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Education and Outreach: Key to Reducing Violence Against Women

*As Central Florida's local expert on domestic violence, Harbor House continues to lead by example — now turning its attention to early prevention programs. Its newest effort — **Coaching Boys Into Men** — involves the community in teaching teenage boys about healthy, non-violent relationships.*



During a "Coaching Boys Into Men" group activity, the mentors and teenagers bonded while fishing and enjoying the outdoors. The mentors — men from the Ivey Lane community — teach the boys about growing up, adulthood and respecting women.

Coaching Boys Into Men

Imagine being a young boy in today's world. The combination of societal expectations, peer pressure and general adolescent burdens make for a difficult maturation process — a process that is even more challenging for children who come from single-parent families, low-income neighborhoods or violent environments.

Compounding the problem even further, according to recent studies, is a lack of positive role models — particularly for young African American boys.

That's why Harbor House is making a concerted effort to introduce boys to positive role

models and to create a dialogue about appropriate behavior — especially towards women.

"We're attacking domestic violence from another perspective: prevention," explains Jonathan McGriff, Harbor House's domestic violence prevention coordinator. "We're teaching these boys about healthy relationships and how to control themselves. If we can change individuals, we can change society."

Coaching Boys Into Men — currently in the pilot stages — features a discussion-based curriculum, led by adult men from the community at the Ivey Lane Community Center. These volunteers teach the 11- to 14-year-old boys

about healthy relationships, feelings and adulthood. The curriculum also covers violence against women — including the causes of abuse, sexual assault and how to prevent domestic violence.

In addition to the core lessons, group activities — such as a basketball tournament and a fishing trip — strengthen the bonds between the boys and their mentors. These group activities show the boys that there are indeed men in their own community who they can look up to.

Support Prevention Efforts

"True progress will only occur when we — as a community — say

'no' to domestic violence," says CEO Carol Wick. "One of the first steps is educating the children in our community. Prevention is a critical component of ending violence against women."

Thanks to organizations like the Masonic Lodge, which provides 20 volunteers to *Coaching Boys Into Men*, Harbor House has created a valuable, successful preventative program. If you or your organization would like to volunteer or financially support Harbor House's prevention efforts, please contact Jonathan McGriff at 407-866-2244, ext. 231.



Views & Insights



CONCORD MANAGEMENT: One Caring Company's Story

Three years ago, Lori Trainer toured Harbor House. She saw the kitchen where women cooked dinner for their family . . . the play area where children rediscovered the meaning of childhood . . . and the hope that surrounded the residents and dedicated staff.

At that moment, Lori knew she wanted — needed — to help the shelter residents. As director of customer and public relations for Concord Management, Lori organizes volunteer efforts for employees. In fact, Concord Management allots five hours per

employee each month for volunteerism within the community — and many have opted to donate their time to helping Harbor House.

Whether it's a large or small task, Concord Management's employees are always willing to pitch in. Last Halloween, the volunteers surprised the children at Harbor House with cookies and DVDs . . . but there was no DVD player. So, when the holidays approached, the company donated one.

In addition, Concord Management employees aren't afraid to get their hands dirty — if that's what Harbor House needs. On multiple occasions, the volunteers have rolled up their

sleeves and spent hours painting areas of the shelter and doing other odd jobs.

No matter what the chore, Concord Management's employees are committed to helping Harbor House's residents. In fact, when Lori asks employees about their volunteering experience, she's often told, "I was apprehensive at first, but now I love it," and, "It's changed my life."

"It's remarkable to see how people are affected. It doesn't matter where you come from — domestic violence touches everyone," Lori says. "I think it's very sad that an organization like Harbor House is necessary, but it's amazing what they do. I'm honored to be a part of it."



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Life-Saver Stats

JULY 1, 2006 – JUNE 30, 2007

21,112 nights of shelter

537 residents in shelter

54% children

13,058 hours of counseling

8,394 calls

1,035 in outreach

21,581 referrals

5,193 participants
in community
education presentations



Harbor House

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