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REFUGE, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, CHANGE

REACH

REPORT



IT'S TIME WE START TALKING ABOUT ABUSERS

From the NFL to Bill Cosby to the NPR 'Serial' podcast, the past few months have brought a host of high-profile instances of sexual or domestic violence into the news. This can bring up uncomfortable feelings and difficult questions. It can be easy to think that domestic violence isn't something that affects us. Maybe we can open ourselves to the possibility that we know someone who has been abused. But we rarely think that we might know – let alone care about – someone who has done the hurting and abusing. When an athlete or celebrity we respect is capable of being abusive, it can make us start to question if someone we know and respect personally is capable of the same.

This is a really uncomfortable thought, so in cases when a celebrity is accused of domestic violence, we may blame the victim; accuse them of lying, exaggerating, and manipulating the situation to get attention or money. But when a video showed Ray Rice striking his fiancé unconscious, it became harder to pretend it didn't happen. Many asked the question, "Why did she stay?" But who does this question focus on? The question itself holds the victim responsible for the abuse. Instead, could we ask: "Why do they abuse?" We need to let go of the myth that abusers are monsters lurking in the shadows that we would never know or care about, and realize that they are standing right in front of us.

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Laura R. Van Zandt
Photo by David Barron

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I've just come from the Massachusetts White Ribbon Day event at the State House sponsored by our state coalition, Jane Doe, Inc. The White Ribbon Campaign was created by a handful of Canadian men in 1991 on the second anniversary of one man's massacre of fourteen women in Montreal. It is now a global effort urging men to get involved in ending violence against women. This year's program at the State House included a Native American honor song, a powerful spoken word performance, several moving testimonials and a pledge – to be part of the solution to ending violence against women. Being “part of the solution” means many things. It is not simply about stopping men from hurting women – it is much bigger than that. It includes examining how we perpetuate norms that sustain a one dimensional – and damaging – definition of manhood and gender overall.

We know that relationship violence affects all of us; women can be perpetrators and men can be victims. This campaign does not – should not – discount that truth. The White Ribbon Campaign is about asking men and boys to join the effort to end violence against women. Massachusetts White Ribbon Day is also about speaking out for safety and respect in all relationships.

This year, the theme of the Campaign is “Reimagining Manhood.” I might also ask that we reimagine womanhood, that is, let's challenge our definitions and expectations for men and boys, and women and girls. Violence is often perpetrated based on the belief that male = strong and female = weak. For years, we have been talking about “girl power” and being a strong woman; let's broaden that conversation and talk about male kindness and compassionate men.

Think about what being a man means to you, and how often that concept is used to endorse violence or attack any hesitation to use violence. At the State House, we heard about being powerful and compassionate, about being strong and kind, and about being connected to ourselves. Being strong isn't about someone else being weak and being powerful isn't about someone else being disempowered. Being part of the solution to ending the violence means understanding that healthy relationships are about shared power, shared strength and shared joy.

Together we will reach beyond domestic violence.



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They are colleagues, relatives, even friends. They can seem like a perfectly nice person. We may notice some behaviors in their relationship that look like jealousy, possessiveness, or controlling tactics. We may want to shrug it off as not a big deal to avoid an awkward moment, but our silence gives them permission.

If we break that silence, what we say and do matters. Many abusive and controlling behaviors are portrayed as normal or even romantic in popular culture so we need to be specific when we describe which behaviors are abusive. For example, we can say, “When you tell your partner who they can and cannot talk to, you are controlling their behavior and that is abusive.”

We need to have these difficult conversations in a way that shows them that we still care about them and want to support them to make a change.

We should speak to them from a place of concern rather than judgment, and we should have this conversation in a private, safe space. This can be really difficult and scary, and REACH is here to support you.

It’s time we stop being silent and start being honest. It’s time we start talking about abusers and how we can hold the people we care about accountable. Many have called on the NFL to make it clear that the League does not tolerate domestic violence. Can we come together and do the same in our own lives?

