

VOLUME 11

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REFUGE, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, CHANGE

# REACH

## REPORT

### WHY WE NEED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

*The first of October marks the beginning of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM). We asked the members of our Survivor Speakers Bureau why we need DVAM, and here is what one of them had to say.*

I had never heard of DV awareness month. Why would I – it had nothing to do with me, right?

I mean, I heard people talk about domestic violence. I watched movies about it on TV. I wondered aloud how people let themselves be treated in ways that were inexcusable. I would never let it happen to me. Then I started to hear it – that same scare tactic that I shrugged off was being used on me. I started to remember the lies that were told to me, but only when the truth smacked me. The arguments with my sisters weren't about strangers they saw on the street – they were about me. The looks that I got weren't because people thought I was silly; they knew.

Years after my marriage ended, I was a shell of the person I had been before. I was just living each moment for my child, making sure that his needs were met, day by day – but I wasn't happy. I was working, but not functioning. I was alive but not living. At the request of my mother, I went to a support group sponsored by REACH. It would be a breeze, because none of it applied to me. I wasn't like these other women – I wasn't. For the first few weeks, I went and listened, but I didn't hear.

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Laura R. Van Zandt  
Photo by David Barron

Soon it will be October again. Domestic Violence Awareness Month – and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Such an important month, such devastating damage inflicted. We have all known someone affected by cancer – and we have likely all known someone who has been impacted by domestic violence, even if we aren't aware of it.

During October, we will hear a lot about breast cancer and self-exams and walks and runs and ribbons. Will we continue to hear about domestic violence? So much has been said in September. I hope that we will continue the conversation. If you listen carefully, if you ask the right questions, if you create a safe space – you might be surprised by what you learn.

Most people who have breast cancer have to find a way to tell friends, families, coworkers – for soon they will have surgery and probably treatments that lead to hair loss and exhaustion. They will hear the soothing sounds of loved ones offering support and assistance. They will say: “that stinks” (or something similar) and that it isn't fair – “you don't deserve this.” Breast cancer survivors feel sadness and helplessness and pain and struggle – and many are so fortunate to have people who will stand with them.

Change that pink ribbon to purple and the story is much harder. Victims of domestic violence are ashamed, scared and lonely in their suffering. They have been led to believe that they do deserve what is happening to them – by the abuser, by society and sometimes even by their family and friends. Over time, fewer people are there to stand with them as they suffer, tired of the excuses, the going back and the wasted effort.

How can we better understand how domestic violence ravages relationships and damages families? Can we think differently about how to “treat” it? Can we stand with survivors of domestic violence? Can we work together to find the “cure” for domestic violence?

At REACH, we believe the answer is in our hearts and in our hands. At our Annual Meeting, we celebrated the work of several people who are the researchers and scientists of the movement to end domestic violence. They are engaging family, friends and neighbors in building healthy and safe homes, neighborhoods and communities. Please spend some time with this newsletter, read about their good work, hear the words of a survivor, meet some of the people on our team and learn more about what we do. We need your help, your voice, your heart and your hands – together we will reach beyond domestic violence.

*(continued from front page...)*

Then I was handed “the wheel” – it literally looked like a bicycle wheel. The hub, the part right in the center of the wheel, was Power & Control. Connected to that were the spokes and each spoke represented a different form of abuse. From emotional, economic, and sexual abuse to isolation, intimidation, etc. As I read that wheel, the tears started falling. I found so many spokes that had been my reality. Still, I didn’t own my past – not for a few more group sessions.

When I finally showed up to group and opened up, admitted that he fed his abuse with my lack of knowledge about what abuse really was, it was the first time I heard “It’s not your fault” and believed it. It was the first crack in the wall I had built up. Each time I went and sat, listened and shared – my burden became a little bit lighter. These women, the ones that I had nothing in common with, they helped to keep me grounded and gave me a sense of self – they let me know that I wasn’t alone. Soon after, I

was able to tell close friends and family something they already seemed to know. Slowly, I was able to take back the power that he held over me. The shame and embarrassment that I had felt had been turned into strength and pride.

