



Press Release

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Murder-Suicide in Kansas City an Opportunity for Communities to Address Domestic Violence

The tragic murder-suicide that took place in Kansas City on Saturday will have a long-term impact on the families of Kasandra Perkins and Kansas City Chiefs linebacker, Jovan Belcher as well as the communities surrounding them. Belcher fatally shot and killed his girlfriend and mother of his three-month-old child, Kasandra, early Saturday, Dec. 1, 2012, in Kansas City, Mo., then drove to Arrowhead Stadium and committed suicide in front of his coach, general manager, and other stadium personnel. As a result, a 3-month-old is now without her parents, families are reeling in grief and shock, an NFL organization and the Kansas City community is stunned, and NFL teams, communities and fans everywhere are saddened and left asking, "Why?!?" We at the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) are also saddened by Belcher's actions and extend our most heartfelt condolences to his and Kasandra's families, their daughter, and all those affected by these deaths.

We may never get a definitive answer as to why Belcher chose to shoot and kill his girlfriend and then kill himself; we may never know the details of the relationship between Kasandra and Jovan; this may have been the only overt sign that something was not right in the relationship; and well-defined, documented proof of the existence of domestic violence in their relationship may not exist. However, there were still probably signs that may have been missed by many.

"Domestic violence has always been perceived as a private issue," says NCADV Executive Director, Rita Smith. "Unless someone knew many of the signs of domestic violence, any chance to have helped prevent Jovan from killing Kasandra could have been missed, particularly because Jovan seemed to have been thought of by many as a very nice guy."

NCADV believes that people must take this opportunity to look at developing resources for teams, players, family members and fans that will begin to address the issue of domestic violence in our community. No group or culture is immune from this kind of violence, and we all have the ability to do something to reduce its occurrence.

"The important thing to remember is that most men are not abusive," says Rita Smith, Executive Director of NCADV. "If most of those good and caring men began to speak out about the use of violence against someone they say they love, we could really begin to see a reduction in that happening."

"NCADV has been working for decades to address this issue and we have strong connections to over 2,000 local programs providing crisis services in the U.S. We are willing to work with the NFL, all 32 teams and personnel working in professional football to develop resources, training and support so that we can begin to turn the tide on this kind of tragedy."

[The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(NCADV\)](#) has worked for more than thirty-four years to end violence against women by raising awareness and educating the public about the effects of domestic abuse. Our work includes developing and sustaining ground-breaking public policy at the national level and assisting the 2,000+ urban and rural shelters and programs at the local, state, and regional levels of the nation in the programming they offer to victims seeking safety and assistance. Currently, our constituency encompasses more than 50,000 programs, survivors, advocates, and allied individuals and is growing daily.

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