



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TESSA SUMMIT TO STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE SUMMIT CONVENES COMMUNITY LEADERS IN CELEBRATION OF
TESSA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY*

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. – More than 100 community leaders gathered on Thursday, July 6 to develop new community-wide initiatives to combat domestic violence and sexual assault.

TESSA's two-day **Champions for Change Summit** at **The Antlers** convened representatives from business, healthcare, military, local government, and other segments of the Pikes Peak Region. These community leaders began work to create a blueprint for increasing public awareness, as well as other strategies for changing conditions that allow domestic violence and sexual assault to continue in our community.

"The police here are responding to as many as 30 or 40 of these calls every day. It's not enough to just keep responding to these calls day after day, year after year," said TESSA Executive Director SherryLynn Boyles. "It's not an isolated problem that happens in pockets, it's widespread. We have to ask what is it in our climate, in society, that we can affect to reduce the violence. Prevention is focused on changing the conditions that make it possible for violence to happen."

The Summit is being co-chaired by El Pomar Foundation COO Kyle Hybl, District Attorney Dan May, and UCCS Administrator Dr. Terry Schwartz, with Mayor John Suthers opening the event. Other major community players taking a leadership role in the Summit include Penrose-St. Francis Health Services President & CEO Margaret Sabin, Fort Carson Garrison Commander Col. Ronald Fitch, and incoming Pikes Peak United Way President & CEO Cindy Aubrey, to name a few.

"We want to empower these community leaders to brainstorm and engage in proactive prevention efforts, emphasizing the interconnectedness of domestic violence and other community issues," Boyles said. "We anticipate several new community-wide initiatives to come out of these groundbreaking discussions."

The summit is being held in conjunction with TESSA's 40th Ruby Anniversary, and is one of three anniversary efforts taking place in 2017.

"This Summit is not only bringing together those of us who see and work with these issues everyday but people who may not have had much experience with it," Boyles said. "We hope this will inspire new ideas, new partnerships and new ways of working together with wide support."

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.

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