

# Caribbean American Weekly

A newspaper for, produced and owned by Caribbean people—the largest Caribbean-owned, circulated publication in New York!

**SPECIAL ISSUE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — TIME TO END THE ABUSE IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

## DA Hynes Takes a Strong Stand Against Domestic Violence

BY BETH SCULLIN

Caring for crime victims is a task that is challenging when it comes to the many responsibilities of a criminal prosecutor. In addition to providing for the safety and well-being of the traumatized victim, paying attention to the rights and needs of survivors of crime results in better witnesses, richer prosecutions, and stronger connections between law enforcement and the communities they are charged with protecting. Unfortunately, this crucial step in dealing with crime is too often relegated to back burner status if not ignored altogether.

The rights of crime victims are anything but a sideline issue for District



Brooklyn District Attorney  
Charles J. Hynes

Attorney Charles J. Hynes. Since taking office in 1990 Hynes has nurtured the development of an innovative and positive approach to addressing the needs of crime victims in Brooklyn. DA Hynes has greatly expanded the role of social workers in his office and has created a haven of safety in what can be a confusing and frightening system.

In 1974, Kings County District Attorney (KCDA) was one of eight District Attorney's offices nationwide to start prosecution based victim—witness programs. Funded by the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to create a model for the rest of the nation KCDA developed its first response to victims of crime addressing both the psychological and emotional trauma of

*continued on page 6*

## President Obama On National Domestic Violence Awareness Month



In the 16 years since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), we have broken the silence surrounding domestic violence to reach thousands of survivors, prevent countless incidences of abuse, and save untold numbers of lives. While these are critical achievements, domestic violence remains a devastating public health crisis when one in four women will be physically or sexually assaulted by a partner at some point in her lifetime. During Domestic Violence Awareness Month,

*continued on page 10*



**HOW TO GET A GREEN CARD:**  
Get Out of Green Card Slavery Now ... see page 7

## Grand Opening of Law Firm: FREE Consultations for Abused Spouses

The Law Firm of Figeroux & Associates, which recently re-opened at 1105 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn strongly believes that no one—man or woman—should be a victim of domestic violence. In a statement to the Journal, Mr Figeroux said: "It is unfortunate that someone who comes to America with hopes of a better life, find themselves in abusive relationships. To make matters worse, their legal status in the U.S. is dependent on their U.S. citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) spouse. We want persons to know that they don't have to be a victim twice. Domestic violence is against the law and you can do an abused spouse petition. Help is available and we are offering free legal consultations. Please call 718-363-7788 to schedule an appointment." ●



Brian Figeroux, Esq.

## Shirley Chisholm Honored ...see page 6



## What We Can Learn from Rihanna see page 2



## Breaking News: Toni Braxton Files For Bankruptcy Again; You Can Too! ...see page 5

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# There Is No Room For Abuse In Our Community

BY PEARL PHILLIP

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and we want to use this opportunity to send a strong message of awareness to the Caribbean community about this taboo disease under the theme "There is no Room for Abuse in Our Community".

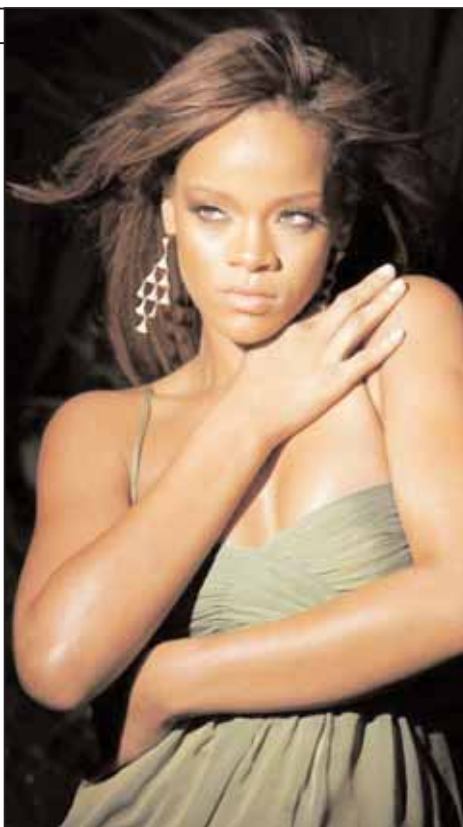
Domestic violence should not happen to anybody, ever; but it does and we want the victims to know help is available and they are not alone. Domestic violence happens in all relationships and families of different cultures, income levels, religious beliefs, women and girls, as well as men and boys. We have to take a stand and decide enough is enough and it's time to end the abuse in our communities. We are destroying our hopes, dreams and that of our children.

