



VOLUME 9

ISSUE 2

FALL 2013

REFUGE, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, CHANGE

# REACH

## REPORT



### HOW DO YOU PLAN FOR SAFETY?

When one of our Advocates meets with a domestic violence survivor, safety is always a chief concern. REACH works with people from all walks of life, and many are at different points in their journey. Some are still in a relationship with an abusive partner, some may be out of the situation but fear that their ex-partner is still looking for them, some may be facing their abuser's imminent release after time in prison. Whatever the situation, we work with each person to keep them as safe as possible. In the field of public health this is known as a "harm reduction" approach.

The first thing to know about a safety plan: it's highly individualized. We find out as much as we can about the person: Do they feel safe at work? At home? Is there a restraining order in place? Are they planning to leave their abuser?

*A good safety plan is realistic.* We focus on asking questions to find out about the survivor's situation. What usually precedes a violent incident? Do you feel safe calling the police? Do you feel safe calling our hotline? Does your abuser control your cell phone account? What has worked to diffuse an escalating situation in the past? We firmly believe that each survivor is the expert on their own life, that they know their partner better than we do.

*A good safety plan is as concrete as possible.* Usually the survivor writes out their plan, and we keep a copy for them. We even encourage them to practice it. It could be something as simple as "I will keep (cont. page 5)



## IN THIS ISSUE

Safety Planning	1
Letter From the Director	2
Annual Meeting Recap	4
Reach for the Stars	5
Director of Prevention	6
Speaking for REACH	7



Laura R. Van Zandt  
Photo by Pat Moon

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All of our work is about saving and changing lives. So we work every day to prevent and end dating and domestic violence for victims and survivors – and also for neighbors and friends. As Carynne explains in this newsletter (page 7), dating and domestic violence does not discriminate. Strong relationships and a closer community help prevent dating and domestic violence while offering hope and support for those experiencing abuse. Closer communities are also better able to hold friends and family accountable for behavior that is unhealthy and dangerous, again offering hope for change.

At REACH, we talk about relationships and all the complexities therein. We support communities in educating youth and equipping the adults who care about them with practical skills. At REACH, change is not about telling boys not to hit and girls not to get hit. At REACH, prevention is about encouraging conversation about values – what do I want for myself and what do I want in a relationship with another person? It is talking about how to establish and maintain the boundaries we need in order to achieve what we want for ourselves – and how those boundaries help each of us in our relationships. We encourage you to bring these conversations to your faith community, your school, your neighborhood. Open a dialogue that creates real change for kids and adults alike.

In fact, open a dialogue right now. Contact our new Director of Prevention Programs to talk about hosting a gathering or volunteering (page 6). Check out our blog – comment and share your thoughts about it. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter and pass along what you learn. Talk with your kids (and your partner) about the unhealthy relationships you see on TV or hear about in music. Keep singing and dancing or watching that show – and say something about it.

Our annual Voice for Justice Award winners offer examples of how dialogue makes a difference. Read about these amazing people and our Annual Meeting on page 5. Another strong voice and previous award winner, dedicated Advisory Board member Steve McCandless, is profiled on page 3.

I look forward to seeing you at *Reach for the Stars* on October 19 as we honor former Middlesex District Attorney Gerry Leone for his leadership and commitment to preventing and prosecuting domestic violence. We are excited to celebrate the 10th anniversary of this important event on a Saturday night at the Moakley Courthouse in Boston, with J.C. Monahan as our emcee. Come celebrate with us.

Together we will reach beyond domestic violence.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: STEVE MCCANDLESS



Steve McCandless grew up in Colorado, attended graduate school in Boston, and now lives in New York. He has retired from the finance work he did as a corporate treasurer and entrepreneur and now has more time for nonprofit boards, theater, and travel. In addition to his role as

a supporter and Advisory Board member at REACH, he serves on the boards of Simmons College and Safe Horizon in New York, and volunteers at a domestic violence counseling office. He lists continued intellectual stimulation, being active, and meeting interesting people he wouldn't otherwise have met among the most rewarding aspects of his volunteer and philanthropy work.

Steve got involved with REACH because his sister Betsy was killed by her abusive ex-husband, who then killed himself, in 1992. After seven months in a violent marriage, Betsy escaped and went into hiding, becoming both homeless and jobless as she fought to stay alive while her abuser stalked her. She contacted the Support Committee for Battered Women, as REACH was then known.

She attended support groups and received counseling and advice. Steve still remembers the lack of consequences assigned to Betsy's abuser by law enforcement and the courts, and has been fighting on behalf of victims ever since. He sees many ways that others can do the same. "There is, of course, financial support and volunteer support. You can learn about domestic violence so you can recognize it when it happens to friends and relatives. Those in business can learn about the toll domestic violence takes in the workplace. A safe workplace is good business."

