

WINTER 2019

HARBOR HOUSE

# Happenings

NEWSLETTER

## Prevention Program Teaches Youth About Healthy Relationships



Your teens can be an exciting time. You are gaining more independence as you prepare to enter adulthood. Dating is one of those rites of passage that makes teens feel grown up. At Harbor House, we love love. But we also

understand the importance of expressing love in a healthy way. The CDC reports that almost one-fourth of young women experience intimate partner violence for the first time before they turn 18. That is why it is important for our Prevention team to talk to youth about what love should—and shouldn't—look like.

We know that breaking the cycle of violence is not just about reaching children who have already witnessed violence in their own homes. It is also about reaching out to young people in our community with no abuse in their backgrounds and educating them so their futures remain free of violence.

Our Prevention staff currently leads programs with students at Jones High School and in after-school programs at New Image

Youth Center and Boys and Girls Club Taft Branch.

Coordinators facilitate the Expect Respect curriculum which covers topics like what healthy relationships look like, communication, red flags for potentially dangerous people, violence in the media, and more.

The students in one of the programs recently had an unplanned learning opportunity when a participant's cousin was assaulted by her boyfriend. The victim's cousin opened up about it during the program, and our Prevention Coordinator facilitated a discussion about what happened. The girl shared in class that she had already taken the initiative to talk to her cousin and was educating her about dating violence and healthy relationships based on what she had learned in Expect Respect. Her goal was to break her family's cycle of violence and help her cousin stay away from her assailant after he got out of jail.

"It was a reality check for all the kids," said the Prevention Coordinator. "It really opened their eyes to the importance of prevention when they saw it right there in their own school. The discussion turned a bad situation into a positive learning experience about helping friends and educating them about healthy relationships."

The night before Valentine's Day, the Prevention program hosted its annual Night Out With Bae at Orlando Police



*Expect Respect students turned out for a fun evening focused on healthy relationships at Night Out With Bae.*

Department. More than 50 students from the Prevention programs came out for a fun evening celebrating healthy relationships, complete with a panel discussion, games, and dance battles.

In addition to programming with youth, Harbor House's Prevention staff is available to give talks to parents and the

community on these topics. Building a safe future with healthy relationships for the next generation is a job for all of us. Working with youth, parents, and the community is key to stopping the generational cycle of violence.

## Message from the CEO, Michelle Sperzel

As we move from winter into spring, it is a good time to look back and anticipate what is ahead of us. Last year, Harbor House - powered by you - reached over 13,000 people through a wide array of community programs. And as a supporter of one of the largest and most comprehensive domestic violence service providers in the state, you helped over 5,400 survivors and their children obtain safety, counseling, legal advocacy, financial education, and hope for a brighter future.

What does our immediate future hold? This spring we are looking forward to expanding our children's program to include Camp HOPE, a year-long trauma informed program for children,

and adding additional support groups for children and youth. We are excited to be adding a child and adult therapist to our staff and know that this new program will help survivors heal.

We are also making additions to our Paws for Peace Kennel and adding a meditation walking path to the emergency shelter campus.

We are opening six apartments on our campus for on-site transitional housing. In the community, we will be adding additional support groups and domestic violence workshops. All the updates we are making are to help survivors feel safe and empowered.

We also want to get you more involved. Help us build awareness by

sharing your thoughts about gender equity with Conversations of Courage in March or spread awareness about domestic violence and the services Harbor House provides to survivors with It takes Courage in September. In April, we are asking you and your pets to join us at the Paws for Peace Walk; and in October we will honor this year's Champions of Courage at our annual Purple Door Luncheon.

On behalf of all those we serve, thank you for all you do to make all we do possible, and for your commitment to our mission throughout the year.

*Michelle*

## Start Your Own Conversation of Courage

Are you looking for a meaningful way to raise awareness about domestic violence? Harbor House is encouraging you to host your own Conversation of Courage in March as we mark Women's History Month.

