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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Schizophrenic Mother Desperate for “Silent Heroes”

“Silent Heroes”—new award-winning book gives voice and support to all those who have a loved one with schizophrenia or other mental illness

Deadwood, OR - October 21, 2005 - Imagine knowing a mother so desperate, so alone in her struggle, that she commits the horrific act of murdering her three young children. Many friends and families live in silence, they do not seek support or know where to gain comfort for the confusion, loss, and daily struggle of someone with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses. Fearing the bias and stigma long associated with mental illness, namely that somehow the illness is a result of upbringing, poor environment or character weaknesses, they suffer alone.

And yet, they are not alone. One in five Americans over the age of 18 suffers from a mental disorder in a given year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Among the American adult population, 2.2 million people have schizophrenia, 18.8 million have a depressive disorder, and 19.1 million have an anxiety disorder. Each of these has a family member, partner or loved ones that are affected by their illness.

In **Silent Heroes: Courageous Families Living with Depression and Mental Illness** (Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing, November 2005; ISBN: 1-932279-18-0) author Maureen Focht reveals the strength and conviction of family members that are usually unrecognized. She provides five key traits of a hero, addresses questions such as: How do we cope? What stages do we go through emotionally and mentally that help us reconcile our commitment? And what are the ways to build resilience?

At age 11, the author watched her mother become a paranoid schizophrenic. Instead of becoming homeless and potentially committing violent crimes, her mother was blessed with a silent hero—the author's father. He remained dedicated throughout the devastating struggle of seeing his beloved wife lose her mind to illness. He exhibited the strength and courage to assist both his wife and children. He is but one example of a hero to celebrate.

Focht is an educator for the Family-to-Family program with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and a training specialist for the nationally known “Parent Project” program and she is on the frontlines for a Public Education Campaign to tell people there is no shame in seeking help. Through her own experiences, and those of other families, she shares the remarkable stories of untold support come from those unseen-family members who have continued to stand by their loved-ones.

Among those you will meet are Norma, Lisa, Les, Christine, and Kevin. Stories of men and women, children, and adults are woven together to offer a complete view of what it is like to witness, be affected by and feel many aspects of the illness of a loved one. Offering the perspective of enlightened witnesses to give voice to feelings unspoken, or even unidentified, provides an initial foundation for support. Partners, siblings and children have little place to turn for encouragement when living with someone with a brain disorder such as schizophrenia, bi-polar, depression or other related illnesses.



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From "Silent Heroes" -resources for friends and families dealing with schizophrenia:

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/schizophreniamenu.cfm

National Schizophrenia Foundation
www.nsfoundation.org

The National Schizophrenia Fellowship, NSF
www.nsf.org.uk

The World Fellowship for Schizophrenia and Allied Disorders
www.world-schizophrenic.org

Schizophrenics Anonymous, SA
www.SAnonymous.org

Named a Finalist Award Winner from USA BookNews 2005 in two categories-Psychology and Social Change, the warmly depicted stories and straightforward approach of this book honors all the silent heroes who remain by the sides of their loved ones.

For more information visit www.theSilentHeroes.com. Contact the publisher for more info on the **Mom-Writers Publishing Cooperative** and Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing at www.wymacpublishing.com.

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