



HARBOR LIGHTS

SUMMER 2005

MISSION

To lead a communitywide partnership in the awareness and prevention of domestic violence and abuse and to offer safety and support to diverse families in crisis.

Be A Man!

They're footballers. Fraternity men. Big, burly guys like ex-quarterback Don McPherson, who's hoping to lead a new generation of men into a violence-free end zone.

Several New York Dragons football players limp into the room with what Don McPherson calls the midseason walk, meaning they have weeks of scrapes and bruises that haven't yet had a chance to heal. They reach out to shake Don's hand and the contrast is dramatic. The Dragons—members of a professional arena (indoor) football team—have their injuries, their baggy clothes, and their faint hopes for a future in the National Football League, while the 37-year-old Don has already had his dash in the NFL, his injuries have long since healed, and his crisp khaki pants, lapis-blue shirt, and easy smile make him look like a corporate executive on retreat. Still, Don will be mining the similarities between himself and these men in his presentation—not just their shared experience in football but also their shared history as men in a country where sexual violence runs rampant. A country in which, experts estimate, a woman is battered by a man—usually an intimate partner—every 15 seconds, raped every two minutes, and murdered by a spouse or boyfriend every six hours.

"Let's look at the semantics of sexism," Don begins, writing on a whiteboard. The Dragons lean forward intently, as if he's a coach outlining strategy for an upcoming game. Then he stands back and reads these words aloud.

Jack beats Jill.
Jill was beaten by Jack.
Jill was beaten.
Jill is a battered woman.

"What's happened here?" Don asks, pointing his marker at the last line. After a few seconds, one of the players speaks up. "Jack's missing?" Don nods.

"Jack is out of the picture and Jill is stigmatized. That shows that even our language about sexual violence blames women for the things that men do."

The Dragons pay rapt attention for the next two hours, not only because this is a startling concept but because Don cuts a heroic figure. As a quarterback at Syracuse University, he was first in the NCAA in passing and led Syracuse to an undefeated season in 1987. He won more than 18 national collegiate-player-of-the-year honors, then played for the Philadelphia Eagles and Houston Oilers before retiring in 1994.

This kind of career isn't just a dream for arena football players, of course—many men have such dreams and idolize the men who achieve them. Whenever Don would return to his hometown during his football years, old acquaintances were quick to cluster around him. "You still playing football?" they'd crow. "You the man!" But it's in the eight years since he left football that Don has emerged as a real hero. He's parlayed his superstar credibility into speaking engagements with thousands of people—especially male athletes and college students—to talk about sexual violence, male privilege, and the culture that breeds them.

For some 30 years, activists—mostly women—have struggled to provide services to victims of sexual violence, pressure the criminal justice system to punish offenders, and drag sexual violence into the court of public censure. In the past few years, there's been a dazzling explosion of new energy in this movement as a small but growing number of men like Don McPherson join the fray. (article continued on Page 2)

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It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving.

--Mother Teresa



AT OUR 'A TIME TO LAUGH' FUNDRAISER ON APRIL 21, WE RAISED OVER \$34,000 FOR HARBOR HOUSE!



Beth Schnorr, Executive Director, and her mother, Gerty Murray, in full-face smiles and clown noses!



Shannon Kennedy, Harbor House Board member, and Mary Love from 95.9 FM roaring with laughter

Mary Buser, Harbor House Volunteer, Coordinator & T. Marni Voss, Comedienne, sharing a funny moment

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"Daily violence is a part of our culture—school shootings, the Oklahoma City bombing," Don tells the Dragons. "Does it ever occur to any of us that girls are doing it? No. What about rape, sexual assault, harassment, date rape, domestic violence—if we call these things women's issues, what does that allow men to do? That's right, take no responsibility for it. We are the perpetrators." In the process of challenging other men to take responsibility for male behavior, male activists like Don are taking on the whole structure of sexism—gender prejudice plus power—that encourages such crimes. Many even call themselves feminists.

"I use the f-word a lot," says Mark Wynn, a former Nashville police lieutenant and another sexual violence missionary who educates medical, social service, and criminal justice professionals around the world about the dynamics of domestic violence. Mark can describe the powerlessness felt by victims firsthand: His own mother endured years of escalating abuse but was too terrified, isolated, and ashamed to leave her abuser. "My definition of a feminist is someone who protects the rights of women, so I'm proud of this," Mark says. "I think all of us should be feminists."