What could we achieve if we eliminated gender bias? How many of society's most difficult problems could we solve if women and girls had a seat and a voice at the table?

Anyone can host a Conversation of Courage. Gather neighbors, friends, family, or colleagues to have a conversation over coffee, a meal, as



part of your book club or faith group. You don't have to be an expert to host; there is no right or wrong kind of conversation to have, just create a welcoming space where different points of view are welcome and respected.

People who participated in our first Conversations of Courage week last

year reported great discussions of gender roles and biases in the workplace, in the media, at home, and beyond. Men and women came together to listen and learn. One participant concluded, "At the heart of all of us was a

concern for humanity, not gender specific."

Start planning now to host your own Conversation of Courage the week of March 25-31. Contact Harbor House at [online@harborhousefl.com](mailto:online@harborhousefl.com) or 407-703-2890 for a free toolkit and start planning your conversation today.

## Harbor House Teaming Up with Orlando Magic



Florida!

Discounted tickets to the game against

Come out to Amway Center on March 22 to cheer on Orlando Magic AND Harbor House of Central

the Memphis Grizzlies are available to Harbor House supporters. The Magic will donate a portion of those ticket sales back to Harbor House. Tickets start at \$18 and include a free post-game concert by J. Alvarez.

Don't leave your seat at halftime - you'll

get to see Harbor House featured live on the court!

Get your tickets now at [groupmatics.events/event/harborhouse](http://groupmatics.events/event/harborhouse).

We hope to have a big turnout to support Harbor House and our hometown team. See you there!

## Young Professionals Board Helps Kids

The Young Professionals Board (YPB) of Harbor House first came together in January 2018. This committee is an organization of young adults committed to promoting the works of Harbor House and becoming leaders in the community through collective action.

Members focus on the elimination of domestic abuse, stalking, and dating violence. The YPB provides young Central Floridians with the opportunity to fulfill their personal call to service. They volunteer at Harbor House, host fundraising events, and advocate for survivors.

The newly installed 2019 Young Professionals Board includes: Heather Meglino (Board Chair), Meglino Law, LLC; Sofia Borden (Board Co-Chair), CMDI; Lisa Ramey (Finance Chair), Xenia Hotels & Resorts; Andrea Amhazy Otero (Recruitment Chair), Orange County Clerk of Courts; Ashley Popowski (Volunteer Chair), Land Advisors Organization; Lauren Blackwelder (Social Media Chair), Shuffield, Lowman, & Wilson, P.A.; Alexandra L. Thompson (Social Media



Co-Chair), The University of Central Florida; Dipika Joshi (Handbags Event Chair), Visit Orlando; Adrienne Gonzales (Handbags Event Co-Chair), Goodwill Industries of Central Florida; Daniel Hernandez (Run Event Co-Chair), State of Florida; Michael Adams (Run Event Co-Chair), Dan Newlin & Partners; Ashley Schachter, Baker Hostetler; Christina Vicari, The Heskin Martinez Law Group; Courtney Walmer, State Attorney's Office, Ninth Judicial Circuit; Dawn Curtis, Ninth Judicial Circuit Court; Drew Bernstein, RVR Consulting Group; Frank Borden, NBC Golf Channel; Ghena Luker, Orlando Police Department; Jennifer DeVasto, Massey Services, Inc.; Jessica Layne, Orlando Health; Jessica Lynch, Century 21

Professional Group; Katrona Walker, TLC Engineering for Architecture; Meredith Sand, Meredith Sand Designs; Mishka Brice, City of Orlando; Patrice Holmes, OptumRx; Rina Patel, Rose Girls, LLC; and Tasi Hogan, In Touch Strategies.

The Young Professionals Board set the bar high in its first year, raising more than \$21,000 to benefit the Children's Program

at Harbor House through the first-ever Handbags for Hope. The purse extravaganza featuring new and gently used designer handbags up for sale and auction returns to The Abbey on Thursday, June 6.

We are looking forward to another successful year from this innovative team.