In addition to experiencing the sheer horror of domestic violence in its many forms, Caribbean immigrants are faced the burden of being further dependent on their U.S. citizen or Legal Permanent Resident spouse to assist them with their legal status. We want you to know that help is available. You don't need to be in Green Card slavery anymore. As a victim of domestic violence you can petition for yourself and your children. See page 7 for more information.

## Everybody's Business

Domestic violence is everyone's business. Maybe you know someone who has suffered from domestic violence. Maybe you have experienced it yourself. Or maybe you think that domestic violence is simply wrong, and you want to do something about it. Here is the challenge; the call to action.

We want a world where women and men, boys and girls can have the full support of their families, co-workers, religious organizations, friends and neighbors to have the courage to leave their abuser and start a fresh, well-deserved life. We want it to start in our community; the Caribbean community. We want the whispers to stop. We want voices to be heard. We want support to be given. We want shoulders to cry on. We want doors to open. We want arms to welcome us. We want a place where no one excuses abusive behavior and everyone is committed, 100%, to being part of the solution. We want and we can, make this place a reality in our communities. The good news is domestic violence is a problem we can solve. There are things that each and every one of us can do to help.



Look at Rihanna. She is young, beautiful and talented. She is also a victim and survivor of domestic violence, in her case, intimate partner violence. Rihanna's experience (and that of other celebrities on page 4) reminds us that domestic violence can happen to any woman or man....

## Time to End the Abuse

Despite what many people believe, domestic violence and abuse is not due to the abuser's loss of control over his or her behavior. In fact, abusive behavior and violence is a deliberate choice made by the abuser in order to control you. Therefore, you must make a personal decision to stop the abuse. There is no better time than now. Stand up for yourself. Say enough, say no more. Say it's time to end the abuse. Say there is no room for this anymore in my life, in my home, in my community. ●

## Editor's Note:

### Thank you!

As a strong advocate against domestic violence, we want to say a special "thank you" to Brooklyn District Attorney, Charles J. Hynes. We deeply appreciate the work you do personally as well as your office in ending the vicious cycle of domestic violence.

## CARIBBEAN AMERICAN WEEKLY TEAM

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. —Hosea 4:6*

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# Small Island Developing States Seek International Commitment

BY NOSH NALAVALA

The most recent talks in Bonn showed that the 194 negotiating countries have failed to even define a common target or method for curbing greenhouse gases. Where do the negotiating countries go from here? Does Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) have a strategy for breaking this deadlock?

**Dessima Williams (DW):** Our strategy is to be prepared for progress and for lack of progress, in the sense that we are working for very ambitious, deliberate and timely outcomes. What we have done is to stress the situation of our islands and of the world. The whole world is suffering from a worsening situation in climate change. Island countries are on the forefront of global climate deterioration. Many economic and physical science studies suggest that we are in trouble. The earth is now hotter than it has ever been, and 93 percent of the warming over the past 50 years has gone into the oceans, which directly affects our coral levels, fish stock, sea-level rise and thus the security of islands. For those reasons, negotiations ought to be moving faster.

One of our main strategies is to resist a pullback based on the absence of US legislation. Many say that when "there is no US legislation, there is no commitment," therefore they should not commit. But we got the Kyoto Protocol without the US, didn't we?

