

Independence House Will Launch Healthy Relationship Survey to Cape Teens

Part of "Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month" in February

ARTICLE | [NEWS](#) | JANUARY 27, 2020 06:14 PM | BY [CAPECODTODAY STAFF](#)



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Hyannis, MA, January 22, 2020 — February's Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month is nationally recognized as a time to talk and take action about dating violence among adolescents. In a call-to-action, Independence House is asking middle and high school aged teens across Cape Cod to take part in a brief virtual online survey that will help provide information about the knowledge students have with regard to healthy vs. unhealthy relationships.

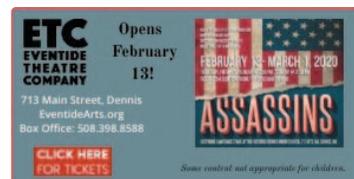
Two online surveys will be located at <https://independencehouseteens.org/TDVAM>, one for middle school teens and another for older high school students. The surveys will launch on February 1, 2020 and be available for students throughout the month of February. With thanks in part to sponsor, MASSHIRE Cape and Islands Career Center, the top three participating schools will be awarded a vinyl banner to display at their school; the first 100 students who participate in the survey will receive a \$5 Dunkin Donuts gift card; and all student surveys will be entered for a drawing to win a \$75, \$100, and \$250 Visa Gift Card. Results of the survey will be made available to schools on Cape Cod and participating students.

Among the surveys from the Independence House Teen Program, also known as the Nicholas G. Xiarhos Respectful Youth Relationship Program, the Middle School survey aligns in partnership with Lt. Governor Karyn Polito's efforts and the Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence to help provide relationship information to young teens through Mass.gov's "RESPECTfully" Campaign (mass.gov/respectfully). This new crusade with a focus on middle school aged teens addresses how healthy relationships are built on respect, honesty and open communication. Teens learn what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy, and provides information on signs to look out for as well as how to talk about these issues with someone they care about. The campaign in part is meant to provide younger teens with an earlier education about healthy dating and be more prepared as they transition into their upper teen years.

"Teen dating violence awareness is crucial to help teens identify what abuse looks like. We all deserve a life free from violence and starting this in our early years has evidenced based benefits," said Autumn Zerendow, M.Ed., LMHC, Child and Teen Program Director at Independence House.

"The Nicholas G. Xiarhos Memorial Fund is delighted to continue our partnership with Independence House and our Teen Program," said Steven Xiarhos on behalf of the Nicholas G. Xiarhos Memorial Fund. "We believe strongly in the importance of protecting the well-being of teens, who are at a particularly-vulnerable point in their lives and require our focused attention to keep them safe. We can start to accomplish this by helping teens to form healthy relationships and make positive life choices, which is what the Teen Program is all about."

Independence House Teens, The Nicholas G. Xiarhos Respectful Youth Relationship Program is Independence House's youth-focused primary prevention and education program promoting healthy relationships and violence prevention among high school students throughout Cape Cod. The program is named in honor of Nicholas Xiarhos, son of former Yarmouth Police Deputy Chief Steven Xiarhos, who lost his life in Afghanistan. Nick was a mentor and role model to his peers and always looked out for others. The program offers workshops and presentations to schools across Cape Cod that include topics such as bullying, conflict resolution, sexual harassment, gender stereotypes and sexism, sexual assault and consent, establishing boundaries, teen dating violence, and healthy



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relationships. Independence House also offers counseling, advocacy and assistance for teenagers who question or seek assistance with their dating relationships.

Independence House, Inc. is Cape Cod's leading resource, counseling and advocacy center to address and prevent domestic and sexual violence. To learn more about Independence House, visit www.independencehouse.org and the dedicated teen website at www.independencehouseteens.org (or) IHteens.org.



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