

VOLUME 13

ISSUE 1

SPRING 2016



FINAL PRINTED ISSUE!

Please email courtney@reachma.org to receive our new e-newsletter, coming this fall!

REFUGE, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, CHANGE

REACH

REPORT



TEAMING UP WITH THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC AND DATING VIOLENCE

The New England Patriots and team owner Robert Kraft have taken a leadership role in addressing domestic violence in Massachusetts and REACH is proud to be on the team. Last fall, we accepted a transformative gift of \$100,000 from Robert Kraft and the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation to help us move our programs to a new location and reach more people than ever. REACH was one of five agencies from across New England to receive such a meaningful investment. Mr. Kraft challenged REACH's supporters to match his gift – and you stepped up to meet that challenge! We are thrilled to be moving ahead with plans to find and equip new program space.

These major gifts to individual agencies are part of an investment totaling over \$1.5 million. Mr. Kraft and the Patriots made a gift to the state coalition, Jane Doe Inc., and is partnering with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office in an effort to prevent teen dating violence entitled "Game Change: The Patriots Anti-Violence Partnership." The Attorney General's Office selected 98 schools to go through the Mentors in Violence Prevention Institute, which uses sports-themed curriculum and employs collegiate athletes as trainers. In December, REACH received the exciting news that we had been selected as one of six domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) programs in the state to participate in the Attorney General's initiative. The DV/SA provider in each region will receive \$45,000 to support training school staff and parents and work with schools on policies for students and families dealing with violence. We look forward to sharing more with you about this promising project.





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Laura R. Van Zandt

Photo credit: David Barron

WHAT LAURA IS THINKING...

I'm thinking about how those of you reading this newsletter care deeply about REACH and how your commitment to this work extends to those of us who form this organization. Many of you have shared our celebrations and our challenges. During my treatment for breast cancer last year, I shared with you my hope that we could support survivors of domestic violence with the love, compassion, and care that we offer to survivors of cancer. As I write this, many of you know that I am now struggling with grief. It is so hard to lose someone we love, someone who forms our identity, someone who is part of our story. Once again, I feel held and validated in my pain and sadness.

In a recent blog post, my colleague Jessica wrote about grief and loss for survivors of intimate partner violence. I invite you to read her post and also what I have shared on REACH's blog at www.reachma.org/blog.

PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES IN OUR COMMUNITY

It's the question on everyone's mind whenever a domestic violence homicide makes the news: how could this have been prevented? In August 2014, REACH, the Waltham Police Department and the Middlesex District Attorney's Office (MDAO) launched the Waltham High Risk Response Team (WHRRT), bringing service providers together with law enforcement, the courts, probation, and others to identify and support victims of domestic violence who are at high risk for homicide. All members of the team use a risk assessment tool to identify the most dangerous cases of domestic abuse. This tool is based on evidence from decades of scholarly research identifying common factors in domestic violence homicides. REACH convenes monthly meetings where team members talk about cases and share risk assessment information provided by survivors, as well as public record information regarding offenders. This allows us to flag cases that have a high risk of homicide and to intervene more effectively. A key to this intervention is cooperation among partners from different sectors of the community, all of whom may have contact with a family experiencing abuse.

Our team currently has 15 active partners including law enforcement officers from the Waltham and Watertown police departments, representatives from the MDAO, Waltham District Court Probation Department, Greater Boston Legal Services, Journey to Safety, and the Department of Children and Families. We also consult with batterer intervention programs on these complicated cases. We plan to bring schools, housing and health care providers on board in order to coordinate even more resources.

Since the team was formed, 37 cases have been identified. We discuss risk factors and decide what each team member's role will be in improving the survivor's safety and holding the offender accountable. Our work informs safety planning with survivors and decision-making on criminal matters, such as bail setting and other measures that keep offenders contained. By working together, the WHRT is increasing the protective factors for survivors and preventing dangerous cases from escalating.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: LAUREN MONTANARO



This past fall, REACH welcomed Lauren Montanaro to our Prevention Team as the Community Engagement Specialist. In this role she is leading trainings and also helping to coordinate our Volunteer Program.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I was born and raised in Rhode Island, just outside of Providence. I went to college at American University, in Washington, D.C., where I majored in Law & Society and minored in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I started getting involved in this work after attending my first Take Back the Night, and ultimately ended up joining the first group of Peer Educators for the Elimination of Relationship and Sexual Violence (PEERS) at my college. Our goal was to raise awareness among the student population about domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking. We facilitated workshops for student groups, and conducted numerous outreach events. I also spent a few weeks between my junior and senior year volunteering with the Christian Appalachian Project at one of the domestic violence shelters they were running at the time. The experience was incredible, and inspired me so much in my work with PEERS.

