

*Massachusetts White Ribbon Day 2010:
Connecting the dots to end violence against women*

March 2, 2010

350 - 400 people – mostly men and boys – from diverse communities across Massachusetts packed into Gardner Auditorium to pledge their commitment to be part of the solution in ending violence against women. Everyone left transformed by the honest, courageous and inspiring speakers who shared their personal and professional experiences with the issue.

Speakers included:

- **Lt. Governor Murray** highlighted the positive changes that come about when we are proactive in addressing the needs of victims/survivors and working to prevent sexual and domestic violence.
- **District Attorney Gerry Leone** spoke about the impact seen at the prosecutorial level and the need to change attitudes defined by rigid, outdated roles about gender that are driven by a desire for power and control.
- **WBZ Sportscaster Steve Burton** shared how violence against women had touched his own family and talked about the responsibility of parents, teachers and friends to teach young men and boys – and each other – to engage in safe, healthy and respectful relationships.
- **Gunner Scott, Director of the MA Transgender Political Coalition**, described his own experience as a transgender man of looking for male role models who do not use violence and shared stories of how violence against transgender people is rooted in a culture that expresses masculinity as dominant over women and demeaning of femininity.
- **Pascal Akimana**, from Burundi Africa works with Men's Resources International, brought an international perspective from his childhood growing up in a patriarchal society where violence against women was accepted as the norm and used as a weapon of war.
- **Department of Children and Families Commissioner Angelo McClain** tied his own experiences of growing up as an African-American man to the struggles for equality, dignity and safety for women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and how through the WRD we can get more folks into the movement.
- **Darrus Sands, an organizer with Boston Public Health Commission's Start Strong Initiative**, talked about making a commitment from a young age to treat people with respect and how his work to promote healthy relationships means having real conversations about sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

- **Derrick James, a youth leader with Close to Home (C2H)**, spoke about the work that the youth team is doing to address Teen Dating Violence, gender expectations, and social norms as portrayed in the media. He introduced ["A Real Man"](#) a video by Dashawn Watkins, another member of the C2H team.

Poster Exhibit in Doric Hall

We installed a poster exhibit at the State House – displayed Monday to Friday, MARCH 1-5

***Men Step Up: A Celebration of Change
A Poster Collection from Jane Doe Inc.***

These 25 posters represent some of the best examples of prevention education materials used throughout world for the purpose of promoting men as allies and leaders in ending violence against women. The strength of these campaigns stems from the messages designed to reach many different audiences, including youth, business professionals, law enforcement, educators, faith leaders and health care providers.

This poster exhibit is being offered to WRD Affiliates for local display during the month of April.

Ambassadors

Estimated final count of ambassadors:

There may be a few more than this counting legislators and elected officials

Number new in 2010: 80

Number listed in 2010: 185

Number total registered since 2008: 374

Affiliates

Total Number of Affiliates: 50

JDI Members: 30

Community Organizations: 20

Community Events

24 communities reported organizing over 30 local events. Events included pledge assemblies, information tables, proclamation events and other

activities. Groups included high schools, colleges, churches, town governments and several businesses. Several Barber Shops in North Adams organized their clientele to sign the pledge this year.

Notably, we were looking for partnership with organizations with membership constituency and we accomplished this with the involvement of the Verizon Corporation and the United Nations Association of Greater Boston.