

## Yarmouth event asks men to take stand against domestic violence

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Posted Mar 6, 2015 at 2:01 AM

Updated Mar 6, 2015 at 7:23 AM

About 80 people attend White Ribbon Day breakfast to pledge to be part of the solution.

SOUTH YARMOUTH — One month to the day after a Bourne woman died at the hands of an accused stalker, dozens of men — including high school students — pledged Thursday to be part of the solution to ending violence against women.

"It wasn't that long ago that the issue of domestic violence and sexual assault seemed insurmountable," Lysetta Hurge-Putnam, executive director of Independence House, a counseling, advocacy and referral center in Hyannis for victims of domestic or sexual violence, said during the Cape's third annual White Ribbon Day breakfast meeting at Cape Cod Irish Village.

"Yet here we are today ... with a lot of male leaders from our community who have taken the pledge," she said.

White Ribbon Day is part of the White Ribbon Campaign started by a group of Canadian men in 1991 on the second anniversary of the massacre of 14 women at a university in Montreal by a man wielding a rifle and a knife. Men are asked to wear a white ribbon and pledge to take a stand against violence against women and girls.

This year it also coincided with the one-month anniversary of the shooting death of Lisa Trubnikova, a Coast Guard petty officer. Fellow Coast Guardsman Adrian Loya, who according to court documents spied on her and her spouse with a video camera in the hours before the shooting at the couple's Monument Beach condo, is charged with her murder.

Anna Trubnikova and Bourne police Officer Jared MacDonald were injured in the attack.

"Most men do not abuse their partners," Hurge-Putnam said. But she said men have a role in quashing the objectification of women that leads to violence by speaking out against sexist comments or harassment at the poker game, in the locker room and elsewhere.

"Domestic and sexual violence are men's issue," Hurge-Putnam said. "Well-meaning men must speak up and not remain silent."

Thursday's event was sponsored by Independence House, the Yarmouth Police Department and the Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office.

After commending the group of about 80 people who had turned out for the event — despite the snow that canceled classes in several school districts in the area — District Attorney Michael O'Keefe remembered going on domestic calls as a police officer before the phrase was even coined.

"It was a family problem," he said. "Police really didn't know what to do in many of those cases," beyond separating the spouses or partners.

After five women were killed by their partners within a short period of time in Barnstable — a story that made national headlines in a 1994 People magazine story — the community formed a roundtable discussion on domestic abuse and "made great strides," O'Keefe said.

Judges are being trained to deal with the issue in a "more focused way," and there are plans for a statewide team to review domestic violence fatalities, O'Keefe said.

Last year's creation of the independent crime of strangulation gives prosecutors and police more tools to work with, he said. O'Keefe said too many times an abuser's attempt to strangle his partner is a prelude to a homicide.

"This is a basic right, to live your life without fear," state Rep. Brian Mannal said.

"We must be positive role models," Yarmouth Deputy Police Chief Steven Xiarhos noted.

State Rep. Timothy Whelan, a retired state trooper, said he still remembers the tears of a woman who woke up to a beating from her partner who said, "Even when I sleep you make me mad."

As a father to daughters, a husband and a brother, Whelan said he considers women to be the most important people in his life. "I will stand with you the rest of my life as a legislator and beyond," he said.

Barnstable High School junior Robert Welsh, 17, who belongs to the Independence House-affiliated Mentors in Violence Program (MVP), which combats abuse against women, said White Ribbon Day "is a step in the right direction."

He compared not speaking out against violence against women to the infamous 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese in New York City, when dozens of neighbors heard her screams but did nothing to help or call police.

White Ribbon is a title for a day that shouldn't be needed, said Kyle Anderson, a 17-year-old Barnstable High junior who also addressed the gathering.

An organization called the ManKind Project is planning a "No More Men's March" against domestic and sexual violence May 31 in Hyannis, organizer Brian Renard said.

Men and boys are invited to walk as individuals or representatives of groups, Renard said. Proceeds from the \$20 march fee will go to Independence House, but boys under age 18 may march at no charge, he said. For more information go to <https://indhouse.ejoinme.org/march> or to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-NO-MORE-March/767455019969630>.

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