



PRESS RELEASE
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INTERVAL HOUSE “STEP UP & STAY IN” VIRTUAL GALA TO HELP VICTIMS OF ABUSE DURING PANDEMIC

HARTFORD – For more than 20 years, Interval House’s “Step Up & Step Out” annual springtime gala has been a must-attend social and charitable event in Hartford.

Every year the formal event attracts hundreds of the State’s “Who’s Who” of business leaders, politicians, television personalities and ardent supporters of the cause. “Step Up & Step Out” is Interval House’s largest fundraiser, raising critical operations dollars for the nonprofit domestic violence intervention and prevention organization.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic reached Connecticut and threatened this year’s event, organizers did not know what to expect.

“After making sure our staff and clients were safe, we came up with a plan and the virtual gala was born,” said Mary-Jane Foster, Interval House’s President and CEO. “This dreadful pandemic is a true public health crisis and one way we can help each other is to stay in and stay connected. That includes staying connected to the organizations we support and count on.”

“Step Up & Stay In” kicks off today at noon with an online auction, which runs through May 9 at www.stepup2020.givesmart.com. On May 9 at 7 p.m. Interval House will stream a 30-minute gala program via Facebook Live and YouTube Live. The live program will emulate a telethon and feature Foster and friends, as well as Lilian Ijomah—a survivor and former client of Interval House, and musician Kelly English. Viewers will be asked to donate live to help the organization meet its goal.

Step Up & Stay In auction items include:

- Dinner for four with President & CEO Mary-Jane Foster at Max Downtown;
- “We Are Family,” a beautiful and hopeful original artwork painted by kids in our Safe House art therapy program;
- A rousing dinner party with WNPR's Chion Wolf and Hartford Flavor Company owners Tom & Lelaneia Dubay;

- A private tour & tasting with the owners/brewers at Labyrinth Brewing Company;
- Box Seats behind home plate at a Yard Goats Game this season or next;
- Jewelry and Accessories by Kate Spade, Elyse Ryan, and KT Design; and
- An “Instant Wine Cellar” drawing—every \$25 donation buys one chance to win!

“The support we have seen amid this social crisis has been tremendous,” Foster said. “We are hoping for a great online turnout of past gala attendees and perhaps new supporters who want to help. We hope everyone puts on their pajamas, or dresses up to watch the show—bunny slippers optional!”

To register for the auction and the May 9th 7pm virtual gala, visit www.stepup2020.givesmart.com.

All proceeds from Step Up & Stay In will directly support Interval House’s services for victims of domestic violence. For those experiencing abuse, staying home can be very dangerous. Interval House’s victim advocates have been in constant contact with clients via phone calls and text messages, to counsel those who are homebound—potentially with an abuser. The Safe House remains full and staffed with a small crew of essential staff to ensure residents have what they need. Members of the community that want to help the agency during this time may direct donations to www.intervalhousect.org/donate or mail a check or gift cards for clients to P.O. Box 340207, Hartford, CT 06134.

Step Up & Stay In is generously sponsored by: Bank of America, The Petit Family Foundation, Webster Bank, Judith & Brewster Perkins, Cindy & Michael Klein, Ed & Carol Wrobel, Halloran & Sage, People’s United Bank, Accounting Resources, Inc., Highland Park Market, Kelser Corporation, Main Street Office Center LLC, Mary-Jane Foster, Nassau Re, Shari Cantor, Adam & Amanda Delaura, Apex Refrigeration, Cooling and Heating, LLC, Bryan & Heather Flannery, K. Prasad Menon, Mosaic, Sharon Alleman, CFP®, Susy Hurlbert, Eastern Connecticut Association of Realtors®, TRUMPF, Candlelight Writing Workshops, Chuck Coursey, George Jepsen & Diana Sousa, John & Maryellen Turgeon, New England Capital, Nilda Fernandez, Remy Schwartz, Sylvia de Haas-Phillips, and Tammie Fischer. A special thanks to Slalom and Labyrinth Brewing Company for supporting the May 9 live stream program.

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About Interval House

Founded in 1977, Interval House is the largest agency in the state of Connecticut dedicated to preventing and breaking the cycle of domestic violence. Through free and confidential services for victims in 24 towns and cities both East and West of the Connecticut River, Interval House has made a positive difference in the lives of more than 250,000 women and children who have experienced psychological and physical abuse at the hand of a domestic or intimate partner. 24-Hour Hotline: (888) 774-2900. Donations accepted: www.intervalhousect.org/donate. All other calls: (860) 246-9149. Website: intervalhousect.org.