

Domestic abuse victims get aid  
Program gives notice of protective orders

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The Courier-Journal

Just hours after Faith Mudd obtained an emergency protective order against Howard Scotland in August 2003, he broke into a Jeffersontown home, shot her to death and killed himself.

Mudd didn't know Scotland, of Louisville, had been served with the order.

But an automated notification system unveiled yesterday alerts victims by phone within minutes after an order has been served.

It gives them time to make sure they are in a safe place or to call police if the order is violated, said Jefferson Family Court Judge Jerry Bowles, who came up with the idea for the program.

"What a big day for Kentucky," said Bowles, who unveiled the program with the Mary Byron Foundation, a local grant-making charity, which oversees the project.

In addition to the quick notification, the VINE Protective Order program also allows victims to call a toll-free number at any time to find out when court hearings will be held and when the domestic violence order is set to expire, among other information.

The alert system is another aspect of VINE, which stands for Victim Information and Notification Everyday.

Kentucky was the first state to use VINE to notify victims immediately upon a change in an inmate's status, such as a release, escape or court appearance.

VINE's creation was spurred, in part, by the death of Mary Byron, who was killed outside Mall St. Matthews in 1993 by an ex-boyfriend who she thought was in jail.

"Our goal is to break the cycle of domestic violence once and for all," said Pat

Byron, Mary's mother and the president of the foundation, who spoke at yesterday's news conference.

The VINE Protective Order has been launched statewide in Kentucky with a grant of \$1 million from the U.S. Office on Violence Against Women.

In Kentucky, about 29,000 emergency protective orders and about 15,000 domestic violence orders are issued each year to protect abuse victims.

The Mary Byron Foundation has partnered with Appriss Inc., providers of the VINE service, to implement the new technology.

Gov. Ernie Fletcher, who was at the announcement of the program yesterday, said it can "give important, life-saving information."

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