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## Independence House Receives \$100,000 Grant From Kraft's Foundation

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HYANNIS – When Lysetta Hurge-Putnam saw that she had a message on her answering machine a few weeks ago, she figured it was Cheryl Bartlett returning her call to come speak at the Independence House annual breakfast.



CCB MEDIA PHOTO  
Lysetta Hurge-Putnam, executive director of Independence House, announces major grants and initiatives for the agency.

But the Independence House 15th Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month Community Breakfast yesterday at the Doubletree Hotel in Hyannis became the opportunity for Hurge-Putnam, the executive director of Independence House, to announce that the call was from New England Patriot's owner Bob Kraft.

"Bob Kraft was calling me to let me know that Independence House had been selected to receive \$100,000 to support our housing stabilization program, so we intend in the next year to also increase supportive housing for victims of domestic violence," she told the more than 150 people gathered for the breakfast.

Hurge-Putnam also announced a second \$100,000 initiative supported by a \$50,000 grant from the Seaside LeMans charitable race and matching funds. "Within the next few months, Independence House will officially launch our Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence," Hurge-Putnam said.

Bartlett, who leads substance abuse prevention efforts for Cape Cod Healthcare, was the keynote speaker at the breakfast, which was focused on the relationship between domestic violence and substance abuse. Her talk focused on the Cape-wide efforts underway to try to curb the opiate abuse epidemic on Cape Cod, including initiatives in the schools that focus on educating young people about the dangers of drugs. "We want the next generation to be a healthier generation," she said.

Special guest speaker Dr. Richard Ferri talked about his work with survivors of domestic violence. "The scourge of addiction coupled with battering is one of the most horrific things I've had to deal with professionally and personally," he said.

A domestic violence survivor told her harrowing story of her marriage to a man she said tried to kill her, to "gaslight" her—making her think she was insane—and to use the courts to get custody of her children. She said she has now reclaimed her life as an author. "I am no longer mute. I am no longer a victim and I'm glad to be alive," she said.

The grant from Bob Kraft and the New England Patriot's Foundation was given to support the "under the radar" work the agency does for domestic violence survivors in the Cape Cod Community, according to Hurge-Putnam.


"We thought it fitting to hold and share the news first with the Cape Cod community during Domestic Violence Awareness Month," Hurge-Putnam said. "The people most affected by this award are members of our own community on Cape Cod who are transitioning from a life of abuse to a violence-free home for themselves and their children."

As part of a multi-faceted initiative from Robert Kraft and the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation focusing on domestic violence, the award given to Independence House will increase the services of the Independence House Housing Stabilization Program, providing more transitional housing assistance to survivors of domestic violence and their children, Hurge-Putnam said.

Independence House was named as one of five organizations throughout New England to receive such an award.

Separately, the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation and Robert Kraft have additionally joined forces with Attorney General Maura Healy to support domestic and sexual violence prevention and advocacy programs in Massachusetts, awarding \$500,000 to provide training to 90 public high schools across the state with the nationally recognized Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program, founded at Northeastern University by Jackson Katz.

Independence House has facilitated the MVP program to high schools across Cape Cod including Barnstable High, Falmouth High, Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High, Lower Cape Regional Technical



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High, and is currently in conversation with four other high schools to bring the MVP Program to their students.

With the additional announcement at the community breakfast of the Independence House newly expanded Prevention Division, the agency's goal is to facilitate the MVP program in every upper level school on Cape Cod.

By **LAURA M. RECKFORD**, *CapeCod.com News Editor*

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