Steve encourages anyone thinking about volunteering to find an organization whose mission interests them and is congruent with their values, and then get involved.



Steve shares with us a picture of his wall of artist plates, collected over the years from our *Reach for the Stars* Gala

## GET INVOLVED

**REACH is excited to announce that we are expanding our volunteer program this coming year. We will now be offering a 25-hour domestic violence training twice a year in Waltham. We are actively seeking volunteers to support our shelter and community programs by helping with childcare, answering the hotline, and helping around the office.**

**There are many other ways you can help REACH. Consider organizing a donation drive (collecting toiletries, paper goods, etc. for our shelter), or gather your friends and neighbors for a REACH fundraiser/house party. Make the holiday season brighter by buying gifts for a family through our Holiday Gift program. Engage your school, PTSO, or youth group in conversations. Invite REACH into your place of work or worship to learn about the signs of domestic violence and ways to support survivors.**

**Join our event committee and help plan the *Reach for the Stars* Gala. And of course, throughout the year your financial donations sustain our programs, providing crucial support to families who have suffered from domestic violence. These are just some of the ways you can be part of this work.**

**If you are interested in learning more and meeting other REACH volunteers and supporters, we will be offering educational forums throughout the year on a variety of topics related to domestic violence. Stay tuned for a schedule of topics and speakers coming out later this year!**

*If you would like to get involved, please visit our website at [www.reachma.org/get-involved](http://www.reachma.org/get-involved) or call Jessica Hollander, Director of Prevention Programs, at 781.891.0724 x105.*

## A RECAP OF REACH'S ANNUAL MEETING

It happens every year, and every year we walk away rejuvenated and inspired to continue this important work. The annual meeting, held on June 6th at Massachusetts Medical Society, started with a reception full of wonderful food and a chance for folks to catch up, chat, and check out some of our photo displays. This year we highlighted some of REACH's programs right here in Waltham – our Peers Against Violence teen dating violence prevention work in Waltham High, our Latinas Know Your Rights group, and our Waltham Organizing Network. We began the program portion of the evening with a poignant remembrance of the 13 lives lost to domestic violence in Massachusetts last year. After a moment of silence, we heard from Nicki. Nicki told us about the first time she was physically assaulted by her former fiancé, the journey she's been on since, and the ways that REACH has helped along the way. "I have learned that love doesn't try to break your arm, it doesn't force you into submission or tear you down as a person. True love would never leave destruction and despair in its wake." A well-deserved standing ovation followed.

We were pleased to present our annual Voice for Justice awards to Susan Fargo, the retiring state senator from our district, Pat Tutwiler, former Principal at Wayland High School and Joan Heilbronner, who coordinates the food for our annual Holiday Gift party. These three individuals provide great examples of how everyone can do their part to build healthy communities by ending domestic violence, whether advocating for legislation at the State House, promoting healthy relationships among teens, or cooking in their own kitchen.

REACH Board President Christine Konys ended the evening by asking each of us to think about the ways we can be part of this work. She talked about how surprising it was to receive a call from an advocate one time who dialed the wrong number trying to reach a survivor. The advocate started the call the way we so often do, by asking if the person on the other end was safe to talk.

"That call stunned me then, and I still remember it so well. 'Is it safe for you to talk?' If you have never had to answer that question but would like to help those for whom the answer is 'No', there are many ways you can help. You CAN make a difference. You can help save a life. I hope you will."

If you weren't able to join us but would like to read more of what the speakers had to say that evening, you can read extended excerpts from their remarks on our blog at [www.reachma.org/blog](http://www.reachma.org/blog). We are grateful for the continued support from so many of you that makes this work possible.



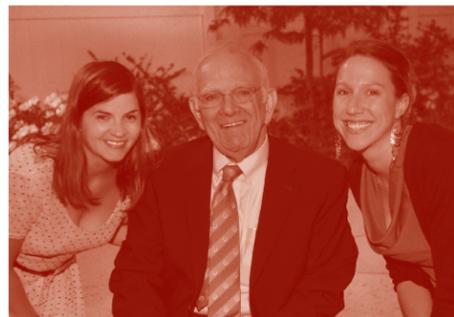
Above: Foundation for MetroWest Executive Director Judith Salerno (second from left) with REACH Board members Sandra King, Leslie George and Leila R. Kern

Below: Virginia Bigwood Award Recipient Joan Heilbronner (center) with Board Chair Christine Konys and Executive Director Laura Van Zandt



Left: Ruth Bigwood Award Recipient Retiring Senator Susan Fargo (center) with Foster Fargo and Laura Van Zandt

