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### **Safe Havens Hosts its 7th Annual IMPACT Award Celebration Virtually on March 22, 2022**

BOSTON, MASS. - Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse will bestow its 7th Annual IMPACT Awards on Deborah Collins-Gousby, Isa Woldeguorguis, and Dr. Oliver Williams. We are thrilled to highlight the vision and commitment of these community leaders and the critical work that they are doing to end all forms of violence.

Since 2015, the IMPACT (Individuals and Institutions Making Progress Against Abuse in Communities Together) Award has been honoring individuals and organizations whose partnerships and commitment strengthen the work of Safe Havens and contribute to justice and hope for victims and survivors of domestic violence and elder abuse. Safe Havens' Co-Director, Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter, loves how the award "celebrates both the individual leadership and the organizational commitment that raises awareness, changes attitudes, and promotes safety and justice for survivors of domestic violence and elder abuse." Collins-Gousby, Woldeguorguis, and Williams do all of this and more. We are honored to recognize the extensive advocacy, leadership, and anti-oppression work that all three have dedicated their lives to. This year's honorees have legacies of work in community support and anti-violence that extend beyond geographical bounds.

Deborah Collins-Gousby is a Boston native who graduated from Boston Public Schools and Emerson College. Before joining Brookview House, Collins-Gousby worked nearly thirteen years at Casa Myrna, a comprehensive provider of domestic violence services, starting as Director of Emergency Programs and eventually assuming responsibility for all of the agency's direct service programs. Prior to joining Casa Myrna, Collins-Gousby worked for fourteen years at the Boston-based Elizabeth Stone House, which is also a provider of shelter and community-based services to survivors and their children affected by domestic violence. She has extensive experience in direct services, program development, staffing, budgeting, volunteer management, education and outreach and outcome measurement and reporting. Collins-Gousby is President of the Jane Doe, Inc. Board of Directors and co-chair and member of the Leadership Committee of the Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN).

Isa Woldeguorguis has been the Executive Director of The Center for Hope and Healing, Inc. (CHH) since 2012. CHH has served victims of rape and sexual assault and provided community education to eradicate sexual violence in Greater Lowell, Massachusetts for 45 years. Prior to this, Ms. Woldeguorguis worked in the anti-violence field for more than twenty-five years and held several statewide and national roles in the movement to end sexual and domestic violence.

Ms. Woldeguorguis is a well-respected leader and national trainer in the fields of child abuse, domestic and sexual violence, systems change, race, and equity. Ms. Woldeguorguis has served as faculty on several national initiatives and instructed courses on leadership and the anti-violence movement. She has authored several articles on topics such as family-centered practices in child welfare, racial and ethnic disproportionality, and

immigration. Isa is the co-chair and one of the founders of the Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN). MAWOCN is a statewide network of advocates working in the domestic and sexual violence fields who share a vision of a movement in which women of color are promoted to and supported in leadership roles. The MAWOCN provides training, technical assistance, and leadership development.

Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D. is a Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, in St. Paul, MN. He directed the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community from 1994 to 2016. Currently, Dr. Williams heads the African American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP), which works with community leaders in 12 cities across the United States to build community partnerships and end abuse. Williams is also the Director of the Safe Return Initiative, which addresses the issues of prisoner re-entry and domestic violence. In addition, he is a member of the consultant team for Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community. Dr. Williams has extensive experience as a clinical practitioner and has worked in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, child welfare, sexual assault, and domestic violence. He has also worked in battered women's shelters, developed curricula for batterers' intervention programs, and facilitated counseling groups in these programs. He has provided training across the United States and abroad on research and service delivery surrounding partner abuse. Dr. Williams' extensive research and publications in scholarly journals and books have centered on creating service delivery strategies to reduce violent behavior.

The 2022 Safe Havens IMPACT Award ceremony will take place on **Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 7:00** pm via Zoom. Tickets for the event are \$30 and additional donations are welcomed. Sponsorships are also available. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, or for more information about tickets, please contact Alyson Morse Katzman at [amkatzman@interfaithpartners.org](mailto:amkatzman@interfaithpartners.org).

Tickets may be purchased online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/257155066727> or through the Safe Havens website at <https://www.interfaithpartners.org/2022-impact-award>. For more information about Deborah Collins-Gousby, Isa Woldeguorguis, Oliver Williams, or past honorees, please visit <https://www.interfaithpartners.org/2022-impact-award>.

**About Safe Havens:** Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse was founded in 1991 with the purpose of engaging faith leaders (both lay and clergy) and congregations to address domestic violence and elder abuse and build bridges between domestic violence service providers and faith communities. Initially focusing on raising awareness about domestic abuse, Safe Havens developed trainings and resources to strengthen the capacity of faith leaders and service providers to partner, in order to increase access to safety and services for victims of domestic violence and elder abuse. This year's IMPACT Award celebration will also kick off Safe Havens' 31st year of working locally in Greater Boston and nationally as Technical Assistance providers for the Office on Violence Against Women at the U.S. Department of Justice. For more information, please visit Safe Havens' website, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.

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