

Domestic Violence Deaths Increase in 2005

**Contacts: Craig Harrison
 Chair
 Utah Domestic Violence Council
 (801) 328-8891 Ext. 3313**

**Judy Kasten Bell
Executive Director
Utah Domestic Violence Council
(801) 521-5544 x 103
(801) 920-1327 cell**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The tragic consequences of domestic violence increased in 2005, totaling 33 domestic violence related deaths—up from 23 in 2004. Victims ranged in age from 4 months to 88 years old. Firearms were used in 25 fatalities. Knives accounted for five deaths. One death occurred from blunt force trauma, another resulted from wounds inflicted with a broken cup handle, and the source of death for the youngest victim, 4 month old Christian D’Agnillo, could not be determined. (See #22 on the 2005 DV Related Deaths List.)

Please note that the Domestic Violence Related Deaths List as compiled by the Utah Domestic Violence Council includes any death that was related to domestic violence, not just homicides. Thus, a murder/suicide is counted as two deaths on our list. All information on Utah’s 33 domestic violence related deaths occurring in 2005 was collected from public sources. The information is continually tracked, compiled and updated to illustrate the tragic impact of domestic violence in the Beehive State.

2005’s 33 DV related deaths included 14 cohabitant homicides. As outlined by Utah law, cohabitant means an emancipated person or a person who is at least 16 years of age and who:

- Is a current or former spouse of the other party or is living as if a spouse with the other party, or is related by blood or marriage to the other party;**
- or has one of more children in common, or is expecting a child with the other party, and/or;**

- is or has been residing in the same residence as the other party.

Based upon that definition, in addition to persons who had been husband and wife or otherwise intimate, the 2005 list included a brother/brother murder/suicide, a man who was murdered by a roommate and a man who was murdered by his first cousin.

At least 31 children either witnessed or were nearby when violence turned deadly. Brea Lynn Kirchoff, age 26, was shot by her boyfriend in front of her three young children and 13 year old brother. Six children were in the home when their father, Jeffrey Jones, age 33, shot and killed himself after threatening their mother. Two children, ages 11 and 12, witnessed their father stab and kill their 19 year old brother, Gerald “Bobo” Fain, Jr. Jacqueline Villoto, age 34, was stabbed and shot by her common law husband, Jairo Ortega, age 46. Her three sons, ages 12 to 15, were severely traumatized when they discovered their mother’s body. Jacqueline was also babysitting a 5 year old, who was sleeping in the home when the murder occurred. And there were many others.

The full 2005 Domestic Violence Related Deaths List is available on the Utah Domestic Violence Council website located at www.udvc.org. Because domestic violence can become deadly, get help if you experience any of the following¹:

- Physical violence that has increased in frequency and severity.
- Threats involving weapons, especially when weapons are accessible.
- Attempts to strangle or choke you.
- Amphetamine use by the abuser.
- Threats to kill you (particularly if you feel that it could actually happen).
- Forced sex and other controlling behaviors.
- Threats of suicide by the abuser.
- Violence against your children and/or against animals.
- Violence outside the home.

¹ Adapted from “Danger Assessment,” by Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Ph.D., R.N.

If you decide to leave a violent relationship, don't do it alone. Call the Utah Domestic Violence Link Line at 1-800-897-LINK (5465) for resources near you. Your call is confidential and could save lives. Remember, there's no excuse for abuse. End domestic violence by breaking the silence.