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**empower** HOUSE  
SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# NEWS!

**SUMMER / FALL**

**2014**

END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NOW

## EVERYONE DESERVES A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP • how education in the classroom changed a family for the better!

Dating Violence — once easily defined as physical, verbal, sexual, and emotional abuse is now interlaced with digital abuse and forms of digital manipulation, creating a complex, confusing, and hidden epidemic among today's youth. In addition, teens are challenged to recognize differing forms of abuse that may be present in their family situations.

Dating and domestic violence has become an engrained part of pop culture through media messages spread instantly through Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Instagram, Snapchat, and even through forms of texting and sexting. In addition to recognizing general red flags of abuse, teens are facing the challenges of understanding the full extent of power and control and its differing dynamics in both teen dating relationships, as well as in family settings. Among adult victims of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, 22% of women and 15% of men first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age. In addition, the severity of intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.

In light of such statistics, prevention among youth is often a well acknowledged need, but is often hard to implement in the rush of crisis intervention. Yet in December of 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reported, It is equally important to continue addressing the beliefs, attitudes and messages that are deeply embedded in our social structures and that create a climate that condones sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence. <sup>1</sup>

Looking to prevention to create awareness among teens, educators, parents, and schools, Empowerhouse utilizes partnerships with area health teachers and counselors to provide awareness and education in health classes while also implementing guidelines for Standards of Learning for Family Life. Through a collection of research-based curriculum, Empowerhouse seeks to not only introduce red flags of dating abuse, but to equip teens with skills to identify, establish, and maintain healthy relationships.

From July of 2013-June of 2014, Support Services Coordinator and Empowerhouse volunteers, connected with 5 high schools, 3 middle schools, 3 alternative education schools, 7 entities in the community that serve youth, and hosted 3 youth forums, spreading awareness to 3,995 teens in District 16 about teen dating violence and healthy relationships. Among the nearly 4,000 teens was 1 particular middle school student named Charlotte.

Charlotte attended an Empowerhouse presentation in health one afternoon at her middle school. During a typical presentation where the dynamics of abuse were explained, Charlotte sat quietly, wondering how many other students knew the cycle being described as a reality in their home. Charlotte lived with her mom and her mom's boyfriend, who screamed, drank, threw bottles, punched walls, and attacked her mother regularly. While Charlotte knew his behavior was "bad," she began to realize how this behavior was abuse. At the end of the presentation, Charlotte tucked away the Empowerhouse card that was handed out to everyone.

Charlotte's mom, Judy, knew about Empowerhouse but had never wanted to call. She was a strong woman who liked to take care of her herself and her child, but when Charlotte came home and handed her the card, saying, "you need to call them," it was the catalyst she needed. The next morning she called the Empowerhouse hotline to get information about protective orders and leaving her abusive partner. Within the hour, the Empowerhouse Support Services Coordinator was on her way to meet Judy who had decided to pursue a preliminary protective order.

For the first time in her life, she felt she was standing up to the abuse. She explained to the advocate the multiple barriers that had kept her silent and paralyzed in her relationship. When asked what changed, she disclosed that her daughter came home talking about a presentation where she learned that she and her mom were experiencing abuse. When Charlotte told her mom that the abuse was not ok and would not end but continue through phases of denial, honeymoon, tension, and explosion, Judy knew instantly that she had to make a change.

Judy and Charlotte entered the emergency shelter at Empowerhouse with a few belongings and a preliminary protective order. Despite significant financial barriers, legal manipulation, and controlling tactics from her boyfriend, Judy utilized resource after resource and entered the Housing Program at Empowerhouse to pursue the possibility of her own apartment.

It continued to be unsafe for Judy and Charlotte to return to their house, but through the Rapid Rehousing Grant, Judy and Charlotte were able to find a two bedroom apartment and start a new beginning. For Judy, there may continue to be ups and downs as she faces court hearings and other obstacles, but her focus is not on the challenges. Judy's attention is on her incredible strengths that led her to this point. She is a survivor, and her greatest hope is that Charlotte will continue to be a voice of awareness to others, spreading the word that everyone deserves a healthy relationship.

1. Black MC, Basile KC, Breiding MJ, Smith SG, Walters ML, Merrick MT, Chen J, Stevens MR. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011. 7. S.L. Feld & M.A. Strauss, *Criminology*, 27, 141-161, (1989).

