# respond

The Newsletter for RESPOND, Inc., New England's First Domestic Violence Agency

Fall 2011 Volume 20, Number 1

## Contents

The Impact of RESPOND One Survivor's Story	1
Letter from the Executive Director	2
Groundworks Somerville Spruces up RESPOND Offices	2
Verizon Wireless Supports RESPOND Throughout the Year	3
Running for RESPOND	3
RESPOND's 2010 Gala a Success!	4
2010 Gala Awardees	5
<b>RESPOND Thanks Our Donors</b>	7
Honor and Memory Gifts	7
Fiscal year 2011	7



# The Impact of RESPOND One Survivor's Story



WHEN NINA ARRIVED AT RESPOND's emergency shelter last year, she was at her last option. She had suffered abuse at the hands of her husband for five years, and with three children, was afraid for her life.

Shortly before she turned to RESPOND, Nina and her husband lived in Florida, where their six-year marriage turned violent. Shocked when her husband put his hands on her during an argument, Nina called the police, and her husband was sent to

jail and ordered to go through a domestic violence prevention program, which he had to report to regularly for six months. Then one day, he received a letter in the mail. He'd completed his treatment successfully.

"The day he got the letter is the day he came home with a gun," says Nina.

Still, Nina had nowhere to turn. Her mother-in-law, who had first been supportive of her, defended her son when he went to prison after Nina's call to the police. A move back to Connecticut with her husband brought Nina and her three children closer to home—Boston, where her family lived—and, she hoped, to a more peaceful place in their marriage. But within a year, the violence had started up again.

"I was alone," says Nina. One night after a particularly physical argument, Nina found herself locked in the bathroom, begging her husband to leave her alone. When he finally left for the night, Nina had reached her breaking point. While her family was just a few hours away in Boston, she couldn't go to her mother's house, where she knew her husband would find her and convince her to return to the marriage.

"By leaving him and going to my mother's, it would involve other members of my family," says Nina. "Except for my mother, no one else knew. I was too embarrassed."

So after her husband left that night, Nina called a domestic violence hotline and asked them what to do, and whether she should call the police. When the counselor told her that she'd have to go to court, get a restraining order, and involve child services, she decided her best bet was go to a shelter.

The next morning, her landlord and neighbor approached her, having heard the fight the night before and noticing the bruises on her face. She gave her the security deposit for the apartment back, and with that, Nina left for an emergency shelter in Boston with her three children. She immediately filed for a restraining order, and within a couple of weeks was moved to RESPOND's emergency shelter, where she remained for five months.

There, staff at RESPOND helped Nina get a hold of an immigration lawyer and retain her green card, set her up with volunteer positions that would prepare her for full-time work, and connected her with the Somerville Homeless Coalition,

## *Letter from the* **Executive** Director

Dear Friends.

love when I get to talk about my work. Most admire the hard work RESPOND does and then say something like, "Thankfully, I've never known anyone affected by domestic violence." Unfortunately, most just don't know they know someone affected.



Jessica C. Brayden

Here are the top three misconceptions I often have to dispel:

- 1. I don't know anyone affected by domestic violence. Domestic violence can occur in any intimate partner relationship regardless of income, education, address, religion, race, age, sexual preference, gender or any other characteristic. Current statistics indicate that one in three homes experiences it firsthand. If it isn't happening in your home, you only need to look to your left or right to find one impacted.
- 2. It wasn't physical, so it wasn't domestic violence. Domestic violence is more than physical abuse, and includes any effort to control or manipulate a partner through forced sex, financial abuse, jealousy, isolation, mental abuse, threats and other related behaviors.
- 3. There were no signs anything was wrong. Domestic violence is often predictable and therefore preventable. Those who use abuse to control and frighten usually follow patterns, and learning how to recognize them may save a life.

Despite our efforts, the demand for our services has risen. Since 2008, requests to RESPOND for emergency shelter have quadrupled, assistance obtaining a restraining order has tripled, and calls to the crisis hotline have grown 20 percent.

I am gratified that people are stepping up their efforts for RESPOND. Community partners along with loyal individual donors continue to lend a hand and support us with financial contributions, and stakeholders are joining RE-SPOND's conversation forums on Linkedin, Facebook and Twitter.

