

***BREAK THE SILENCE – An Evening of Drama, Poetry, Dance and Music
Exploring Dating Violence***

Saturday, September 27, 2014 – 7:30pm
Jonas Clarke Middle School, 17 Stedman Road, Lexington, MA

Relationship violence goes by many names – including dating violence, break-up violence, date rape, spousal abuse, domestic violence – and it takes a toll on people of all ages. For many reasons, teenagers and young adults are particularly susceptible. That reality was brought home by the July 2011 murder of Wayland's Lauren Dunne Astley by her former boyfriend.

Her death was a visible and tragic example of a challenge confronting many of our daughters and sons. And it was not a unique instance: across the country, three to four young women lose their lives each day in similar situations.

Relationship violence is too-little discussed in our communities: too many people believe that it can't happen to them or their loved ones; and when they see or experience it, they often don't recognize it and don't know how to act to end it.

Silence – and the ignorance it breeds – makes young women and men more vulnerable to relationship violence. The arts can help break the silence about relationship violence – and teach our children where to turn when they find themselves (or a sibling or friend) in an unhealthy relationship.

This fall, Lexington's **Munroe Saturday Nights**, in collaboration with the **Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Fund**, and the Waltham-based **REACH Beyond Domestic Violence** is creating an evening of original artistic performance focusing on relationship violence. The program, "Break the Silence" will take place on Saturday, September 27, 2014 at 7:30pm at Jonas Clarke Middle School. The program – which will be free and open to the public – will use drama, music, poetry, and dance to shine a light on how relationships become violent, how victims and observers can recognize the signs, and how concerned friends and family can intervene in the cycle that leads to violence. Reservations are strongly recommended. Please visit www.munroecenter.org to reserve your seat.

The program's primary audiences are middle school, high school, and college age students in the greater Boston area, as well as their parents, teachers, and friends. After the performance program, the audience will be invited to engage in conversation guided by experts, educators, and counselors in the field.

The program planning has been informed by individuals with first-hand experience with relationship violence and the efforts to prevent and overcome it. They include David Adams (Co-Executive Director of EMERGE); Jessica Teperow (Director of Prevention Programs at REACH); and Malcolm Astley, a former Lexington school principal who has turned the trauma of his daughter's murder into a crusade to help others proactively address relationship violence in their families and communities. Lauren Dunne Astley was a self-possessed young woman of energy, hope, and caring who had a passion for the arts. This special evening of performance will use the arts Lauren loved to help others avoid her own tragic experience

“Break the Silence” is being underwritten by the Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Fund, the Community Endowment of Lexington, and the Board of the Munroe Center for the Arts. For further information, please contact Cheryl Meadow (csmeadow@comcast.net).