Below: Fred Katz with REACH staff Courtney Opalka and Allison Berry



PLEASE JOIN US

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Reach for the Stars Gala

Saturday, October 19, 2013

**The Moakley Courthouse, Boston**

**Honoring Gerry Leone**  
Partner, Nixon Peabody  
Former Middlesex District Attorney

**Co-Chairs**  
Lisa and Steve Brown  
Sylvia and Gordon Whitman

**Emcee**  
J.C. Monahan  
Co-Anchor Chronicle, WCVB-TV

**BID** on one-of-a-kind platters and plates designed by talented local and national artists

**ENJOY** cocktails, dinner, dancing, and one of the most spectacular views of the city

**PARTICIPATE** in our live auction featuring travel and culinary packages, hard-to-find sports tickets and unique experiences

Purchase tickets at [www.reachma.org](http://www.reachma.org)

For sponsorship opportunities and other inquiries, contact [courtney@reachma.org](mailto:courtney@reachma.org)

*(continued from front page...)*

my cell phone charged at all times" or "I will call this person if I need help" or "I will take the following documents with me when I leave" or "I will be aware of where the exits are..." Again, the idea is harm reduction. If someone still lives with an abuser, we might encourage them to think about where in the home the arguments tend to take place, and then to try to avoid arguing in places like the kitchen, with its hard surfaces and sharp objects, or a bathroom with only one exit. It might feel awful to you to even think like that. But the idea of leaving an abuser, finding a new place to live, finding a way to support yourself and your kids, navigating the legal system...all of that can feel overwhelming to someone in an abusive relationship. On the other hand, moving an argument to the living room, or making copies of important documents – these are the concrete and realistic steps that may eventually lead to the bigger steps away from abuse.

*No amount of planning can control an abuser's behavior. The idea of safety planning is not to place responsibility on the survivor, but to give them as much agency as possible to control the things they can.*

*If you or someone you know could benefit from talking through this kind of plan, please call our office at 781.891.0724 x101 and schedule an appointment.*

*We firmly believe that each survivor is the expert on their own life.*

## NEW DIRECTOR OF PREVENTION PROGRAMS



REACH is pleased to announce that we have hired a new Director of Prevention Programs! Jessica Hollander joined our staff this summer and is already bringing a new energy and enthusiasm to our prevention work. Jessica grew up in Newton and went on to American University where she majored in Women and Gender

Jessica is excited about being a part of the REACH team, and about working in and around the community where she grew up. She says, “When I tell people that I am the Director of Prevention Programs, they immediately think of youth. Prevention education should absolutely start at a young age, but all of us – no matter how old or young we are – have the power and ability to prevent violence from happening in our homes, our families, and our communities. When we learn who our neighbors are and get to know one another, we combat one of the biggest obstacles domestic violence survivors face: isolation. I look forward to working with people of all ages and backgrounds as we come together to prevent violence and make our schools, workplaces, communities safer for everyone.”

Connect with Jessica at [jessica@reachma.org](mailto:jessica@reachma.org) or 781.891.0724 x105

Studies, creating a designated concentration in sexual assault and domestic violence prevention. She has worked with several different agencies in the Boston area, including Casa Myrna Vazquez as their Education and Outreach Coordinator. For the past five years she worked as the Prevention Education Coordinator and Sexual Assault Counselor at a rape crisis center outside of San Francisco.

### UPCOMING DATES

We hope we can count on you to participate in one or more of these upcoming REACH events!

**October 5, 1-4pm**  
(raindate: October 6, 1-4pm)

Fourth Annual Waltham Neighborhoods Fall Festival  
(organized by REACH), Waltham Public Library

**October**

#### Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- Consider organizing a paper goods drive for our shelter or community program. Contact [courtney@reachma.org](mailto:courtney@reachma.org) for details.
- Bring the conversation to your home, place of worship, or school. Invite REACH to speak in your community.
- Call Jessica at 781.891.0724 x105 to schedule a house party, small group discussion, or speaking event.

*All suggestions listed above are opportunities in which you can participate throughout the year.*

**October 19 (Saturday!)**

Reach for the Stars Gala, 6:30pm  
The Moakley Courthouse, Boston  
Purchase tickets at [www.reachma.org](http://www.reachma.org)

**December**

REACH collects gifts for the Holiday Gift Program. If you'd like to fulfill gift wishes for a family, contact [deb@reachma.org](mailto:deb@reachma.org)

### ONLINE FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Reaching a milestone birthday or anniversary? Have an upcoming wedding, Mitzvah or confirmation? Instead of creating a registry or receiving gifts, consider organizing an online fundraiser through CrowdRise, and choose your favorite charity (REACH!) as the

recipient. You can set a fundraising goal, send a link of your fundraiser to your friends and family, and feel good by doing good. Visit [www.crowdrise.com](http://www.crowdrise.com) to get started – it only takes a few minutes to create your own fundraiser!