**MG:** Ambassador, what are you asking for?

**DW:** AOSIS is asking for fair international climate policy measures that are protective and supportive of small islands. First, a legal commitment that the global average rise in temperature be limited to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

Secondly, we are asking for a level of financing commensurate with the needs of adaptation and mitigation. We acknowledge the "fast start" financing and other bilateral efforts. Fast Start is a \$30 billion fund — \$10 billion a year for the next 3 years, starting this year — intended to support Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and others who have already sustained damage from climate change. Three years from now there will be the longer-term funding of \$100 billion until 2020. Thirdly, we are negotiating for a legal institutional framework to bind all parties in such an agreement.

**MG:** And where will your strategy fit in this context?

**DW:** Everybody agrees that when we emerge from the economic downturn of

2008, we cannot use the same old pollutant technology. If we move toward a greener and climate-resilient paradigm, we will be able to resuscitate the global economy and protect the environment simultaneously.

The islands have positioned themselves in large measure as the bell weather of the global regime. Our small size highlights our vulnerability whether in climate change, global trade or the economic arena. We therefore have to make a strategic advantage out of that vulnerability. Thus linking climate change needs to our sustainable development needs is a strategic approach for SIDS, and for LDCs and Africa too.

**MG:** In a recent press conference, the UN Secretary General said he does not expect a resolution at the year-end Cancun Conference on Climate Change and therefore advocated taking small steps in small conferences. Are you hopeful there will be a meeting of the minds in Cancun?

**DW:** COP-16 is a big conference that requires big outcomes. So far, there is a little progress in the negotiations, including in forestry programs and technology transfer. But we are still far from the mandate of the 2007 Bali Action Plan and from definitive agreements that would reduce carbon emissions and support islands.

That, and the failure to have legislation in the US, have encouraged some to say 'We cannot get anything definite. Therefore we should just ask or take a little bit here and a little bit there.' This is not consistent with the AOSIS mandate, which is to stick to the Bali Action Plan that calls for definitive, comprehensive and ambitious legal outcomes. But, we have to be careful. We could be on a slippery slope where we just postpone outcomes every year while climate impacts worsen. We understand incrementalism in negotiations. But the talks must move forward more rapidly. AOSIS has built a coalition of 107 countries who support a comprehensive outcome with 1.5 as an upper allowable temperature target.

**MG:** Have you received any financing yet for Climate Change?

**DW:** Some Fast Start financing may be flowing to some countries, but nothing under the UNFCCC framework. On a longer term, the UN Secretary General has put together a high-level finance panel to look for sources for \$100 billion. The challenge there is to have public sources of financing for adaptation and to have it ready and available in Cancun in November. Another challenge is to propose it under the UNFCCC guidelines and have it accepted as such. That could happen.

**MG:** AOSIS members have repeatedly



Alliance of Small Island States' Chairperson and Grenada's Ambassador to the United Nations Dessima Williams.  
(Photo Credit: Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands (GFOCI))

**DW:** Overall, islands have not made the kind of progress we should have made coming out of the 1994 Barbados Program of Action or the MDGs themselves. Within the UN system we need a more coherent institutional response across all the departments and agencies. Secondly, SIDS ought to be in a specially designated category that will allow for policy responses appropriate for our needs, for example in seeking financing. ●

Editor's Note:

Alliance of Small Island States' Chairperson and Grenada's Ambassador to the United Nations Dessima Williams in an exclusive interview with MediaGlobal's Nosh Nalavala

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# Celebrity Victims of Domestic Violence

Celebrities enjoy fame, fortune and an adoring public. They are human beings also (yes) and are victims of domestic violence, whether it is at the hands (or an object) of a parent, spouse or significant other. For the most part the victims are women, but men do suffer as well. Here are some celebrities who have been abused. Their stories show that no one and no amount of fame can insulate someone from domestic violence.

**Reverend Juanita Bynum** is the author of many books and is well-known for her powerful conferences that call for women to empower themselves through God. In 2007, the *Associated Press* reported the severe beating of Reverend Bynum at the hands of her husband Reverend Thomas Weeks III. The couple who had been separated for some time, met up in an Atlanta hotel restaurant in hopes of reconciliation. Something went horribly wrong and a fight between the estranged couple took place in the hotel garage resulting in Reverend Bynum becoming battered and bruised.

Sadly, Reverend Bynum is not the first

and will not be the last case of domestic violence within Christian homes and among church leaders.