If I had known about the “crazy making”, isolating, threatening and controlling aspects of DV, I may have recognized it sooner – maybe not. But I can tell you that now, with DV Awareness Month, I am proud to share my story, part of my soul, with an organization like REACH who has helped me and so many others. I am honored to be part of a group that is always working to break the cycle, while still so willing to hold up those in need. Showing us that we can be strong... I wish it was longer than a month.

– Cara, survivor

*Do you know someone who could benefit from a domestic violence support group? Connect them to our intake line at 781-891-0724 x 101.*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: DIANE SUDA



*Meet Diane Suda, REACH Board Member. Diane is a free-lance designer and practicing dentist.*

**Tell us a little about yourself.**

I grew up in California, where I organized community arts programs in rural

towns, inner cities and schools. I moved to the Boston area for graduate school. Visual arts, design and fly fishing are favorite pursuits.

**Why did you get involved with REACH?**

As a health care provider, I have treated victims of abuse and trauma. Serving on the REACH board is an opportunity for me to extend such care on a community-wide scale. I view domestic violence through the lens of public health, and enthusiastically endorse REACH’s prescription of prevention and education to stem domestic violence.

**What is your experience with the Board of Directors like?**

The REACH board is comprised of keen-eyed, level-headed, brilliant, generous, and compassionate women and men whose energy is more than the sum of its parts. It is a

privilege and an education to work with fellow members, whether on a nominating committee, mentoring college students, or charting new programs.

*We thank Diane for her insight and commitment to REACH, and the work to end domestic violence. We are also grateful to her for lending her expertise by designing beautiful centerpieces for the Reach for the Stars Gala for the past three years!*

“ *Serving on the REACH board is an opportunity for me to extend such care on a community-wide scale.* ”

## SURVIVOR-DEFINED PRACTICE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORK

How do you know that REACH is doing a good job? With so many worthy causes and hard-working organizations out there, how do you decide which ones are worthy of your attention, support, and time?

REACH describes our service model as survivor-centered.\* The premise of a survivor-centered approach is that survivors' situations, the goals they want to pursue and the support they need, vary enormously – by culture, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, degree of social connectedness, family situation and many other factors. Survivor-centered practice takes this complexity into account.

Evidence hints at the strong benefits of a survivor-centered approach to services. For example, when survivors report greater control over the help-seeking process, they are more satisfied with systems ranging from the police and justice system to residential and community-based DV programs, expressing a greater likelihood of using those options in the future.\*\* They also report fewer depressive symptoms and greater quality of life over time, even accounting for repeat abuse.\*\*\*

So how do we know if we are actually using a survivor-centered approach? This is a question we've been asking ourselves over the past several years. In 2011, REACH was one of three local domestic violence agencies who met to talk about the increasing need for program evaluation and outcome measurement. We collaborated with a group that eventually included 17 other agencies, working with Dr. Lisa Goodman from Boston College and Dr. Kristie Thomas from Simmons College.

Our work resulted in the creation of a new measurement tool, the Survivor Defined Practice Scale, which is a nine-item survey that assesses participants' perception of the degree to which REACH staff members help them achieve goals they set for themselves, facilitate a spirit of partnership, and show sensitivity to their individual needs and styles. It includes statements such as "Staff here believe that decisions about my life are mine to make" – and asks survivors to rank the degree to which they agree with those statements.

Together we collected surveys from 309 participants from domestic violence programs across Massachusetts. Of these surveys, 51 were from REACH participants, and we were

## GARDENING AND CHILDCARE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Calling all green thumbs! We are currently looking for folks to volunteer their time to keep our garden at the shelter looking nice and welcoming. We hope you will consider joining our wonderful gardening veterans, Erica and Morty .

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 shift each week for 8-12 weeks.

