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## **For Immediate Release**

### SARC and Harford County Government Partner for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

Bel Air, MD— February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. This is a national effort to raise awareness about teens, dating violence and how to promote positive and healthy relationships across the country. Dating violence is more common than many people think. One in three teens in the United States will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by someone they are in a relationship with before they become adults. And nearly half (43%) of college women report experiencing violent and abusive dating behaviors.

Teen dating violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors used to exert power and control over a dating partner<sup>1</sup>. Teen dating violence is not just physical. Violence can manifest emotionally, sexually or digitally. Anyone can experience violence, abuse, or unhealthy behaviors in their dating relationships.

This February, in an effort to raise awareness and participate in the 2020 Teen Dating Violence Awareness Campaign theme of “#1Thing,” SARC and Harford County Government are coming together and hosting their first ever Stop Teen Dating Violence Awareness Poster Contest. We are inviting teens from the community to join us as we spread awareness and take a stand against teen dating violence.

“I have always been proud to partner with SARC and their Walk a Mile in Her Shoes campaign to end domestic violence,” County Executive Barry Glassman said. “With this poster contest, we’re working together again to help teens develop healthy dating relationships early on and to recognize the warning signs for abuse.”

Luisa Caiazzo, SARC CEO, stated, “We are excited to partner with Harford County Government and work together to raise awareness about Teen Dating Violence. We hope that this poster contest will help to start a conversation and foster positive, healthy relationships with peers and dating partners.”

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The theme is “Stop Teen Dating Violence.” All entries need to be submitted to SARC by Monday, February 24, 2020. Social media voting begins on Monday, March 2, 2020. The top three posters will receive prizes. Winners will be announced on SARC’s Facebook page on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. Additional information including contest rules and details can be found by visiting [www.sarc-maryland.org](http://www.sarc-maryland.org) or by contacting the SARC Volunteer and Events Coordinator, Erin Flynn at 410-836-8431.

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### **About SARC**

Since 1978, SARC has provided hope and resources to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, and stalking. Services include a 24 Hour-Helpline (410-836-8430), counseling for adults and children, legal advocacy and representation, a confidential safe house, hospital accompaniment program, and community outreach and education. To learn more about SARC visit [www.sarc-maryland.org](http://www.sarc-maryland.org) or call SARC’s Administrative Services at 410-836-8431.