**Chris Brown** who was found guilty of beating up his then-girlfriend Rihanna, has spoken openly and honestly about being a victim himself. He has said, *"It wasn't my real father — but somebody hurt my mom and me. I had to deal with that from seven all the way to 13. It affected me, especially my behavior towards women — I treat them differently. I don't want to put a woman through the same thing that person put my mom through. I was scared and timid when I was little. I used to pee in my bed.... I think it was me being nervous, and scared to get up out of bed and see what was going on. My mom used to try and hide it from me and my sister, but we knew. Anybody that's going through it, just try to deal with it, talk it out."*

**Christina Aguilera** has admitted that her Army Sergeant father Fausto made life hell for her family and she used music as an escape from the trauma of her beatings.



powerless is the worst feeling in the world.

*I turned to singing as an outlet. The pain at home is where my love for music came from."*

Her comments came during an interview with the TV entertainment show *E!*.

Known as one of the most beautiful women in the world, **Halle Berry** has been a witness and victim of domestic violence first from her father (her mother suffered also) and later on in her relationships.

Berry has candidly spoken about the abuse she witnessed against her mother during her childhood with the hope that it will raise awareness regarding domestic violence. Berry, who volunteers at Jenesse Center in L.A., hopes that the attention will encourage people to assist shelters.



Recalling his childhood abuse, Hollywood star **Tom Cruise** vowed to be the perfect father after he was bullied by his "coward" of a dad, Thomas Mapother III.

Speaking to *Parade* magazine, Cruise says, *"He was a bully and a coward—he person where, if something goes wrong, they kick you. It was a great lesson in my life, how he'd lull you in, make you feel safe and then, bang."*

What's love got to do with it? That's the question that **Tina Turner** and several other victims of domestic violence ask. Turner turned her experience of being abused by her husband Ike Turner into a movie and took a strong stand, deciding to be a victim no more.

According to Turner, and as she wrote in her 1986 bestselling autobiography, *I, Tina*, her life with Ike was marked by near-constant physical and emotional abuse. By



the late sixties, Ike had become deeply involved with cocaine and alcohol and was prone to violent outbursts. Tina's litany of his crimes against her include hitting her, pouring hot coffee on her face, burning her lip with a lighted cigarette, and forcing her to perform while ill and pregnant.

After an unsuccessful suicide attempt in 1968, Tina finally walked out on Ike in 1975, carrying nothing more than thirty-six cents and a gas station credit card.

Born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio **Darwin Hobbs** grew up singing in both church and school.

It hasn't been all fun and success for Hobbs, though. He has endured his share of hardships and trials as well. Hobbs has served as an example of healing and encouragement for others as he has recently shared his story of being abused by his stepfather.

With the release of *Free* his latest 12-track CD offering on his own Liaison Records in partnership with Tyscot, the soloist, dubbed the "Luther Vandross of Gospel" is talking openly about his recent breakthrough with childhood sexual molestation.

Hobbs is indeed free now. In a recent interview he reveals that being molested at an early age was the underlying cause of his obesity and bad attitude. The perpetrator was his step father who fondled him on numerous occasions. If he said anything about it his mother would die of a heart attack, he was told. The manipulative lie planted in his head as a boy nuzzled him until at 39, the death of the pedophile not only freed the Ohio native to write the title cut on his new project, but also to finally confess the haunting secret he'd kept from his mother most of his life.

Former supermodel, **Jerry Hall** revealed: *"My violent father broke our bones,"* describing the vicious beatings that John Hall, a hard-drinking trucker, used to administer to his five beautiful daughters.

*"I'm not trying to be vindictive but he certainly gave us a hard time,"* Jerry is reported as telling an interviewer. *"It is a terrible thing to be living in fear, and he would abuse us verbally, too."*

Jerry's 16-year-old twin, Terry, once pulled a knife on her father, threatening that *"If you ever hit us again, I swear I'll kill you!"* ●

Remember, if you are a victim of domestic violence, please get out and get help now!