To feel more comfortable having these conversations, join us for one of our upcoming trainings. Visit www.reachma.org to learn more.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: KEVIN DUNCKEL



Meet Board Member Kevin Dunckel, who helps out in many ways at REACH.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I grew up in Michigan and moved to Boston to work on computer storage systems for EMC.

Working on computer

systems meant a lot of traveling around the country and a bit of the world. It’s always fun to see new places but now I can’t imagine living anywhere but the Boston area. My wife, Kathie and I have two daughters. When they started kindergarten I stopped working at EMC to take care of them. It’s also hard to imagine that they will both be away from home next year but I couldn’t be more proud to see what they have become.

Why did you get involved with REACH?

I was introduced to REACH when a friend invited me to the *Reach for the Stars Gala*. I was more than impressed. I’ve known people who were in domestic violence situations. At that time I didn’t realize what it was, and I certainly didn’t know what I could do about it. Getting involved with REACH was like turning on a light so I could see what I was looking at.

What are some of the roles you’ve held or projects you’ve worked on over the years?

My first role at REACH was serving on the *Reach for the Stars* Event Committee that introduced me to this amazing organization. Since then, I’ve picked up furniture, delivered food, and helped survivors move to a new location. This year I feel fortunate to have been able to help deliver presents the day after the REACH Holiday Party. By bringing presents to individual homes I could see firsthand how domestic violence affects so many people in so many different ways.

What do you like most about volunteering with REACH?

My favorite part of volunteering with REACH is the people who work here. Sometimes TV and the newspapers can make me wonder if there is anything good going on in the world. Since being introduced to REACH I know that I can always find wonderful people who truly care about others.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about volunteering with REACH but not sure if they should get involved?

Please consider volunteering at REACH. If we all do just a little we can really accomplish a lot. One day we will do enough to put ourselves right out of business.

We additionally thank Kevin for transporting the Reach for the Stars plates to and from the potter at The DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum (and photographing them for the REACH website, and storing them at his house!), making runs to a local Target with volunteer John Schoenherr to pick up donated merchandise for survivors to use, and being an overall positive, reliable person to have around whenever we’re in a bind!

Right: Event Co-Chairs Stephen R. Langlois & Sally Marrer and Mary Ann & Peter Mattoon

Below: Guests enjoying the auction



REACH FOR THE STARS GALA

Our 11th annual *Reach for the Stars Gala* was held on October 18 at The Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel. The room was filled with 400 guests and raised a record-breaking \$420,000. We found great comfort that evening in knowing we were among family, friends, long-time advocates and new supporters – all committed to building healthy communities by ending domestic violence.

We were thrilled to have Susan Wornick as our emcee, and Robin Starr as our auctioneer. Current and past board presidents Heather Campbell, Christine Konys, and Joanne Segal presented Laura Van Zandt with a special award in recognition of her tenth anniversary at REACH. Her exceptional leadership, dedication, sensitivity and financial guidance has significantly grown the organization.

Patty, a survivor working with REACH, shared her journey out of abuse with the crowd:

“There is help, and there is hope. If you see something, say something, you just may save a life. My journey began on November 2, 2009 and still continues today. I live my life the way I want to, not the way someone else wants me to because my past does not define me.”

Your support – as sponsors, in-kind donors, members of the Event Committee, and guests – makes it possible for Patty and others to access critical, life-saving services at no cost. We thank all of our supporters for standing with us in our efforts to end domestic violence.

Please consider joining our 2015 Event Committee. We need your help to have another wonderful evening. For more information, contact Brianna Nadelberg at 781.891.0724 x109.