So the next time you hear one of these myths, please help spread the word with some simple truths. Together, we can end domestic violence. Sincerely,



a C. Brayden, Executive Director

# Groundworks Somerville Spruces up RESPOND Offices

**RESPOND OFTEN RELIES ON the kindness** and support of volunteers, companies and individual donors to operate successfully, but last summer, we had the rare opportunity to ioin up with a fellow Somerville nonprofit organization, Groundwork Somerville, to make improvements to its space.

Clayton Fountain, Groundwork's National Park Preservers coordinator, got word that the conference room at RESPOND had sprouted a ceiling leak. It didn't impede RESPOND's work, so it was low on the list of fixes for the organization as it put resources towards its emergency shelter and counseling services, but it didn't look pretty either. Fountain's National Park Preservers program had the answer.

Each summer, the National Park Preservers takes at-risk youth and pairs them with professional restorers, architects and the like to help them learn job skills. Four days a week, the Preservers work on restoration projects at sites around the state, like the Saugus Ironworks or a historical home in Concord. But on Fridays, the group returns to do a community project. Last summer, the 994 Preservers that came through Groundwork Somerville's program performed 4,656 hours of community service - and thanks to their leaky conference room, RESPOND became one of their projects for 2010.

Fountain spent the week leading up to the conference room repairs educating his crew on the sensitivity of the clientele and work being done at RESPOND. When the day of repair came, it went flawlessly.

"The guys and girls on the crew were incredible," says Fountain. "They were polite and respectful. We go in, no one knows we're there, and we leave a beautiful paint job: that's a successful project for us."

The newly painted conference room sparked an idea for Fountain, who recognized that for a nonprofit organization, paint jobs and overall sprucing up would go by the wayside for the more important services they provided - especially in tough economic times. While the aesthetics are near the bottom of the priority list when it comes to budget, Fountain and his crew wanted to give the survivors entering RESPOND's offices a feeling of warmth and security. So he asked if he could come back.

That's how the Preservers and 120 college students from Tufts' FOCUS programs came to spend four days painting every wall in the RESPOND office. Noticing a patio while working, Fountain even asked to build a garden on the deck, full of flowers and vegetables.

Groundwork Somerville plans to continue to commit itself to RESPOND in the future...

"If clients were sitting out there, I hoped to give them somewhere nice and pleasant," says Fountain. "I hoped to inspire them to be more self-sufficient, maybe to plant something for themselves, just to feel better about themselves."

Groundwork Somerville plans to continue to commit itself to RESPOND in the future, taking care of basic improvement projects around the office as well as beginning a larger project with the agency. They are hoping to bring a Groundwork staff member to RESPOND's emergency shelter to develop a garden and to teach residents how to maintain it, bringing them out of the house and doing what Fountain refers to as "garden therapy."

"If survivors in need feel like RESPOND is a warm, safe place, we did our job," says Fountain of his continued investment in the agency. "It's important to find projects that really impact peoples' lives." R

#### **RESPOND**, Inc. **Board of Directors**

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Jessica C. Brayden, Executive Director

# Verizon Wireless Supports RESPOND Throughout the Year



Verizon Wireless Public Relations Manager Michael Murphy with Jessica C. Brayden and Michelle Fine of RESPOND.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, RESPOND is fortunate to be supported by a variety of companies and individuals that make the work we do possible. This year, Verizon Wireless has stepped up as a true community partner and RESPOND supporter with a variety of programs, from donations to community outreach, that helps RESPOND serve its mission and raises awareness around the issue of domestic violence.

Verizon Wireless has long provided prepaid cell phones to domestic violence survivors through their HopeLine program. These phones allow RESPOND's survivors a way to procure housing and begin the process of finding a job after leaving their abusers. This year, Verizon Wireless took their support a step further with its "Shower the Shelter" campaign. Employees at their local office contributed a variety of items for the shelter that helped to make the residents feel more comfortable in their temporary home after surviving a difficult transition.

When the holidays rolled around, RE-SPOND once again fulfilled the Holiday Wish Lists for client families. Verizon Wireless was one of the more generous contributors, providing over 200 families with gifts, holiday decorations, and the fixings that gave them a celebration they would otherwise have done without.