## New York City Family Justice Center

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Brooklyn, New York 11201

*The following is a list of services available at the New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn (BKJFC). All information is kept confidential; however, those services marked with an asterisk (\*) are mandated reporters of child abuse and/or neglect, and are required to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. The BKJFC is an initiative of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence in partnership with the King's County District Attorney's Office.*

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Children's Services \*

*In an emergency call 911; for general questions about domestic violence services, please call the NYC 24-hour domestic violence hotline 1-800-621-HOPE or 311*



# Grammy Award Winner Toni Braxton Files for Bankruptcy Again

BY JANET HOWARD

According to the celebrity gossip website, TMZ, Toni Braxton has filed for bankruptcy again — claiming she owes somewhere between \$10 million and \$50 million in unpaid debts all over the country — including DMVs in two different states.

Braxton—who sold more than 40 million albums in her career—just filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in California—and in the documents, the singer claims she's only worth somewhere between \$1 million and \$10 million but she could have up to \$50 million in debts.

In the documents, 43-year-old Braxton lists a ton of creditors to whom she thinks she may owe money, including:

- AT&T
- The Four Seasons Hotels
- Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- Various medical bills
- Direct TV
- Neiman Marcus
- The William Morris Agency
- Tiffany & Co.
- Orkin Pest Control
- The Internal Revenue Service
- BMW Financial Services
- ADT Security



- American Express
- Flamingo Las Vegas
- Mesa Air Conditioning
- Nevada Power Company
- Screen Actors Guild
- The Westin
- Wells Fargo Bank

### History of Financial Woes

Braxton has a storied history of financial problems—she filed for bankruptcy back in 1998—and earlier this year, the IRS filed a lien against her for \$396k.

A close relative of Toni Braxton tells

TMZ, the singer's financial undoing can be traced back to her show in Las Vegas.

The relative tells us Toni took out "show insurance" through Lloyds of London for her act at the Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel and Casino back in 2007. When Toni was diagnosed with a heart condition—in the middle of the show's run—she had to pull the plug, but she was still on the hook to the Hotel for big bucks. Toni expected Lloyds to cover the loss but Lloyds didn't, arguing Toni had an undisclosed, preexisting medical condition, rendering the policy void.

In the end, Toni had to absorb a huge loss, which the relative claims sent her on a downward financial spiral.

### Your Personal Bailout

The fact is every day millions of Americans wake up from long, restless, sleepless nights of tossing and turning, trying to come up with a solution to their mounting debts. Of these millions, a large percentage are African-Americans and Caribbean-Americans who have been feeling the brunt of economic woes long before the announced recession. For those persons it's been an uphill battle; struggling to meet their mortgage payments, pay their credit card bills, send

their kids to school, pay doctors' visits and medical bills and at the same time put food on the table. While those persons are fighting hard every day to keep the dollar alive, large corporations with their bonus-padded CEOs are given a way out by the United States government with bailouts. It seems like added insult to injury, doesn't it? What can a struggling Black man and woman do? The answer lies in bankruptcy. You can let bankruptcy be your personal bailout.

### Fresh Start

It is possible to take control of your financial destiny and your life. To get the facts regarding filing a Chapter 7 or 13 bankruptcy, call 718-222-3155 for a free consultation. It's time to start living your life. You need a fresh start. You deserve it.

Toni Braxton showed up at a recent Dolphins game in Miami wearing some blinged out jewelry, a snakeskin bag and a pair of Louboutin heels which retail for over \$800. Hey, there's no law saying you can't file for bankruptcy and not still look fly!●

## Credit Repair Attorney, Credit Repair Lawyer

*By the Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates*

Today's credit and rating system is very flawed and can prevent a person from buying a car, a house, obtaining a loan, and can even determine the interest rate paid toward credit cards on any item financed. Negative credit reports can limit financial options available to you and can change your life forever! At Figeroux & Associates, we understand how difficult it can be to live if your credit report does not accurately represent your credit worthiness.

The Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates are different! If you are tired of surfing the web for a company to do credit repair for you and to deliver on their promises, the Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates can help. Unlike many other unrepeatable credit repair organizations out there that are unlicensed and simply send out form letters, the Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates will provide you with an honest and forthright analysis of your credit report and of what we can do to help you. Unlike many of the credit repair organizations who over-promise and under-deliver, the Figeroux & Associates approach to credit repair is not veiled magic but is instead methodical and effective.