### *wish list*

**shelter:** paper towels, disinfectants, toilet paper, non perishable food, large flat panel TV, new underwear, pajamas, pillows and cases, blankets and comforters, gift cards to pharmacies, convenient stores, and grocery stores

**transition house:** new sheet sets for twin, full, queen, towels, kitchen linens, laundry detergent laundry baskets, brooms, mops, cleaning supplies, sponges

**children:** healthy snacks, craft supplies, children's magazines, children's books and toys for all ages.

## "We Love Our Community!"

This spring, Empowerhouse participated in The Community Give, the first-ever 24-hour day of online giving in the Rappahannock River region. Sponsored and led by The Community Foundation, 115 nonprofits had the opportunity to raise money for our causes, as well as compete for a variety of cash prizes. Thanks to the overwhelming support of our community, Empowerhouse not only raised the most money in terms of donations, we won at least one prize in each eligible category as well! Contributions from 326 generous donors resulted in \$80,068 raised and \$23,500 in prize money — bringing us to a staggering total of \$103,568! The Community Give was truly a team effort from start to finish. Staff and board members strategized a game plan leading up to the event, supporters spread the word to family and friends, and everyone who participated by clicking and giving helped us raise much needed funds in a single day. It was awe-inspiring as the day unfolded and witnessing the outpouring of support for domestic violence survivors in our area.

Empowerhouse was filled with excitement as we heard the news of the dollars raised, as well as the announcement of prizes won throughout the day. Staff and board members set up headquarters at the outreach office to track our status on the leaderboard, as well as frequently update followers on Facebook and Twitter with our numbers and planned events during the day.

In the evening, we switched gears to the Hyatt Place-Eagle Village and gathered with supporters to celebrate and watch the last donations come in. Byron Glaser, Board Member of Empowerhouse and President of Zolo, Inc., who graciously offers his design services as a gift to Empowerhouse, created an artistic piece to track progress toward our goal of \$80,000. In the late hour before midnight, we were a little under \$1,000 shy of our goal. To our surprise, in the last few minutes of The Community Give, we received an anonymous donation that put us over the top! Kathy Anderson, Executive Director of

Empowerhouse, did the honors of putting in the last petal to fill in the beautiful flower chart. We were ecstatic for having reached our goal and winning the last prize of the night, worth an additional \$2,500! We are humbled and amazed by the generosity of our community! We are excited to designate \$55,000 to expand our shelter capacity and provide emergency housing to those in need of a safe place to stay away from an abusive partner. With more space available, we will accommodate more people and reach our goal of never turning away local domestic violence survivors and their children in need. A big thank you to The Community Foundation and The Community Give sponsors and thank you to each of you and our volunteers for being a huge part of The Community Give and inspiring us to work even harder for the courageous people we serve!



Team Empowerhouse minutes after midnight with the completed \$80,000 flower chart!

## New hope for survivors with the opening of our new Transition House!

Empowerhouse celebrated the grand opening of its newest transition house with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house on February 28, 2014. Including volunteers from the Chamber of Commerce and the Title Professionals, close to 100 people were in attendance. Guests were given the opportunity to tour the updated 1940s' home that will give domestic violence survivors and their children the time and space to get back on their feet. The transition house welcomed the first 2 families in March 2014. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for The Sunshine Lady Foundation, MacDoc Realty, and Sue and Bill Botts for their large part in making the opening of this new house possible. We would also like to thank the following generous donors for providing leadership support to the 2014 Transition House: Mary Jane O'Neill, Falmouth United Methodist Church, Generations of Women, Jon Properties, Raven Hi Fi, and the Walton Group of Companies.

### Announcing our raffle winner!

We would like to congratulate our prize winner as well as thank every person who donated \$25 or more to The Community Give! The lucky winner of two Empty Bowl 2015 Event tickets is Virginia Bare of Stafford, VA!

### 6th Annual Golf Tournament

October 3, 2014.

### Save the Date. It's almost that time of year again!

Start practicing early; we have added a Skills Contest to bring more competition to the mix! Lunch and dinner will be provided, plus join in on the Silent Auction and raffle giveaways! If you would like to become a sponsor or play in the tournament, please visit the Empowerhouse website for more information.

### Connect with Empowerhouse on Facebook and Twitter!

Do you know where to find us on social media? Please "like" our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/empowerhouseva](http://www.facebook.com/empowerhouseva). Follow our Twitter handle @empowerhouseva and join in the Twitter conversation! By being a part of our online community, you can stay up-to-date on our latest happenings and also help educate others about domestic violence. Simply sharing a Facebook post or re-tweeting a message to your circle of friends can make a difference in their lives. You never know who may be in an abusive relationship and could be encouraged to seek help or support!

IT IS EASY TO DONATE ONLINE AT THE EMPOWERHOUSE WEBSITE:  
[WWW.EMPOWERHOUSEVA.ORG](http://WWW.EMPOWERHOUSEVA.ORG)



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