On March 30, Verizon Wireless generously invited RESPOND Executive Director Jessica C. Brayden to its area meeting of more than 150 employees. Jessica had the opportunity to share RESPOND's mission and raise awareness of domestic violence with these employees, and Verizon Wireless awarded RESPOND with a \$5,000 check for the shelter at the end of her presentation.\* "As New England's first domestic violence agency, RESPOND continues to be in the forefront of domestic violence prevention and awareness — supporting survivors and their families at the most crucial times," said Michael Murphy, public relations manager for Verizon Wireless "We're thankful to our customers and community partners who recycle their no-longer-used cell phones through HopeLine, enabling support to nonprofits like RESPOND that are committed to ending this violence in our communities."

"The support we get from Verizon Wireless is incredibly important to our organization, but it's not only because of the donations they provide that help us aid thousands of victims each year," says Brayden. "Verizon has also taken an interest in RESPOND's mission to end domestic violence and invited us into the workplace to spread that mission further. The ability to interact with the public in as many ways as possible is integral to our mission and work." **R** 

\* Watch the video of the presentation at the Verizon Wireless town hall meeting at www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1ez6Y2Swwc

## **Running for RESPOND: Boston Marathon Runners Raise More than \$20,000**

RUNNING 26.2 MILES IN the Boston Marathon is reason enough to feel accomplished, but for four runners, there was an even greater goal to completing the quintessential April event: to raise money for RESPOND. Michelle Rothman, Kris Rios, Isabel White and Elizabeth Weaver comprised RESPOND's 2011 Boston Marathon Team, a fundraiser made possible by the generous donation of Boston Marathon bib numbers by Earthlink Communications. Tasked with a \$16,000 fundraising goal, these ambitious women ran right by it and sprinted to the finish with more than \$20,000 in donations!

The runners were as diverse as the clientele that RESPOND serves every day. Weaver, a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a longtime runner but a new marathoner, for whom running the Boston Marathon was a dream come true. White, a working mother, saw finishing the Marathon as a way to both improve herself and her community at the same time. While Rios has been a runner for 21 years, 2011 marked her first Boston Marathon, and she kept the thousands helped by RESPOND in her thoughts as she completed the hilly 26.2 mile course. And Rothman, a family lawyer who witnesses the effects of domestic violence each day, was thrilled to support a cause she believes in while crossing the finish line in her first-ever marathon.

"As I received each donation and kind words of encouragement, I felt even more motivation to train. Some runs were harder than others: like when the gym was hot and crowded, when my feet just did not want to go one more step, or when I tripped and skinned my knees during my 20-mile training run." says Rothman. "It was on those runs that I most reminded myself of the thousands of dollars so graciously donated to support me, the hard work performed by the agency's staff and volunteers, and most importantly, the domestic violence survivors who depend on RESPOND every day. I could not have been more grateful to have had the chance to



work towards ending domestic violence and to have experienced this Boston tradition."

RESPOND thanks these four women not only for their fundraising effort, but also for their impressive determination in completing this year's Boston Marathon! **R** 

# RESPOND's 2010 Gala a Success!



Left: RESPOND Gala Committee Members Charity Collier, Alexsandra Snyder and Kristen Rice. Right: Winter Hill Bank President Sandra McGoldrick with guest Frances Gayron.

n October 22, more than 250 people gathered at the Boston Harbor Hotel to again celebrate the mission of RE-SPOND, the award recipients who have gone above and beyond in their efforts towards a world without domestic violence, and to raise money to fund RE-SPOND's mission in 2011. Lead sponsor PegaSystems and RESPOND's gala committee were instrumental in planning a night filled with food, drinks, entertainment and fun. With almost \$100,000 raised through ticket sales, sponsorships, donations and a live and silent auction, the RESPONDing to Domestic Violence gala was a resounding success!

The money raised by the gala each year helps to support RESPOND in providing services for an average of 5,000 men, women and children who are victims of domestic violence each year. In fiscal year 2010, that need was even more acute; RESPOND provided shelter, counseling, hot line support or training to more than 7,000 people. The event, emceed by Chronicle's Shana Seymour, featured food, entertainment, and lots of auction items. Gala guests were treated to a variety of delicious Mediterranean-inspired food, including a risotto bar. In between the passed hors d'oevres and desserts, guests were treated to an awards presentation to hear about some of the best work in domestic violence prevention for 2010.