## Florida's First Camp Hope Set for Summer



Everyone at Harbor House is very excited to host Florida's first ever Camp HOPE, a camping experience

for children who have witnessed domestic violence. The camp provides the opportunity for them to regain their childhood, find hope and healing, and spend time with other children who have overcome similar obstacles and trauma. Participants are guided

through several challenges that will let them explore how their attitudes and actions impact their group.

Thirty campers will head to Camp Winona in DeLeon Springs in late July with the theme Hope Rising. They will learn and live daily statements like: My future is brighter than my past.

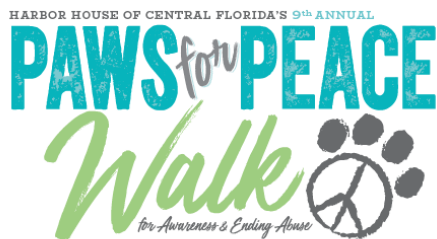
Beyond the week at camp, the program also strengthens the family unit, encourages a stronger sense of community, and enhances the youth's quality of life through civic involvement. Campers will meet back up quarterly with their camp counselors and non-

offending parent to reinforce all they learned at camp.

Camp HOPE America is the first evidence-based camping and mentoring initiative in the U.S. to focus on children exposed to domestic violence. It began in San Diego in 2003 under the leadership of then-City Attorney Casey Gwinn and has grown throughout the country. Harbor House was chosen as the first Camp HOPE site in our state. If you are interested in supporting Camp HOPE and investing in the future of our kids, please contact us at 407-703-2890.



## Paws for Peace Walk Returns in April



Can you imagine leaving your beloved pet behind with someone who might hurt or even kill him or her? Neither can we. That's why Harbor House added the Paws for Peace Kennel on our emergency shelter campus back in 2012. You can help keep pets and their people safe and together by coming out for the 9th Annual Paws for Peace Walk - a fun and leisurely stroll for pets, their families, and friends to raise awareness about domestic abuse and its effect on pets and their owners.

Join us on Saturday, April 20 at Blue

Jacket Park where we'll have an Easter egg hunt for dogs and kids, yoga with your pet, and a silent auction with great prizes for pets and people!

Check in and activities begin at 8am, and we walk at 9am. Registration is \$30 and includes a t-shirt. Sign up and create your own fundraising page at [www.harborhousefl.com/paws](http://www.harborhousefl.com/paws).

Proceeds from the Paws for Peace Walk will go toward the kennel program and veterinary costs for the pets of survivors. Much like the people who move into our emergency shelter, the pets in our kennel have often been the victims of verbal abuse and sometimes physical abuse as well. Healing those physical wounds is the top priority when the pet arrives. The kennel offers pet owners space where they can hang out with their animals for

exercise or just snuggle time. This time together is invaluable for improving the bond between human and pet and helps both heal from the abuse.

If your business would like to sponsor the walk or contribute silent auction items, please call 407-703-2890.

Stay tuned to Harbor House on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as we reveal this year's celebrity spokespets and their people. Coming soon!



## Walk a Mile in Her Shoes Draws a Crowd



Heads were turning as men (and women) took to the streets of downtown Orlando in high heels to Walk a Mile in Her Shoes. A record number of walkers—more than 250!—participated in the walk to speak out about violence against women and to raise awareness about the free, confidential services Harbor House provides.

We want to thank all of the community leaders and elected officials in

attendance: Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Orange County Sheriff John Mina, Orlando Police Chief Orlando Rolón, Orange County Clerk of Courts Tiffany Moore Russell, and State Attorney Aramis Ayala

Thank you to our event co-chairs, Tony Cardoza and Dr. Ademola Adewale, and all the wonderful volunteers who made this event possible.

You can find more pictures from the event in our 7th Annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes album on Facebook.

Mark your calendar for next year's Walk a Mile in Her Shoes—February 6, 2020—and start shoe shopping early!



## Stay in the Know



**FCADV**  
Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence