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Annual run/walk raises funds to help abuse victims

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HARTFORD CITY - A local sorority will have a 5K run/walk Saturday to keep alive the memory of a member who died at the hands of her husband, and to raise funds to assist other domestic violence victims.

Jennifer Williams Cameron, a 30-year-old mother of three who enjoyed coaching her kids' soccer teams, was shot and killed by her husband on Jan. 16, 2001. He then committed suicide.

"Jennifer's death inspired the race," said race director Teresa Basey. "She was a member of the Psi Iota Xi, and her mother, Alicia, still is."

The local sorority was honored by the national organization for its efforts to help victims of domestic violence, and now helps other sororities to develop similar fund-raising programs.

"I think it's a good way to raise money to help victims," said Ray Williams, Jennifer's father. "That it's being done in our daughter's memory makes us feel extremely good that something good is coming out of all of this."

He also said that the walk/run was a way that "regardless of your age or abilities you can take part in helping the victims."

Jennifer's Run is in its fourth year, according to Basey, who as a former competitor conceived the original idea. "We've raised several thousand dollars and have helped several women who needed to start over. We help with the first and last month's rent, and utility deposits."

Basey said there is a procedure victims must follow before they can get the help.

"Blackford County Victims Assistance lets us know that they may have someone who needs a place to stay that night, so we put those people up and that gives them a chance to think about what they want or need to do," Basey said.

But before victims can get more assistance they must complete a program at A Better Way or other recognized shelter, according to Basey.

"They help you figure out what you need in order to survive on your own," she said, "so that you don't have to go back into an abusive household, and the children are taken care of, too."

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