Media Release
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I AM COURAGE: THE BRENDA STRAFFORD CENTRE LAUNCHES FIRST AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Calgary, Alberta – The Brenda Strafford Centre will launch its first public campaign to bring awareness to domestic violence and to the impact The Centre has in providing support and strength with safe, secure shelter. ***I am Courage*** will launch at The Calgary Women's Show on April 20, and will work with a number of community partners for one month to bring awareness to domestic violence, stories of courage, and to profile the organization. Present at the launch will be our campaign ambassador, Barb Higgins, Michelle Morgan, actress from the television show *Heartland*, and two Courage speakers, Sherri-Lee James, survivor and author of *For the Love of my Boys*, and Holly DeSimone, survivor and advocate.

Domestic violence continues to be an astronomical occurrence within our community. The Calgary Police Service spends more time responding to calls about domestic violence than any other crime. Shelters, like The Brenda Stafford Centre, respond to people in need – working to empower them and transform their lives.

"To date, the Brenda Strafford Centre has safely housed more than 1000 families," says Tess Gordey, Executive Director with The Brenda Strafford Centre. "I am always inspired by the bravery and incredible personal achievements of these survivors."

Over 88% of The Brenda Stafford Centre's residents move on to living situations free of their abusers.

"The Courage Campaign celebrates and supports empowerment, confidence and independence," says Tracy Neumann, Director of Development and Fund Development with The Brenda Strafford Foundation. "Courage means something to everyone. By identifying what courage means to you, you can empathize with what it takes to leave domestic violence."

The campaign being rolled out over the months of April and May includes:

- Launch at the Calgary Women's Show (Saturday, April 20th, 12:15 p.m., Style Central Main Stage)
- Book a Courage Speaker, who will share her story of domestic violence – talking about the dire situation she was in, the courage it took to leave, and the courage it takes to not go back, or our Courage Ambassador, Barb Higgins, who will engage with audiences about what courage means to them.
- Receive an *I am Courage* t-shirt with a $100 donation
- Engage with online communities through The Centre's Facebook page and its presence on Twitter
- Billboard ads through Pattison Advertising
- Annual giving campaign letters mailed out for Mother's Day

Backgrounder: Attached are two fact sheets: Domestic Violence overview in Calgary and The Brenda Strafford Centre for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.

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