At Figeroux & Associates, we understand that people go through difficult times in their lives and can and do experience credit issues from time to time. Figeroux & Associates offers a wide variety of legal services designed exclusively to assist you in repairing your credit and reducing your debt:

- ◆ Examination and assessment of credit reports;
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- ◆ Examination of all options designed to reach your financial goals;
- ◆ Free consultations on filing a bankruptcy petition.



For a free consultation, or to register for a free seminar, call 718-834-0190, Ext 113.  
Or visit our website at [www.falaw.us](http://www.falaw.us) and click on Credit Repair.



## SPECIAL EVENT

# State Building Named in Honor of Congresswoman Chisholm

On Monday, October 4, 2010 Governor David A. Paterson announced that the State office building located at 55 Hanson Place in Brooklyn has been renamed the Shirley A. Chisholm State Office Building in honor of the late Congresswoman. A plaque commemorating the achievements of Congresswoman Chisholm was unveiled at a dedication ceremony held at the building.

"Shirley Chisholm was a lifelong leader who worked tirelessly to better the lives of those in her community and across this country," Governor Paterson said. "Her ability to inspire action in others is a gift that continues to resonate today. Naming this building in her honor will recognize her legacy in perpetuity and serve as a constant reminder of her dedication to positive change."

In 1968, Shirley Chisholm became the first black woman elected to Congress. She went on to represent Brooklyn for seven terms from 1969 to 1983. Ms. Chisholm became the first major-party black candidate for President of the United States and the first woman to run for the Democratic presidential nomination. The legislation to rename the building in her honor was signed into law by Governor Paterson and sponsored by Senator Velmanette Montgomery of the 18th Senate District and Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries of the 57th Assembly District.

Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries said: "Shirley Chisholm blazed a trail from the streets of Brooklyn in 1972 to the White House in 2008 with the election of Barack Obama. We all owe Shirley



Governor Paterson and Assemblyman Jeffries unveil a plaque for the Shirley Chisholm State Office Building.

Chisholm a debt of gratitude for her dogged spirit and indomitable strength that changed the very social fabric of our nation forever. As America looks forward to a brighter future, we must never forget to honor those like Ms. Chisholm who helped pave the way and inspire a generation of leaders to seek justice and equality on behalf of the most vulnerable among us. Indeed, she casts a shadow far larger than this building."

Senator Velmanette Montgomery said: "Shirley Chisholm inspired me to make a difference for my community through the political process. She demonstrated how politics can be a life of service and accomplishment for real issues: equality, education, children's services, women's rights, and the fight against poverty. Mrs. Chisholm worked for the good of all people. I am very proud that there will be a building in Brooklyn that stands in her honor, and I look forward to witnessing

the next generation of leaders who are inspired by her priceless examples."

Bill Howard, the former Senior Administrative Assistant to Representative Chisholm, who represented the Chisholm family at the ceremony, said: "Shirley's work can be seen today on the streets of

America. Her life's work centered around a better quality of life for all people, especially our youth. Shirley never wanted to be remembered as the first black woman to be elected to congress, or the first black person to make a bid for the presidency of the United States. Rather, Shirley is remembered as she wanted to be—a catalyst for change in America."

The 13-story facility located at 55 Hanson Place, in Brooklyn, (Kings County), was constructed in 1914-15 and designed by Trowbridge and Ackerman Architects as a flagship Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) building. Throughout its history, the building has been used in many different capacities that Shirley Chisholm, a lifelong champion for human services, would have endorsed including a homeless shelter, State human services offices and a child development center.●

## DA Hynes Takes a Strong Stand/continued from page 1

victimization as well as the financial losses that often occur. In 1982, KCDA started the Crime Victims Counseling Unit with funds from the NYS Crime Victim Board. The mission of the Unit was to provide counseling to felony crime victims. Located in the Supreme Court building, this Unit operated separately from prosecution activities providing counseling and financial compensation through the Crime Victims Board.