Certainly, some men have toiled against sexual violence in the past, but their numbers have been tiny and they've been concentrated in academia or social work. This new wave of male activists is not only much bigger but their backgrounds allow them to wield a different kind of clout: men like Don and Mark, for instance, who hail from traditional male bastions and have lived the kind of rough-and-tumble masculinity so admired by other men. When "real men" like these blast long-cherished sexually aggressive male behaviors, other men tend to take notice.

Some male activists are in the entertainment industry and use their showbiz glitter to highlight male violence: men like country rocker Andy Griggs, a national spokesperson for the Family Violence Prevention Fund, who recorded "Waitin' On Sundown," a song about a woman fleeing an abusive spouse. "You hear a lot of women talk about sexual violence, but not men. It's time for men to stand up and say, 'I will not abuse women and I will not support violence against them.'"

Article written by Krstin Ohlson

Adapted from O, The Oprah Magazine Article 'Be A Man' October 2002 Issue

Coaching Boys into Men

*Permission for article by: Family Violence Prevention Fund
endabuse.org*

What you Can Do

The boys in your life need your time and energy. Your son, grandson, nephew, younger brother. The boys you teach, coach and mentor. All need you to help them grow into healthy young men.

Boys are swamped with influences outside of the home – from friends, the neighborhood, television, the internet, music, the movies... everything they see around them. They hear all kinds of messages about what it means to “be a man” – that they have to be tough and in control. There are numerous conflicting and some harmful messages being given to boys about what constitutes “being a man” in a relationship.

Boys need your advice on how to behave toward girls. Boys are watching how you and other men relate to women to figure out their own stance towards girls. So teach boys early, and teach them often, that there is no place for violence in a relationship.

Here's How:

***Teach Early.** It's never too soon to talk to a child about violence. Let him know how you think he should express his anger and frustration – and what is out of bounds. Talk with him about what it means to be fair, share and treat others with respect.

***Be there.** If it comes down to one thing you can do, this is it. Just being with boys is crucial. The time doesn't have to be spent in activities. Boys will probably not say this directly -- but they want a male presence around them, even if few words are exchanged.

***Listen.** Hear what he has to say. Listen to how he and his friends talk about girls. Ask him if he's ever seen abusive behavior in his friends. Is he worried about any of his friends who are being hurt in their relationships? Are any of his friends hurting anyone else?

***Tell Him How.** Teach him ways to express his anger without using violence. When he gets mad, tell him he can walk it out, talk it out, or take a time out. Let him know he can always come to you if he feels like things are getting out of hand. Try to give him examples of what you might say or do in situations that could turn violent.

***Bring it up.** A kid will never approach you and ask for guidance on how to treat women. But that doesn't mean he doesn't need it. Try watching TV with him or listening to his music. If you see or hear things that depict violence against women, tell him what you think about it. Never hesitate to let him know you don't approve of sports figures that demean women, or jokes, video games and song lyrics that do the same. And when it comes time for dating, be sure he knows that treating girls with respect is important.

***Be a Role Model.** Fathers, coaches and any man who spends time with boys or teens will have the greatest impact when they “walk the walk.” They will learn what respect means by observing how you treat other people. So make respect a permanent way of dealing with people – when you're driving in traffic, talking with customer service reps, in restaurants with waiters, and with your family around the dinner table. He's watching what you say and do and takes his cues from you, both good and bad. Be aware of how you express your anger. Let him know how you define a healthy relationship and always treat women and girls in a way that your son can admire.

***Teach Often.** Your job isn't done once you get the first talk out of the way. Help him work through problems in relationships as they arise. Let him know he can come back and talk to you again anytime. Use every opportunity to reinforce the message that violence has no place in a relationship.

***Become a Founding Father.** Show him how important the issue of violence against women and children is to you. Join thousands of men across the country who are taking a stand against violence. Become a Founding Father yourself. Go to founding-fathers.org to sign up.





Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs
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Harbor House is supported by United Way

**Volunteer Appreciation Event
 Harbor House Celebrates its AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!**



**Mary Buser
 Volunteer Coordinator**



**Mary hugs our Volunteer of
 the Year, Heidi Court
 and House Manager
 Cheri Bricco**



**Entertaining the crowd...
 Exec. Director Beth Schnorr,
 Jeanne Lietzan, and Harbor
 House Board Volunteer of the
 Year Shannon Kennedy**