



Press Contact:

Dawn Monet, Development & Communications Coordinator,  
The NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse  
(206) 568-7777, [dawn@nwnetwork.org](mailto:dawn@nwnetwork.org)

## **The NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse Receives Avon Global Communications Award for Exemplary Messages to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children**

***Friends Help Friends Survive Campaign wins Break the Silence Award and will receive  
\$5K Avon Foundation grant to continue work on engaging everyday people to act.***

**Seattle, WA (March 31, 2014)** – [The NW Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse](#) has been named the recipient of the *Breaking the Silence Award* for the [3<sup>rd</sup> Avon Communications Awards: Speaking Out About Violence Against Women](#). The NW Network was honored for its [Friends Help Friends Survive Campaign](#), aimed at engaging friends and family to support survivors of domestic violence. The awards are part of the [Avon Speak Out Against Domestic Violence](#) program, which has donated nearly \$58 million globally to end violence against women since its launch in 2004. The 2014 awards also honored communication campaigns in India, Brazil, Singapore and Australia.

“Communication and education are critical elements to ignite bystanders into action, and without public awareness and education, bystanders often do not intervene to help in abusive situations,” said Carol Kurzig, Avon Foundation for Women President. “The Avon Communications Award Winners are casting a spotlight on issues that affect one in three women across the globe.” The innovative *Friends Help Friends Survive* campaign, which launched on New Year’s Eve on CBS’ Times Square marquee, trades on the popular fascination with zombies to deliver its message.

“Our campaign uses pop culture in a new way to expose abuse and call all communities to action. It’s campy, edgy and draws you in. It’s not what most people expect from domestic violence awareness,” said Connie Burk, Executive Director of the NW Network.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more domestic violence victims disclose abuse to friends and family than to police, doctors, counselors or crisis hotlines. Yet relatively few resources are directed at equipping those support people to respond safely and effectively. “Experts know domestic violence survivors need help from friends and family before they call police or other services,” said Burk. “Friends and family want to help, but they have been left out of the equation.”

An international panel of judges selected the winning campaigns from more than 870 communications submitted to the Communications X-Change by 303 organizations in 78 countries, ranging from Albania to Nicaragua to Vietnam. The *Break the Silence Award* specifically recognizes communications campaigns that effectively encourage people to speak out against gender violence. This is the first time a U.S. campaign has won the award.

The NW Network was founded in 1987 by lesbian survivors of abuse who could not find services to address their needs. Since then, their work has expanded to include diverse LGBT communities and with this campaign, is reaching out to straight people as well. “We have always known that friends and family are a key component to getting and staying safe,” said Burk. The NW Network published a toolkit last year entitled, “It Takes a Village, People” to train domestic violence advocates to better engage friends and family. The NW Network, in partnership with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects, was recently awarded a grant to establish the National LGBT Domestic Violence Learning Center, and charged with creating a comprehensive national plan for practice, policy, technical assistance and research.

The Communications X-Change is a digital global communications library that enables organizations and advocates throughout the world to find, share, and learn from the best communications material, focused on ending violence against women and children. The Communications X-Change was developed and is managed by [Futures Without Violence](#) and funded by the Avon Foundation. “We commend The NW Network for their innovative use of communications to prevent and ultimately end violence against women and children,” said Esta Soler, Futures Without Violence President and Founder. “Since the launch of the Communications X-Change, we’ve been continually impressed by the creativity and caliber of the submissions. These campaigns are an inspiration to the violence prevention community across the globe and a catalyst for change.”

To explore the *Friends Help Friends Survive Campaign*, please visit: <http://nwnetwork.org/go/friends-help-friends-survive/>. To view all the award-winning campaigns in each of the five categories, as well as the finalists’ campaigns, please visit: <http://www.avonfoundation.org/globalspeakout/avon-communications-awards.html>.

These materials and many others are available on the [Communications X-Change](#).

###

### **The Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse**

Founded in 1987 by lesbian survivors of battering, the NW Network prevents all forms of gender violence while strengthening our diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities in the Pacific Northwest and across the country. The NW Network acts across the spectrum of prevention: increasing individual skills, engaging communities, educating providers, fostering coalitions and advancing public policy. They are home to cutting edge projects in practice and policy, such as the National LGBT Gender Violence TTA Initiative and [farout.org](#). From the grassroots to the national scene, the NW Network is dedicated to social and economic justice, equality and respect for all people and the creation of loving, inclusive and accountable communities.

### **About Avon’s Speak Out Against Domestic Violence Program**

Avon and the Avon Foundation for Women launched [Speak Out Against Domestic Violence](#) in 2004 to support domestic violence awareness, education and prevention programs aimed at reducing domestic and gender violence, as well as direct services for victims and their families. Through 2013, Avon global philanthropy has donated nearly \$58 million to support violence against women programs, services and education. Globally, Avon supports efforts to end violence against women in nearly 50 countries by raising funds through special product sales, and raising awareness through events and with educational information disseminated by more than 6 million global Avon Representatives.

### **About Futures Without Violence**

For more than 30 years, Futures Without Violence has led the way and set the pace for innovative educational programs, public action campaigns, policy development, and leadership training designed to

end violence against women, children, and families around the world. Instrumental in developing the landmark Violence Against Women Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1994, Futures Without Violence has established an international conference center that will engage today's diverse national and global leaders, stand with survivors, and continue working to break the silence around gender-based violence.