To inquire about either opportunity, please contact [deb@reachma.org](mailto:deb@reachma.org).

pleased that our results showed a statistically significant higher score on this survey than the mean score across the state. We plan to continue to utilize the survey and evaluate the work we are doing.

An article on this measure will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* and will list REACH Director of Operations, Deborah Heimel, as one of the authors.

\* Though REACH uses this term, "survivor-centered" and "survivor-defined" are used interchangeably.

\*\* (Cattaneo, 2010; Hotaling and Buzawa, 2003; Kulkarni, et al. 2012; Zweig & Burt, 2007)

\*\*\* (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2010)

## CHECK OUT OUR BLOG

Domestic violence has been in the news a lot lately. Check out our recent blog post "What Will It Take For Us To Believe Survivors?" on the Ray Rice video and the NFL's decision to suspend him indefinitely, and how it impacts the conversation about domestic violence. [www.reachma.org/blog](http://www.reachma.org/blog)



## ERICA RAN THE BOSTON MARATHON FOR REACH!

On April 22, Erica, a close friend of REACH, ran the Boston Marathon and crossed the finish line as TEAM REACH to raise funds and help ensure that our vital services are there for domestic violence survivors who need them.

Erica shared with us: “I see a connection between running and the work REACH does with survivors of domestic violence. In a lot of ways surviving abuse and healing is an endurance event of a lifetime. The word that comes to my mind is ‘transformation.’ Running has transformed me, REACH does transforming work for individuals and communities, and REACH itself has transformed in the time that I’ve been working with them. Their mission has broadened, who they serve has expanded, and I get to hear firsthand about the work that the advocates do. They come alongside domestic violence survivors and help them with the logistical as well as emotional work of healing. It’s lifesaving work.”

We are so pleased that Erica reached her \$10,000 fundraising goal! Thank you, Erica, for your hard work and commitment to REACH. We’d also like to thank the Town of Wellesley for offering the marathon number to Erica, as well as all of you who helped her reach her goal.

## UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

There are several ways to learn more about REACH and domestic and dating violence. Registration is required for each event and space is limited. Address will be provided upon registration. Register by emailing [info@reachma.org](mailto:info@reachma.org) with your name, phone number and which evenings you would like to attend.

September–October  
**25-Hour Domestic Violence Training**  
 September 3–October 14, 2014

November–December  
**6-Hour Domestic Violence 101 Training**  
 November 19 & December 3, 2014  
 6–9pm

January  
**Learning Opportunity**  
*The Hope Project*  
 January 21, 2015  
 6–8pm

February  
**Learning Opportunity**  
*Teen Dating Violence*  
 February 11, 2015  
 6–8pm

March  
**25-Hour Domestic Violence Training**  
 March 3, 2015–April 14, 2015

April  
**Learning Opportunity**  
*Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence*  
 April 8, 2015  
 6–8pm

May  
**6-Hour Domestic Violence 101 Training**  
 May 6 & May 13, 2015  
 6–9pm



Above: REACH staff Brianna Nadelberg and Kim Priore with Board Member David Weaver and Melanie Lund



Above: Left to right: Jessica Teperow, Madeleine Biondolillo, Karin Raye, Chief Frederick Ryan, Shawn MacMaster

## A RECAP OF THE REACH ANNUAL MEETING

We held our Annual Meeting on June 17, hosted by the Massachusetts Medical Society. It was great to see familiar faces and connect with some new friends.

This year, we were pleased to present a panel discussion about the relationship between law enforcement, community activism, and preventing domestic violence. Panel participants included Madeleine Biondolillo, Domestic Violence Survivor Advocate; Karin Raye, Attorney and Community Activist; Chief Frederick Ryan, Arlington Police Department; and Shawn MacMaster, Director of Community Partnerships at the Office of Middlesex District Attorney Marian T. Ryan. REACH Director of Prevention Programs Jessica Teperow moderated the panel. The panelists addressed how to support someone in an abusive relationship, how laws and the systems enforcing them are only part of the solution for survivors, and how we as a community can help build healthier and safer communities.

