



AT&T Wireless Services

CELLTALK

A PUBLICATION OF AT&T WIRELESS SERVICES

Domestic Violence Victims Use Wireless to Reclaim Their Lives

Wireless applications within the area of public safety has been the cornerstone of our grassroots community relations efforts at AT&T Wireless Services. During the 1st quarter of this year, AT&T Wireless Services committed to continue its efforts in stopping domestic violence through the expansion of the Domestic Violence Phone Program throughout the state. The Domestic Violence Phone Program provides use of a cellular phone to victims of domestic violence whose attackers continue to be a threat.

Motivation for this initiative began with a formal announcement in Tallahassee where Attorney General **Bob Butterworth** lauded the early programs and encouraged AT&T Wireless Services, along with other cellular carriers in Florida, to expand the programs in the areas they served. The media coverage on the announcement sparked a flurry of requests from sheriff's offices all across Florida.

The Domestic Violence Phone Program operates with donated cellular phones and a limited amount of free airtime each month. The sheriff's offices distribute the equipment to victims of domestic violence whose attackers are at-large or free on bail and still considered to be a threat. The victims can

use the phone to summon help when in fear of being attacked no matter where they happen to be. A cellular phone helps the victims gain independence, confidence and safety in their lives.

The program was first put into place in Polk County in March, 1995 with 40 phones. The program quickly expanded into Sarasota with 20 phones and then to Pinellas with another 29 phones. At the end of last year AT&T Wireless Services had added Martin County to the growing list of programs. Since January, AT&T Wireless Services has partnered to expand the program to: St. John's County, the City of Boca Raton, Orange County and Hillsborough County.

Each of the programs has consistent guidelines for

victims wanting to use a cellular phone. To receive and continue use of a phone, victims are required to:

- 1) live in the county providing the phone,
- 2) file for an injunction for protection against the abuser and,
- 3) not live with the abuser.

Additionally, most programs require that victims who receive a phone must check in weekly with victim's advocates in order to continue to use the phone.

The O.J. Simpson trial escalated public awareness regarding domestic violence and, as a corporate citizen, we have committed our resources to these programs in order to support law enforcement in achieving zero tolerance of domestic violence.