"It was an honor to receive an award at the gala," says Victoria Helberg, RESPOND shelter coordinator and recipient of the Rita Bourgeois Leadership Award for her tenacity, courage and dedication to working to end domestic violence. "Working in RE-SPOND's emergency shelter, I see the very real impact of domestic violence, and it is touching to be a part of an event working towards solutions and supporting the victims that come through our doors every day."

Attendees also had the opportunity to bid on dozens of silent auction gifts, from sports packages to massages, memorabilia, and gourmet dinners at some of Boston's best restaurants.

A spirited live auction featured vacations to St. Croix and Martha's Vineyard, along with a dinner for six at the Journeyman restaurant in Somerville and coveted tickets to the New England Patriots, Bruins and Celtics.

"Each year, the gala brings in a huge contribution to our operating budget," says Jessica C. Brayden, RESPOND's executive director. "We love that our attendees have such a great time and leave with fantastic auction items. But even more enjoyable for each of us is the fact that so many people care about our mission and are willing to come out to support it, both with their time and their donations."

RESPOND thanks all of its generous inkind donors that made the auction successful, as well as gala donors and attendees whose funds are much appreciated in helping RESPOND continue its mission.

> RESPONDING Domestic Violence Gala

Save the Date!

## **RESPONDing To Domestic Violence Gala 2011**

RESPOND's 2011 Gala, RESPONDing to Domestic Violence, will be held on Friday, October 21 at Hotel Marlowe in Cambridge. It's sure to be another wonderful night, and an important one for RESPOND's fundraising efforts, so please save the date!

If you're interested in getting involved with the Gala Committee or donating a gift for our silent or live auctions, please contact Kristen Rice at kristen@respondinc.org. We look forward to seeing you at the gala!

# 2010 Gala Awardees

Each year RESPOND recognizes stellar contributions to the work to end domestic violence. At the 2010 Gala, the following people were honored:

#### Jim O'Neil and Kelly Muir

New England GiveCamp

Timothy White Take a Stand Award

For their thoughtful generosity and commitment to survivors of domestic violence. New England GiveCamp offered a platform for developers, designers, database administrators and social network specialists to donate their time and technical services to provide services for nonprofit organizations, resulting in more than \$100k in pro bono services to date.

## Eric Greene, George Babey, Justin Babey, and Evelyn Livant

The Development Team

For their dynamic and loyal commitment to philanthropy and volunteerism. The Development Team created, designed, and implemented a comprehensive website for RESPOND in only 48 hours.

## Victoria Helberg

**RESPOND Shelter Program Coordinator** 

Rita Bourgeois Leadership Award

For her tenacity, courage and dedication working to end domestic violence in Massachusetts and beyond. Believing that every person has the right to feel free from threats and abuse, Victoria works tirelessly on the behalf of all survivors of domestic violence. She has helped hundreds of survivors find safety, access to life-saving services, and healthy lives free of fear and victimization.

# 2010 Gala Sponsors

## Corporate Sponsors

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## **Gala Hosts**

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#### Special thanks to:

Fay, Spofford, & Thorndike Maryellen Mondillo Peter Piattoni Dean Groves The Graphic Group Gala Committee Shayna Seymour, WCVB Channel 5 Junior League of Boston Neighborhood Health Plan and All the volunteers who made this night a success

5

## One Survivor's Story

continued from page 1.

which helped her eventually get the apartment she currently lives in with her children, medical insurance, and a childcare voucher for when she began work. Inspired by a RESPOND staff member who was taking classes, she took courses at the Harvard Extension School, because she had always wanted to go to college.

Nina credits RESPOND with breaking the cycle of domestic violence. "Without the shelter, it would have been the same routine: I'd have left him to go to my mom's, and then I'd eventually have been back," she says. The shelter also provided a stable environment for her children, who to this day don't realize they were in a shelter, but thought they were in a nice home with other families.

Without the shelter, it would have been the same routine: I'd have left him to go to my mom's, and then I'd eventually have been back.

-Nina

It wasn't just the staff members or the surroundings that empowered Nina, however.

"The most important part of my experience at RESPOND was the support, and someone to talk to—and by that I mean the other residents who could relate to me," says Nina. "It gave me the strength to say, 'Enough,' and not go back to him."

