



PRESS RELEASE
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MEN AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO SEND SPECIAL MESSAGE ON VALENTINE'S DAY

HARTFORD – February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, and Interval House's *Men Make a Difference, Men Against Domestic Violence*™ group want people to know love shouldn't hurt.

Since 2009, the group of prominent Connecticut men has helped Interval House champion the cause against domestic violence and abuse. On February 14 -- Valentine's Day -- they will gather at 11am in the State Legislative Office Building in Hartford to recommit themselves to the cause and share their message that there's never an excuse for violence and abuse in an intimate partner relationship.

Since the group was formed, members have pledged to serve as role models to other men and boys, said Mary-Jane Foster, Interval House's President and CEO. They have also raised money, spoken in public and distributed thousands of pieces of educational materials.

"They want to make sure, during this month in particular, that teens know that domestic violence and abuse is never acceptable," Foster said. "It's been their message for nearly ten years and reaching out to young people is so important if we are to ever end this serious social and public health crisis."

According to national and state statistics, 1 in 3 teenagers report being physically, sexually or emotionally hurt by their partner. About 17-percent of state high school students report being emotionally abused by a dating partner, and 8-percent report being physically abused.

Founded in 2009 by Interval House and Senator Richard Blumenthal, the group is comprised of dozens of well-known men, including: State Attorney General George Jepsen; State Rep. Dr. William A. Petit, Jr.; Channel 8 Co-Chief Meteorologist Joe Furey; Channel 3 News Anchor Dennis House; Fox 61 Sports Director Rich Coppola; USA Olympian Donnie Cabral, and many more.

"All of us know someone who has been affected by domestic violence or who has experienced it," Senator Blumenthal said. "Without strong community leaders and role models like these men, this pattern of devastated lives will continue to be passed from one generation to the next."

Since 1977, Interval House has helped more than 230,000 victims of domestic violence. The agency provides services to 24 cities and towns in the Greater Hartford region. It operates a 24-hour crisis hotline, 20-bed emergency safe house and provides counseling for victims and advocates in both the criminal and civil court system.