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TESSA KICKS OFF 40th RUBY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WITH THREE NEW INITIATIVES

Colorado Springs, CO – Forty years ago to the date TESSA became official—on May 17, 1977, the Battered Women’s Services – TESSA’s founding name--was established. Today in front of the El Paso County Courthouse TESSA announced three new 40th Anniversary initiatives to launch a new chapter in the organization’s history.

“We at TESSA are thrilled to have achieved such a milestone this year. Forty years ago, TESSA was an information line. Today we provide a range of services including a 24-hour hotline, a 32-bed shelter, counseling and help for the kiddos,” said TESSA Executive Director SherryLynn Boyles.”

“But we know there is much more to do. We not only want to provide new services that our clients say they need most—but we want to inspire the community to help us stop domestic and sexual violence,” Boyles continued. “That’s why we created the three new initiatives we are announcing today.”

- **Housing First**—TESSA has been awarded \$325,000 in new funding (from the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the Victims of Crime Act) to help secure housing by providing direct assistance and case management for approximately 60 domestic violence victims and their children who are or at risk of homelessness.
- **Project LIFT (Legal Assistance)**—TESSA assists more than 2,000 clients each year at the El Paso County Courthouse with the protective order process but many of them are in need of attorneys to help them with more complex cases. Project LIFT will pay fees to local lawyers to take victims’ cases. Our hope is that lawyers will also help victims with related family and criminal law issues on a pro bono basis.
- **Champions of Change Prevention Summit**—TESSA is convening approximately 100 community leaders from business, healthcare, the military and other segments of society to develop community-wide initiatives. Through the Summit, community leaders will come together to develop new strategies for increasing public awareness, inspiring new partners, and changing conditions that allow domestic and sexual violence to continue.

“TESSA has set a course for achieving our mission, and these initiatives represent almost \$600,000 in new funding that TESSA has received as a direct result of having created a clear path forward,” Boyles added.

TESSA serves 10,000 victims of domestic and sexual violence in El Paso and Teller Counties each year, and also works within the community to end the violence.