Today, Nina is working toward a degree in political science at Northeastern University while working full time and supporting her children. It's been about a year since she's left the RESPOND shelter, and she and her children's lives are completely different. But it's the relationships she made during her stay at the shelter that have stayed with her.

"It was wonderful to have support from other survivors and the RESPOND staff," says Nina. "They made me feel as though I wasn't alone." **R** 



Top left: Singer Annie Lynch. Top right: Executive Director Jessica Brayden. Bottom: Birdsong at Morning's Darleen Wilson, Alan Williams, and Greg Porter.

# *The Birds* and *The Bees* Team Up to Benefit RESPOND

ON FEBRUARY 15, THE day after Valentines Day, longtime supporters, music lovers and new friends came together in Harvard Square to enjoy an evening of music to benefit RESPOND.

The Birds and The Bees concert, graciously hosted at Club Passim in Cambridge, spotlighted the talents of Annie Lynch (of the Beekeepers) and Birdsong at Morning, featuring Darleen Wilson, Alan Williams and Greg Porter.

More than a decade ago, Darleen and Alan worked on RESPOND's first CD project, and the 2-CD set was named Album of the Year for 2000 by the late Timothy White, Billboard editor-in-chief.

During the event, Director of Programs and Service Michelle Fine and Executive Director Jessica Brayden spoke to the audience about the realities of domestic violence and encouraged all to give of their time, treasure and talent to help end it once and for all. **R** 

# **RESPOND** Thanks Our Donors

EACH YEAR, RESPOND SENDS letters, holds events and interacts with our community in an effort to raise awareness about and end domestic violence. We couldn't do it without your help. We thank our supporters for not only being advocates for our mission throughout the year, but for providing the time, money and in-kind donations that it takes to assist the thousands of clients that turn to RESPOND each year for help. Individual donors make up the largest part of our operating budget, and this year, as always, we express our gratitude to each of our donors and volunteers. Thank you! **R** 



Photo: RESPOND Controller Darcie DeLuca thanks students from Tufts University FOCUS and Groundworks Somerville Staff for painting RESPOND's offices.

## Honor and Memory Gifts

- In Honor of: Linda Berkel Ann Helwege
- In Honor of: Mother's Day David Gorovitz

In Honor of: Julia Devanthery Leah Perlman

- In Honor of: Kathleen Donahue Elizabeth Gately
- In Honor of: Eric Fellinger Catherine E Byrne, Donna and William Fellinger, Doris M. Hamner, Maya Harrison, Erin Hemenway, Liami & Kathleen Jost Seward
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- In Honor of: George and Susan Zimmerman Julianne Zimmerman
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- In Memory of: Pauline Dwyer Michael and Elizabeth Grunko
- In Memory of: Rosaline & Jamen Hagan Rosemarie D. Hrubi
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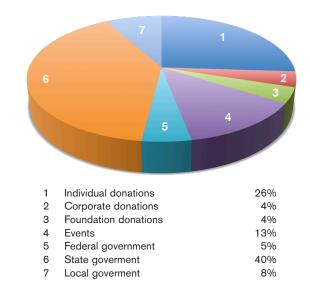
- In Memory of: Jean Maguire Catherine Maguire & Friends
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- In Memory of: Barbara Ryan Michael Ryan
- In Memory of: Irena Mirsky Janine Fay
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- In Memory of: Louis C. Peracchi and Arrigo Doris Tassinari

Carla M. Tassinari

- In Memory of: Marie Siracco Eugene Brune, John J. and Helen S. Corrigan, Barbara Duhamel, Sarah Fishman, Donna L. Wade
- In Memory of: Michael Skrzypczak Helen Skrzypczak

## During fiscal year 2011, RESPOND has:

- Responded to 3,436 crisis calls on the 24-hour crisis hotline
- Sheltered 82 adults and children at the emergency shelter
- Provided individual ongoing counseling support to over 430 survivors
- Provided 110 support groups for survivors of domestic violence
- Assisted 363 individuals at the Malden and Somerville district courts with restraining orders, translation, referrals and other legal support, including court accompanyment.
- Led trainings and maintained a presence at 94 outreach events
- Provided outreach and education about teen dating violence to over 3,500 teens at local schools





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