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Contact: Dawn McKee, Special Projects Coordinator, Centre Safe (formerly Centre County Women's Resource Center) 814-312-3866

DORA E. MCQUAID, award-winning poet, activist, speaker and teacher is returning to Centre County to talk about domestic violence, healing and empowerment in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

(Bellefonte, PA) – Former Penn State/University Park Campus faculty member and PSU alumna, Dora E. McQuaid, is returning to Centre County as Keynote Speaker for the annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month event on Tuesday October 9, 2018.

The event, *Domestic Violence Leaves an Empty Place at the Table* will be held from 12:00 noon – 1:00 on the 3rd floor of the Courthouse Annex in Bellefonte, PA.

With over 25 years of experience as an award-winning poet, activist, speaker and teacher, Dora's work embodies the intersections between arts and activism, healing and empowerment and the private and political. Her unique blend of art, emotion and service has earned numerous literary and service awards. Her dedication to addressing sexual and domestic violence through poetry, performance and activism was honored in 2012 by her image replacing that of former Penn State football coach and convicted pedophile, Jerry Sandusky, in the *Inspiration* Mural by artist Michael Pilato. Dora's groundbreaking collection of poems, *the scorched earth*, documents her journey from victimization to survivorship, through healing from both sexual and domestic violence into empowerment and advocacy. Dora speaks, performs and publishes internationally and serves as consultant and expert witness in sexual violence legal cases.

McQuaid says, "I'm honored and excited to be returning to Centre County to once again share my work with the members of the extended community and to honor local victims and survivors of domestic violence, as well as the Centre County organizations that are dedicated to assisting and supporting survivors in healing and reclaiming their lives, as I did for the many years that I taught at Penn State and made State College my home."

District Attorney Bernie Cantorna will also speak during this public event and the Centre County Commissioners will declare October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Anne Ard, Executive Director of Centre Safe, and Dawn McKee, Centre Safe Special Projects Coordinator, will discuss resources available for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and the powerful public exhibit of the Centre County *An Empty Place at The Table*, honoring the Centre County community members whose lives were cut short in domestic violence-related homicides since 1998 with personalized place settings showing that "*domestic violence leaves an empty place at the table*". McQuaid will do a book signing of *the scorched earth* following the event inside the courthouse.

This event is co-sponsored by Centre Safe and District Attorney, Bernie Cantorna.

To schedule an interview with Dora in person in State College between 10/7 and 10/10 OR a phone interview after 9/30, contact Dora directly at doramcquaid@gmail.com For more information about Dora and her efforts, visit: WWW.DORAMCQUAID.COM

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