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MEDIA RELEASE

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Macy's Foundation Gives YES Grant to Teen Dating Violence Prevention ***\$7,500 will support education and treatment***

Bellevue, Wash (Dec. 2, 2010)—Youth Eastside Services (YES) is the beneficiary of a generous grant from the Macy's Foundation to help prevent and treat teen dating violence as part of the Foundation's focus on preventing domestic violence. The \$7,500 grant will primarily be used to fund YES' RESPECT (Relationship Equality & Safety: Peers Educating Community Teens) program which trains teen mentors to educate their peers on how to recognize and avoid dating violence.

"Teen dating violence has been shown to be a gateway for adult domestic violence for both the abuser and victim," explained Gretchen VonHeeder, coordinator of the Teen Dating Violence Program for YES. "What's more, we've found that teen girls often site power and control as normal in teen relationships until they are taught otherwise," she added.

The New York Times reported last year that dating violence has risen by more than 40 percent since 1999. YES' own surveys confirm there continues to be a prevalent concern that teens, particularly girls, are victims of dating violence and are unaware of specific resources available to them.

"We are very pleased to have Macy's backing for this unique program in our region," said YES Executive Director Patti Skelton-McGougan. She explained how more than 16 years ago, YES was one of the first agencies in the country to bring attention to this growing problem by developing a teen dating violence program to both help victims and raise awareness. Today the agency is one of just a few nationally and the only agency in King County to put such focus on teen dating violence.

YES provides individual treatment to about 75 victims of teen dating violence each year, support for family of victims and an 8-week survivor support group. At the core of the program is dating violence prevention via a peer education program called RESPECT. "Research has clearly demonstrated that the best way to deliver prevention information to teens is through their peers," said VonHeeder.

RESPECT trains youth to assist in the presentation of a curriculum that teaches about dating violence and abuse including what makes a healthy relationship, identifying unhealthy behaviors, and where to go for help. Peer educators in the program most often have been exposed to, are victims of or have had a friend impacted by dating or domestic violence.

For more information on teen dating violence and resources available through YES, visit www.YouthEastsideServices.org.

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About Youth Eastside Services: YES is a nonprofit organization and a leading provider of youth counseling and substance abuse services in the region. Since 1968, YES has been a lifeline for kids and families, offering treatment, education and prevention services to help youth become healthy, confident and self-reliant and families to become strong, supportive and loving. While YES accepts Medicaid, insurance and offers a sliding scale, no one is turned away for inability to pay. For more information, visit www.YouthEastsideServices.org.