After a lively discussion, we were honored to present our Voice for Justice Awards. The Ruth and Virginia Bigwood Award was given to Christine Konys, retiring Board President, whose strong leadership, energy and enthusiasm have meant so much to REACH for the past nine years.

REACH presented the Mary Young Award to the Sudbury-Wayland-Lincoln Domestic Violence Roundtable for

raising awareness about domestic violence in all its forms, promoting safe and healthy relationships, and their collaborative work with local domestic violence agencies.

The evening also provided a wonderful opportunity to highlight some of the community-led groups working to end domestic violence including the Sudbury-Wayland-Lincoln Domestic Violence Roundtable, Needham Domestic Violence Action Committee, Web of Benefit, and the Waltham Organizing Network.

Each year, we remember the lives lost to domestic violence in Massachusetts over the past year. We held a moment of silence to acknowledge the 15 voices silenced by domestic violence in 2013.

Our incoming Board President, Heather Campbell, ended the evening by reminding us that everyone has a role in ending domestic violence: "You all are crucially important to the work that REACH does. Your support keeps the lights on at the shelter, keeps the hotline staffed, and keeps REACH staff in local schools, talking to teens about healthy relationships. The more we can put our messages out there, the better chance we have of someday reducing domestic violence to a bad chapter in the history books."

We are grateful for the continued support from so many of you that makes this work possible.



Above: Ruth Backman and Malcolm Astley of the Sudbury-Wayland-Lincoln Domestic Violence Roundtable



Left: Silent Witnesses remembering the 15 voices silenced by domestic violence in 2013 in Massachusetts



Above: Natalie Kaufman with Community Organizing Network members Bob Marcou, Karen Toney, and Jim Preston



Above: Retiring Board President Christine Konys, Ruth and Virginia Bigwood Award Recipient

Photos by Helene Norton-Russell

## UPCOMING DATES

**September 27**

**Fifth Annual Waltham Neighborhoods Fall Festival (organized by REACH), 1:00-4:00pm**

Waltham Public Library

*Free and open to the public*

*Rain date: September 28, 1:00-4:00pm*

**Break the Silence performance, 7:30pm**

Jonas Clarke Middle School in Lexington

*Free and open to the public*

**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.
- *Contact [jessica@reachma.org](mailto:jessica@reachma.org) to schedule a small group discussion, house party, or speaking event.*

**October 6**

**Service on Preventing Domestic Violence, 7:00pm**

Christ Church Episcopal Church in Waltham

*Free and open to the public*

*Childcare provided*

**October 17**

**Domestic Violence Forum, 9:30-11:00am**

League of Women Voters in Needham

*Free and open to the public*

**October 18**

**Reach for the Stars Gala, 6:30pm**

Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel

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

**October 21**

**What to Do/What to Say Training, 6:00-9:00pm**

Waltham Public Library

*Free and open to the public*

**October 30**

**Fundraiser for REACH, 7:00pm**

Paint N' Pour,

*284 Moody Street, Waltham \$35/person*

**December**

**REACH collects gifts for our Holiday Gift Program.**

If you'd like to fulfill holiday wishes by providing gifts for a family, *contact [deb@reachma.org](mailto:deb@reachma.org).*



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### 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.



# PLEASE JOIN US *Reach for the Stars Gala* Saturday, October 18, 2014

Renaissance Boston  
Waterfront Hotel  
606 Congress Street, Boston  
6:30pm

Cocktails & Silent Auction  
Dinner & Live Auction  
Dessert & Dancing

Emcee  
Susan Wornick

Co-Chairs  
Sally Marrer & Stephen Langlois  
Mary Ann & Peter Mattoon

Purchase tickets at  
[www.reachma.org](http://www.reachma.org)  
and other inquiries, contact  
[courtney@reachma.org](mailto:courtney@reachma.org)

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of priceless items and  
unique experiences

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

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ceramic bowls designed  
by talented local and  
national artists

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