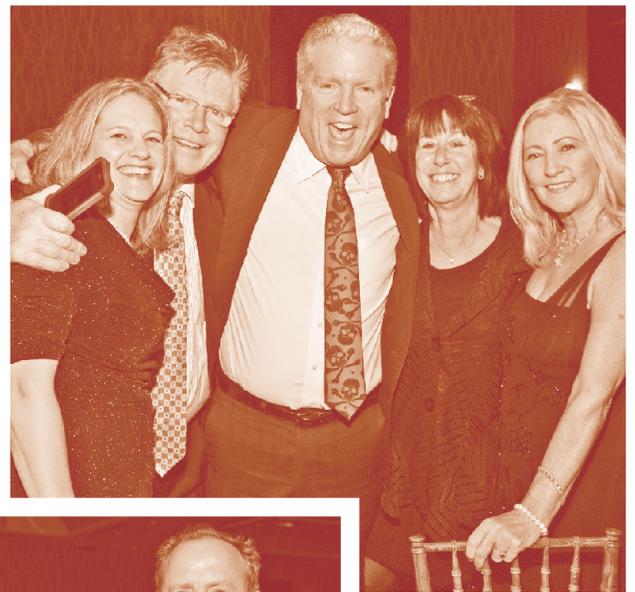
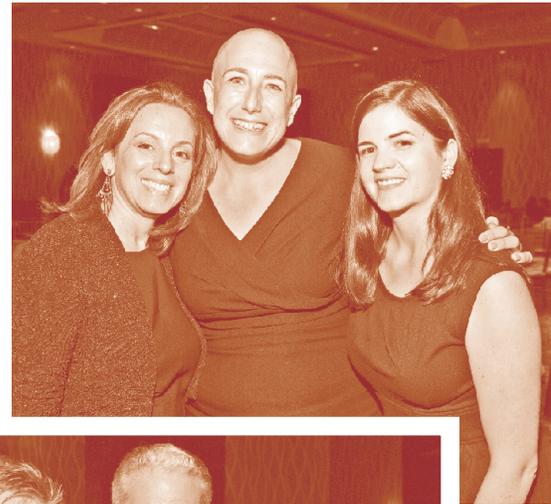
Above:
Amy Noordzij, Leslie Zales, and Liz Laats
Susan Wornick, emcee
David and Becky Cole



Above:
Sada Orzechowski, Mark Ballegeer, Joseph Hannasch, and Stephanie Davis

Below (L to R):
Cathy and Ben Li

Lisa Smith-McQueenie, Michael Connolly and Hon. Lynda Connolly
REACH staff Brianna Nadelberg, Laura Van Zandt, and Courtney Opalka Meyer



Above (L to R):
Deb Stamm, Robyn Tice, Rich Stamm, Liz Laats, Laura Van Zandt,
and Dawn Tice

Becky Cole, Clint Moon, Matthew and Laurie Nee, and event
committee member Pat Moon

Right:
David Walker of Shreve, Crump & Low (R) presenting donated
necklace to winners Duncan and Karen McKechnie

Photo Credits: David Barron

HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM

In December, 300 people came to REACH's annual Holiday Gift Party and it was a tremendous success! Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the big and small details that make the evening possible, including the extremely generous Holiday Gift Sponsors, many talented cooks and bakers, and our kind friends at Blue Ribbon Bar-B-Q.

REACH's Holiday Program is about more than just gifts. While bags of presents and excited kids are a big part of what makes the program fun, this is just a piece of the overall picture. Here's what you don't see: a survivor named Cindy who hasn't connected with REACH in a while receives a letter and a blank wish list which she fills out for herself and her children. Cindy comes to the Holiday Gift party and enjoys a meal, her kids see Santa, and she reconnects with friends she met in support group. In conversations with them while the kids are off decorating cookies, Cindy is inspired and encouraged to hear how her friends have continued to gain independence and confidence in the wake of abuse they experienced. She reconnects with her REACH advocate and casually mentions that the holiday season is tough - emotionally and financially. Her advocate is able to refer her to a therapist who will help her process her complex emotions around the holidays. The advocate also reminds her of resources that can help her with things like utility bills. They make an appointment for Cindy to come to the REACH office the following week for assistance filling out paperwork for a program that will help keep her family warm during the winter months. She leaves the party with a bag full of presents and a heart full of hope.