But my plan was never to work full time in the field of domestic violence. In fact, I always planned on attending law school... But something about that experience changed my outlook, and every time I would go on an interview for a potential job, I would ultimately leave thinking about that shelter. The Christian Appalachian Project has a program for what they call “Long-term volunteers,” which offers essentially full time volunteer opportunities to folks interested in volunteering at least nine months of their time. A few weeks before graduation, I sent an email asking if there were any more volunteer positions available for the following year, and as luck had it, there were! I changed all of my plans, and moved out to rural Appalachian Kentucky, and spent a year volunteering with the Christian Appalachian Project & AmeriCorps through a joint volunteer and grant program.

As that year came to a close, I realized this work was too close to my heart to walk away from, and I started looking into opportunities to stay involved.

I found REACH through a lucky Google search, and loved the focus on working with LGBTQ/T survivors, and especially their mindfulness when working with male and trans survivors. I applied for a position as a Residential Advocate, and worked with survivors in our shelter for two years. I loved working in the shelter, and was constantly inspired by the incredible men and women who came through our doors. Yet I always missed my “preventionist” roots. When the Community Engagement Specialist position was created and the opportunity arose to join the Prevention team, I decided to apply. I am so excited for the opportunity to continue working with REACH in this new capacity, and cannot wait to build relationships with our volunteers and communities.

What are some of your hobbies?

Playing with other people’s dogs! Oh, and I love skydiving! I also enjoy running, crocheting, and playing the ukulele... but really, those first two are definitely my favorites.

What are you most excited about in your job?

There are so many things... I suppose I’m most excited about working more closely with our volunteers. With my role at the shelter, I was fortunate enough to get to know several of our volunteers very well. I have to admit, we are incredibly fortunate here at REACH. Our staff members accomplish incredible work; they move mountains with such limited time and resources. But we absolutely cannot do it alone. The support of our volunteers, and the enthusiasm that they bring, keep this agency going in ways we can never explain. I am so grateful for all those individuals who have already given so much to REACH and the survivors we work with, and I am so excited to meet and work with the new folks who are interested in joining us!

If you are interested in volunteering with REACH, or holding a training in your community, email lauren@reachma.org for more information.

1. Plate artist Nancy Schön, Laura Van Zandt, Board member Ora Gladstone and Board chair Heather Campbell
2. Event committee member Amy Noordzij with Beth Doe
3. Event committee members Mary Ann Mattoon (left) and Sally Marrer (center) with Laura Van Zandt, Donna Knight, and Cathy Dinardo



REACH FOR THE STARS GALA

Our 12th Annual *Reach for the Stars Gala* took place on November 7 at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel. With your help, we raised \$430,000 for the life-saving services that we provide at no cost.

Mariah, a survivor working with REACH, shared her journey with the crowd. Here's an excerpt from her moving piece:

“Abuse sucks the life out of you and makes you dependent on the abuser and that’s what happened to me. I had a 6-week-old, and was one month away from being evicted because my husband cleared out our bank account...I didn’t have diapers or formula left to last a week.

“REACH gave me real tools to protect myself, gain confidence again and to be back in self-control. By the grace of God I am now productive, self-sufficient and I have goals in life to leave a positive mark in my community and to raise a daughter who will also leave a positive mark in this world. Most importantly, REACH gave me the strength to look forward to a future. Through your support, you enable other victims to no longer suffer in silence.

“Thank you for supporting me, for being a change for good in my life and allowing me to live a life more abundantly out loud.”





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SAVE THE DATE
 13th Annual *Reach for the Stars* Gala
 September 24, 2016
 InterContinental Boston

- 4. Bonnie McLellan and Mish Michaels
- 5. Event co-chairs Jim & Rachel Solomon and Dave and Dana Lazowski
- 6. Alison Albers, Jeff and Patty Mitchell, Rachel Zinny, Event Emcee Kelley Tuthill and Brendan Ward

- 7. Fred Katz
- 8. Shelter volunteers Bill Segal and Kathleen Carney-Mark
- 9. Barbara Rome, Jen Goorno, Josh Solomon and Marilyn Newman

Photo credits: David Barron

2015 IN REVIEW

As 2015 began, New England was experiencing one of the snowiest winters in history. As record amounts of snow blanketed the region, work continued largely as usual at REACH. Staff members got snowed in at the shelter alongside survivors, and continued answering the hotline.

