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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Chicago, Illinois [7/20/2022] – The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence (The Network) extends our sincerest condolences to the friends, family, and loved ones of Martasia Richmond. Her death represents a loss of yet another vibrant community member.

Richmond is the second transgender Woman of Color known to have been killed within Chicago this year. Her death also marks the second domestic violence-related homicide in just 48 hours, and at least the 20th transgender person murdered in the United States this year.

Many community members have called for additional action to protect transgender community members and increase response to these tragic events, noting the low rates of accountability in these cases.¹

Transgender individuals and Black individuals are at an increased risk of experiencing domestic violence due to the oppression and discrimination faced by these groups within society. Transgender individuals are two times as likely as their cisgender counterparts to experience domestic violence.² Similarly Black individuals face disproportionate rates of violence. Black individuals consistently are overrepresented in domestic violence related homicides, representing 86% of victims in 2021.³ Addressing domestic violence requires working to address these oppressive systems and the root causes of violence.

It is a tragedy that Richmond was not able to find safety. The Network continues to work with the community to expand resources for those experiencing domestic violence, but recognizes that each individual has unique needs. As a transgender Woman of Color, Richmond may not have felt comfortable utilizing available resources, particularly relying on law enforcement to respond in a crisis.

Black and transgender survivors face many fears when turning to law enforcement for assistance. As part of the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Plan to End Gender-Based Violence the City has highlighted the need for a non-law enforcement crisis response. As homicides and shootings continue to rise, particularly amongst marginalized community groups, it is imperative that Chicago take action to expand options for survivors and work towards addressing oppressive systems within our community.

Richmond leaves behind a 10-year-old-daughter whom she always went to great lengths to support. Her funeral will be on Sunday, July 24 and her family asks that attendants wear white and green. Brave Space Alliance, a Black and trans-led nonprofit that supports LGBTQ+ individuals on Chicago's South Side, is organizing the service.

If you are a survivor in need of safety or support, please contact the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-877-863-6338. If you are a transgender survivor, we have services for you in communities across the City of Chicago. Please reach out for assistance. The Trans Lifeline (1-877-565-8860) is a hotline staffed by transgender people for transgender people. Trans Lifeline volunteers are ready to respond to any support needs community members might have.

¹ <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-transgender-homicide-chicago-martasia-richmond-0719-20220719-qvz5yubzifhjp4i7ukce4te-story.html>

² <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305774>

³ <https://the-network.org/measuring-safety-2022/>