### SPEAKING FOR REACH, SPEAKING FOR ONESELF

*The following piece was written by Carynne, a member of our Survivor Speakers Bureau. Here, in her own words, is what she wants you to know about domestic violence.*

OK, Here goes...Are you ready? Let's talk about something super important that not enough people realize...Domestic violence is NOT discriminatory. It's shocking, I know – but it is true.

I mean, have you ever heard someone say:

...I can't believe that happened in my neighborhood...

...This type of thing doesn't happen here...

...but he was such a nice guy...

...she seemed to have everything going for her...

...did you hear the way that he talked to her...

...he/she reads my texts and emails...

It still amazes me how many times I have heard snippets of conversations or seen a mark on someone and wonder where things are headed. I know I am not the only one who sees the flags.

So, when I say that domestic violence isn't discriminatory, I mean it. Let me lay it out for you:

- Domestic violence doesn't care what you look like. It is blind! You could be short or tall; have blue eyes or brown; your race doesn't matter – neither does your dress size. No matter how well put-together you may look to the world, or if you are barely holding it together, domestic violence doesn't see you.
- Domestic violence doesn't care how old you are. You could be in your first relationship as a teen or later on in years. You are never too old for it to overwhelm you.

- Domestic violence doesn't look to see where you live before it invades your life. It is in every town, city, state, country. It can infest a rundown apartment or a mansion on the hill. It infiltrates under a cloak of fear, no matter how clean and sterile a place may seem.
- Domestic violence doesn't concern itself with religion. Shrouded in lies, it weaves its way into every peaceful and loving doctrine.
- Domestic violence doesn't look the other way when it comes to sex and sexual orientation. Male/female/gay/straight – none are immune to its cunning ways.
- Domestic violence speaks every language. There is no language out there that hasn't been translated into weapons.
- Domestic violence ignores your success. No accolades, raises or degrees can keep you from its grip.

Domestic violence has been secretly woven into society, hidden & protected by the masks of shame, fear and deception. If you look closely – you will see it. If you listen – you will hear it. If you close your eyes – you can imagine it, feel it, you may even be living it.

It is time we put the spotlight on domestic violence. Fear and hatred thrive in darkness and it is up to all of us to shine it out. So look for ways to get involved with REACH in your community or through financial support. Reach your hand out to help someone in need, and the world will get a little bit brighter (both yours and theirs). I know mine has.

*To learn more about REACH's Survivor Speakers Bureau, or to arrange a speaking event in your community, contact [jessica@reachma.org](mailto:jessica@reachma.org) or 781.891.0724 x105.*



P.O. BOX 540024  
WALTHAM, MA 02454

NONPROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
BOSTON, MA  
PERMIT 58174

### HELP US GO GREEN!

In efforts to reduce our carbon footprint one step at a time, please contact [courtney@reachma.org](mailto:courtney@reachma.org) to receive our mailings via email.

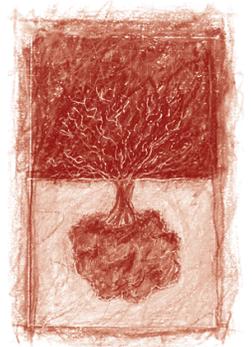


### MONTHLY COLUMN IN NEWS TRIBUNE

*REACH in the news!* In addition to our presence on Facebook, Twitter, and our very own blog, REACH now has a monthly column in the Waltham News Tribune. The column features updates relevant to our organizing work in Waltham, as well as around domestic violence and healthy relationships in general. Look for our column each month.

### WE NEED YOU: CHILDCARE VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We are always in need of volunteers to provide childcare for the children whose parents attend our weekly day and evening support groups. Because childcare needs vary each week, this is an on-call position in which volunteers sign up to cover one two-hour childcare shift each week for 8-12 weeks. *Contact Deb at [deb@reachma.org](mailto:deb@reachma.org) to learn more.*



### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Laura R. Van Zandt  
Executive Director
- Deborah Heibel  
Director of Operations
- Heather R. Hernandez  
Director of Residential Programs
- Jessica L. Hollander  
Director of Prevention Programs
- Brianna S. Nadelberg  
Director of Development
- Maria Pizzimenti  
Director of Advocacy

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Christine Konyas, President
- Heather Campbell, Vice President
- Ora Gladstone, Clerk
- Mbaye NDiaye, Treasurer
- Claire S. Bean
- George H. Carroll
- Kevin Dunkel
- Amy Favat
- Audrey S. Foster
- Leslie S. George
- Barry A. Guryan
- A. Miriam Jaffe
- Hon. Lella R. Kern (ret'd.)
- Sandra T. King
- Sheriff Peter Koutoujian
- Joanne F. Segal
- Diane Suda