



## Independence House to Commemorate 40 Years in 2019

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HYANNIS – Cape Cod’s leading resource, counseling and advocacy center to address and prevent domestic and sexual violence is commemorating its 40th anniversary throughout 2019.

A year-long series of events began earlier this month with an online survey for high school students about teen dating violence.



Other events will bring together people from different generations and cultures throughout the year.

Highlights include a collaboration with the NAACP to bring a soon to be announced nationally known speaker to Cape Cod, a White Ribbon Day event with the Yarmouth Police Department and Cape and Islands District Attorney’s Office, and a luncheon with advocate Patricia McLean, who has a new photographic and audio exhibit she will bring to the community.

Executive Director Lysetta Hurge-Putnam said the organization has come a long way since it was founded by five women in a basement with a hotline, but that more progress is still needed.

The organization quickly evolved to provide safe and secret places for women and children to flee from abusive situations.

“To this day it is not necessarily a conversation that is easily had in general,” Hurge-Putnam said.

“But definitely there is more permission from someone who is a victim to talk about it but also more permission for the community to be more involved and offer support.”

According to Independence House, more than 9,000 Cape Codders are impacted by domestic and sexual violence each year.

The organization will also celebrate 20 years of leadership from Hurge-Putnam throughout 2019.

She says she hasn’t done much looking back but says there have been a lot of positive changes when it comes to domestic and sexual violence.

“In 1999 when I came to the Cape domestic violence definitely was being addressed on Cape Cod, but with respect to the programs, services and resources that are available on Cape Cod there has been a significant change,” Hurge-Putnam said.

She said the availability of services for survivors is much greater today.

“It’s not one size fits all. It’s not only shelter, only restraining order, only counseling, or only advocacy. It’s a mix and match of all of those,” Hurge-Putnam said.

Hurge-Putnam said there is also much more collaboration today with the region’s law enforcement partners.

Visibility is also growing on the issue with the Me Too Movement, which has empowered more women to come forward with accusations of misconduct by high profile individuals.

Other events throughout the year include a 40-site, year-long tour of the Independence House Silent Witness and Clothesline Project exhibits, musical events, the Strike Out Domestic and Sexual Violence bowling event, the 5th Annual Charity Open Golf Tournament, 5th Annual Lobster Roll Cruise and more.

A full schedule of events can be found at [independencehouse.org](http://independencehouse.org).

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