In March it was time for Say Hi to Your Neighbors Week in Waltham, a beloved tradition. It comes at a time of year when people are less likely to be outside and connecting with one another, and it strengthens social ties that can help prevent domestic violence. REACH staff and volunteers said hi and gave out coffee to commuters at the local train stations, hosted a “Meet the Social Media Night,” and enjoyed great conversation while sitting at a designated community table at In a Pickle Restaurant.

Come spring, it was time for REACH’s Annual Meeting, which focused on how domestic violence can affect the workplace. We honored Jane Doe Inc. Executive Director Debra Robbin and former Waltham News Tribune Editor Paul Crocetti for using their professional positions to be a voice for domestic violence survivors. We also heard from a survivor how the abuse she experienced made working difficult and how legislation passed in 2014 could have helped her.

For our Prevention Department, summer means it’s time for the Peers Against Violence (PAVE) Peer Leaders Summer Training! Fourteen students from Waltham High School participated in 40 hours of training around healthy relationships, dating violence, and peer leadership.

In September, we held our fall training for new staff, volunteers, and others who just wanted to learn. We were honored to receive a \$100,000 challenge gift from Robert Kraft and the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation to support our efforts to move into a new office. REACH’s supporters stepped up to meet Mr. Kraft’s challenge, and their generosity will allow us to reach more people than ever before.

We also welcomed our new Community Engagement Specialist Lauren Montanaro (See page 3). The 6th Annual Waltham Neighborhoods Fall Festival rounded out the month with a day celebrating healthy communities.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) and it began with the kick-off of our Coordinated Community Response Team to address Elder Abuse in Waltham, under a federally funded grant. The Waltham Against Abuse in Later Life (WAALL) team had their first training in early October.

Our DVAM theme for this year was “Inspire Conversation” and REACH staffers were out and about doing just that. You can read our full DVAM recap on our blog: <http://reachma.org/blog>.

Things didn’t slow down much once DVAM ended, because it was time for the 12th Annual *Reach for the Stars Gala* on November 7. This year’s event was our largest yet! See page 4 for more.

December is all about the Holiday Gift Program! We were in a new location, and thanks to the hospitality of our friends at Cimpres and Vistaprint, we had tons of room for everything from rows of presents to kids’ craft activities. When it was done, 237 families received gifts to brighten their holiday season.

Then, just as we were getting ready for a few days’ break over the holidays, we received word from the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office that we were selected as one of six domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the state to participate in their new initiative, “Game Change: The Patriots Anti-Violence Partnership.” (See page 1 for more).

We have our work cut out for us in 2016 (our 35th year!) and we need your help. Our work pales in comparison to the ongoing work done by survivors to rebuild their lives in the wake of abuse. Every day they inspire us with their courage, their resiliency, and their ability to not lose hope. As friends and supporters of REACH, you inspire us as well. Your continued dedication to stand by these survivors sends a message that domestic violence is unacceptable, and together we can reach beyond it.

SAVE THE DATE

REACH Annual Meeting
June 1 at 6:00pm

Supporting the Young People in Our Lives:
Addressing relationship violence on college campuses

Massachusetts Medical Society

For more information, please visit www.reachma.org

MAKING HOLIDAY WISHES COME TRUE

The holiday season can be tough for families who are struggling as a result of domestic violence. As one survivor, Dawn, said, “These times are hard on me since I usually just have enough money to pay the bills and put some gas in the car and after that there is not much left.” But in December, 237 survivors and their children received gifts supplied by strangers they’ve never met. The gifts were items that they themselves had asked for; gifts that donors picked out based on information provided by each survivor. Dawn explains, “It makes a tremendous difference in our Christmas.” For REACH staff and volunteers, it was a wonderful week of organizing and distributing the gifts. The party, hosted in a new location by our friends at Cimpress and Vistaprint and catered by Blue Ribbon BBQ along with an amazing group of volunteers, provided an opportunity for survivors and their families to gather and strengthen the social connections that are so important to their well-being and ongoing healing.

This program would not be possible without the kindness of REACH’s donors who assist our efforts to brighten the holiday season and build healthy relationships in the community. **We thank you for your support!**

1. Maria and Maribel with Santa
2. Cookies decorated by holiday dinner volunteers
3. Party volunteers from Cimpress and Vistaprint





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FREE UPCOMING TRAININGS

Please join us for an exciting 6-hour learning opportunity. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of intimate partner violence and how to support someone in their life who is experiencing abuse.



Space is limited. Registration is required. Please register for a training by emailing@reachma.org.

ABUSE IN LATER LIFE

May 2
6-8pm

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 101 & TRAUMA 101

May 13 & May 20
6-9pm

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 101 & TRAUMA 101

July 13 & July 20
6-9pm

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
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| Barry A. Guryan | Diane Suda |
| A. Miriam Jaffe | David Weaver |
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