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## **Family of Slain Daughter Creates Group to Fight Domestic Violence**

*Topeka, KS* – On July 3, 2008 Curt and Christie Brungardt received news that is every parent's worst nightmare. Their 25-year-old daughter, Jana Mackey, a KU law student, had been killed by her ex-boyfriend in Lawrence.

Jana's mother and stepfather, both professors at Fort Hays State University, are committed to continuing Jana's work of protecting women. Mackey was well known throughout Kansas for her advocacy for women's rights. As a young adult, Mackey served as a sexual assault and domestic violence advocate and served as one of the youngest lobbyists at the Kansas state capitol for the National Organization for Women.

After Jana's death, the Brungardts' started a non-profit organization and website called "Eleven Hundred Torches: Jana's Call to Action" with the goal of documenting 1,100 stories of community service on behalf of their daughter. Symbolic of the number of people who attended Mackey's funeral, the organization encourages ordinary citizens to serve others and pick up her fallen torch. This past October their campaign reached its goal. Thirty members of Jana's childhood church, Trinity Lutheran Church of Hays, put their campaign over the top. Documented stories came from 19 states and 4 foreign countries. Today the organization is nearing 1,200 and is still going strong.

On Thursday, the Brungardts' announced their plans to narrow their focus to Mackey's passion of working with victims of gender violence by creating "Jana's Campaign to Stop Domestic Violence." "We believe it is our personal responsibility to use the story of Jana's life and the story of her death to help reduce violence against women," Christie Brungardt said. "It is our deep desire to turn this tragedy into something positive."

Jana's Campaign is a committed group of nearly 50 advocates whose purpose is to work in the domestic violence public policy arena. The campaign plans to promote new legislation and other government actions that secure safety and justice for victims of domestic violence. The campaign's goal is to move the issues of domestic violence to the top of the political agenda. The group is currently investigating the issues of sexual assault response care, landlord tenant laws that harm domestic violence victims, and dating violence education.

During this coming Kansas legislative session, Jana's Campaign will also be encouraging lawmakers to support the domestic violence tag bill. This bill is the first comprehensive

domestic violence legislation ever proposed in Kansas. If adopted, this legislation would require a domestic violence tag be placed on all legal documents associated with a domestic violence crime. Having this domestic violence tag is especially important as offenders often repeat their crimes against victims. Therefore, this legislation encourages sanctions be put in place before violence escalates.

This bill also requires the courts to order an assessment on the offender and recommend interventions and treatments. Again, reducing and eliminating repeat offenses.

“Domestic violence is often a hidden act. Too often it is seen as a private matter between partners. It is not,” says Curt Brungardt. “Domestic violence is a public issue. Domestic violence is a public crime that demands a public response.”

For more information about *Jana's Campaign* see [www.janascampaign.org](http://www.janascampaign.org).

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