will walk one mile in women’s high heeled shoes through downtown Findlay to raise awareness and educate the community about domestic violence and sexual assault. Several local celebrities will be in attendance; even Mayor Pete Sehnert is scheduled to march.

“None of us can stop domestic violence and rape alone. It’s a group effort, a family issue and we need to make a place for everyone to stand up against it,” said Open Arms Executive Director Beth Meeks. Open Arms asks male community members to take a stand against violence and pledge to walk. The walk will replace Open Arms’ traditional Bird House Auction fundraiser. Proceeds from sponsored walkers will benefit Open Arms. To challenge a friend or co-worker to walk, or to obtain the individual walker form, visit www.openarmsfindlay.org.

The walk will kick off with an opening ceremony at 11:30 a.m. Dave Glass, vice president and director of broadcast at the Findlay Publishing Company, will emcee. The walk is scheduled to begin at 12 p.m. in Dorney Plaza, with registration starting at 10 a.m.

Participants will march back to Dorney Plaza for the reception and awards ceremony scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. The adult and student walkers with the highest amount of pledges will win the grand prize. Walkers will also have the opportunity to win awards for titles such as “best legs.”

High heeled shoes in a variety of men’s sizes will be available, or participants can bring their own. If walking one mile in heels becomes too challenging, walkers can stop at “comfort zone” stations

along the route and purchase flip-flops to wear instead. Women and children are welcome to cheer along the men in heels or even join the march. A children's area and food vendors will provide fun for the whole family.

The walker registration fee for adults is \$20, or \$10 with own heels, and \$10 for students. Boys 16 years old and under can walk free with an adult. The registration fee is waived for those who raise \$200 or more in pledges. Walkers can turn in pledged donations to the Open Arms office, 401 West Sandusky Street, or bring them to the registration table on the day of the event. To volunteer at the event, call Open Arms at 419.420.9261.

Walk A Mile In Her Shoes®: The International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence was created by Frank Baird in 2001. In 2007, Baird formed Venture Humanity, Inc, a nonprofit corporation that develops peace, violence prevention and community projects. Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® is a Venture Humanity, Inc. project. Visit www.walkamileinher shoes.org for more information.

Open Arms Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis services is a nonprofit agency supported in part by the Hancock County United Way. Open Arms provides six program services to those living and working in the greater Hancock County community. The six programs include Rape Crisis Services, Child Advocacy, Violence Recovery Project, Outreach Services, the Harmony House Visitation & Exchange program, and Emergency Shelter Services. The 24-hour Crisis Hotline is 419-422-4766. Join us at our blog at openarmsfindlay.blogspot.com for updates on our everyday life here at Open Arms.

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