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## Cape Men to Pledge No Violence Against Women at White Ribbon Day Event



SOUTH YARMOUTH – Men and boys across the Cape can take a pledge to say “no” to violence against women and girls on Thursday.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Cape Cod White Ribbon Day breakfast event will be held at Irish Village on Route 28 in South Yarmouth from 9 to 11 a.m.

The event is a collaboration between Yarmouth Police, The Cape and Islands District Attorney’s Office and Independence House, a non-profit that helps individuals affected by domestic or sexual violence. Donna Giberti, the director of development and marketing for Independence House, is asking men to come out, take the pledge and have some breakfast.

“We’re asking men to step up to the plate and make a difference in helping solve the problem [of] violence against women,” Giberti said.

Guest speakers for the event include Yarmouth Deputy Police Chief Steven Xiarhos, Judge Joseph Reardon, County Sheriff James Cummings, Cape and Islands District Attorney Michael O’Keefe and Mentors in Violence Prevention students from Barnstable High School, Cape Cod Regional Technical High School, Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School and Falmouth High School.

Men of all ages throughout the Cape are invited and encouraged to attend.

The White Ribbon Campaign started in 1991 by a group of men committed to ending men’s violence against women through education, discussion and action. The campaign was founded after fourteen female students were targeted because of their gender and killed by a gunman at the University of Montreal.

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[http://www.capecod.com/newscenter/white-ribbon-day-campaign-urges-an-end-to-violence/nggallery/image/ka\\_yarmouth\\_white-ribbon-day\\_independence-house\\_2016\\_030316\\_010/](http://www.capecod.com/newscenter/white-ribbon-day-campaign-urges-an-end-to-violence/nggallery/image/ka_yarmouth_white-ribbon-day_independence-house_2016_030316_010/)

## White Ribbon Day Campaign Urges an End to Violence

### White Ribbon Day 2016

SOUTH YARMOUTH – The major theme of the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Cape Cod White Ribbon day event on Thursday was education.

White Ribbon Day is a campaign that calls on men and boys to take a pledge saying “no” to violence against women and girls.

The event was a collaboration between Independence House, a non-profit that helps individuals affected by domestic and sexual violence, the Yarmouth Police Department and the Cape and Islands District Attorney’s office. It was held at Irish Village on Route 28 in South Yarmouth.

Several guest speakers, including those in law enforcement, politicians and even high school students, talked about violence against women, prevention efforts and offered personal stories.

Judge Joseph Reardon said at a young age he was taught by his father to never lie, never steal and never hit a woman.

“We have to teach our young men early on that you never hit a girl,” Reardon said.

Reardon said that in a lot of cases violence is a byproduct of poverty and individuals in that situation often resort to drugs, alcohol, criminal acts.

“You lose respect for yourself,” he said. “And as soon as you lose respect for yourself you lose respect for everyone else around you.”

Barnstable County Sheriff James Cummings said he is in a unique situation at the Barnstable County Correction Facility as there are batterers and victims in the same building.

“We do our best up there to try to change the way the batterers think,” Cummings said. “That’s what we see as the problem. Either they learned it from a father or someone else growing up and we try to teach them to change their cognitive behavior so that they think differently.”

Student presidents of local Mentors in Violence Prevention programs at Cape Cod high schools also spoke out against violence.

The goal of the MVP program is to spread awareness to students that domestic violence, dating violence, bullying and equality unacceptance is not acceptable.



CCB MEDIA PHOTO: Cape & Islands District Attorney Michael O'Keefe speaks at White Ribbon event in Yarmouth Thursday

Jack Giberti, the co-president of the Barnstable High School MVP program spoke about the effect Cape Cod students had on the cancellation of a Don McLean concert scheduled in April at Barnstable High School.

McLean was arrested in January for domestic violence assault in Maine.

The presidents of the four MVP programs at Cape Cod High School wrote a letter to Barnstable Schools Interim Superintendent William Butler. The next week the concert had been cancelled.

Fellow MVP president at Cape Cod Regional Technical High School Paxton Reed discussed his feelings when he found out his best friend had been raped and that the concept of violence against women suddenly became real to him and not just a plot of an episode of "Law & Order."

Reed also said that educating youth was the key to stopping violence.

"Abolitionist and women's rights advocate Frederick Douglas said, 'It's easier to build strong children than to repair grown men,'" Reed said.

State Representative Brian Mannel from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Barstable District said the White Ribbon Day event is a good thing for the community and a sad day as well.

"I wish that we didn't have to have White Ribbon Day. I wish that this was no longer an issue and I think there will come a time when it is not an issue," Mannel said. "The thing about domestic violence and violence against women is that for so long as a culture we have hidden it and we have not talked about it."

Other speakers included State Representative Tim Whalen, District Attorney Michael O'Keefe and Yarmouth Deputy Police Chief Steven Xiarhos.

A consensus among all of the speakers was the importance of the work done by Independence House across the Cape.

**By BRIAN MERCHANT, CapeCod.com NewsCenter**