When Cindy comes in for her appointment the following week her advocate is also able to provide her with gift cards to a local grocery store. When Cindy mentions that she has a court date coming up having to do with child support, the advocate promises to be there with her. The advocate reminds Cindy that REACH is always here as a resource for her, even years after she left her abusive relationship. We don't consider her case "closed," think of her as "graduated," or assume that the effects of trauma are completely behind her. At every step of the journey, REACH is there to help her keep moving beyond domestic violence.



As a REACH donor, you are crucial to every piece of Cindy's holiday story. The gifts you thoughtfully purchase for Cindy and her kids brighten their holiday season; your financial donations throughout the year allow REACH's staff to provide follow-up care; the gift cards you send enable Cindy to shop for her kids' meals and experience an independence she was not allowed when she lived with an abusive partner. Your donations provide an advocate to stand with Cindy in court, help send her kids to summer camp and offer back to school supplies to them in the fall. It also helps us provide important Prevention Programs in Cindy's community, so that schools, employers, faith communities, businesses, and others join together to promote healthy relationships.

To learn more about the Holiday Gift Program or other ways to get involved, please contact deb@reachma.org.

SAVE THE DATE

REACH Annual Meeting
Monday, May 18, 2015: 6:30-8:30pm

Making Domestic Violence Your Business:
Focusing on ways to address domestic violence in your profession and your workplace

Massachusetts Medical Society

For more information, please visit www.reachma.org

SAY HI TO YOUR NEIGHBORS

The fourth annual Say Hi to Your Neighbors week took place from March 21-28. Each year, community members work with REACH staff to plan and implement different community events throughout the week. With support from the Mayor's office, the Waltham City Council, local businesses, and faith-based organizations, these events are aimed at creating a safer community by increasing connections between community members and decreasing the isolation that many people experiencing domestic violence often feel. We believe that by taking the time to remind one another to "Say Hi" to our neighbors and reach out to folks in the community that we may not know, we create more connections for people in need of support. If we feel more connected and know our neighbors, we are more likely to look out for one another and may feel more comfortable reaching out to them for help.

This year's Say Hi week was especially exciting because the planning committee was led by two Waltham residents: Dan Maloney, a community volunteer, and Emily Rudy, an intern at REACH and senior at Brandeis University. Dan and Emily have brought enthusiasm and creativity to their work and a strong commitment to get more community members involved. From handing out free coffee at the train station, to a community wide Scavenger Hunt, there were many ways for Waltham residents of all ages to get involved and get connected. For more information, please visit the events page on our website or email SayHi@reachma.org.



A friendly message in the snow



DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!

Many companies (and most hospitals, colleges and state agencies) offer employee giving programs where donations you make are matched by the company. Just send your donation, along with your company's matching gift form, to REACH at PO Box 540024, Waltham, MA 02454, and we will do the rest! Some of the Massachusetts companies with matching gift programs are listed below. If your company is not listed, consider speaking with your HR office to inquire.

ABT Associates	Mass Mutual Insurance
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Columbia Gas	Ropes and Gray LLP
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Dunkin' Brands	SPX Foundation
EMC Corporation	Staples
Federal Reserve Bank	State Street Corporation
Federal Street Advisors	Stop & Shop
Genzyme Corporation	Teradyne
Gillette Corporation	Textron Systems
Globe Newspaper	TJX Company
Goodwin Procter LLP	United Way of Massachusetts Bay
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Iron Mountain	Vertex Pharmaceuticals
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Mapfre USA	
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Reach for the Stars

2015 GALLA

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
RENAISSANCE BOSTON WATERFRONT HOTEL

EMCEE
Kelley Tuthill

Contact courtney@reachma.org for more information.

SAVE THE DATE