When District Attorney Hynes, took office in 1990, the role of counselors in this office began to change. Previously, victim services were to be found located at the end of long dusty corridor, removed from the actions of the criminal justice process. In 1995, three new counselors were hired to directly address the needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. These counselors would work alongside the prosecutors providing much-needed social services and emotional support to the victims allowing the lawyers to focus more keenly on the prosecution of the criminal activity. This bureau-based model allowed traumatized crime victims to better participate in the prosecution process and receive desperately needed counseling services at the same time.

It soon became clear that this model provided mutual benefits to victims and prosecutors. Crime victims receive prompt, sensitive interventions that address their immediate needs and help them understand the often slow and confusing process of criminal justice. Prosecutors are able to interact with witnesses who are better prepared and emotionally stronger. Demand for these services grew rapidly and KCDA vigorously pursued opportunities for grant funding to assist the expansion of this program. In addition to Crime Victims Board funding the office was successful in obtaining grants from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services in 1997 and 2000 and Federal Violence Against Women Funding in 1999.

In the decade since 1999 the Unit has expanded to include 24 social workers and advocates. A number of the staff are specialists in areas such as child abuse, adolescent issues and victims with disabilities. The Unit's multicultural staff reflect the diversity of the borough. At this time Unit staff are able to provide services to victims in the following languages — Spanish, French, Creole, Russian, Urdu, Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Twi and Gha. In 2008, the Unit changed its name to the Victim Services Unit to better represent the scope of its work and mission.

Today, the Unit enters a new era of victim services with the five year anniversary of the opening of the Family Justice Center within the walls of the District Attorney's Office. Hosting an array of community agencies, District Attorney Hynes has expanded services to victims of intimate partner crime exponentially. Domestic violence victims may walk in and choose which services they want, including counseling, advocacy, meeting with a prosecutor or police officer, career services, housing help, and civil legal assistance — all while their children play safely in the on-site, supervised play room.

Over the last two decades, District Attorney Hynes has made it possible for the Victim Services Unit to continue evolving to meet the needs of crime victims in Brooklyn. Because of his commitment to the care of survivors of crime, Brooklyn is a safer place for all of its residents.●

Beth Scullin is the LCSW-Director, Victim Services Unit, Kings County District Attorney's Office.

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## Coaching Boys Into Men

The Coaching Boys Into Men<sup>SM</sup> campaign invites men to be part of the solution by teaching boys that violence never equals strength. See our latest Ad "Father and Son."

In 2000 the Waitt Family Foundation, created by Gateway Computers founder Ted Waitt, partnered with the FVPF to find out why so few men were taking action against domestic violence. The results were eye-opening: the majority of men supported anti-violence efforts, but said they had never been asked to contribute to them actively. Men weren't getting involved because they "didn't feel welcomed or invited," offered Judy Stafford of the Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention, which together with the Verizon Foundation has supported the FVPF's CBIM work for years.

In the years since 2000, profound lessons have been learned. Since that initial study, the FVPF and its partners have helped to foster the leap from just 29 percent of American men talking to boys about violence, to over 55 percent. Today, as we look back on these efforts, we are encouraged by the fact that more men are joining the cause. Today, we have a clearer sense of what works and what doesn't, as well as what we need to do in the critical weeks and months ahead.

And while the increase of American men talking to boys is significant, we still have a long way to go before Breaking 80. True progress toward ending violence against women and children will only be achieved when a critical mass of men are actively involved in the solution by talking to the boys in their lives.

### Coaching Boys Into Men Coaches Leadership Program

Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM)



engages athletic coaches through the Coaches Leadership Program to help shape the attitudes and behaviors of young male athletes.

Athletic coaches play an extremely influential and unique role in the lives of young men, often serving as a parent or mentor to the boys they coach. Because of these special relationships, coaches are poised to positively influence how young men think and behave both on, and off, the field. From speeches to the team, practice sessions, or simply casual conversation, coaches have many opportunities to impart their philosophies to athletes.

The Coaches Leadership Program equips coaches to talk with their athletes about respect for women and girls and that violence doesn't equal strength.

The boys in your life need your time and energy. Your son, grandson, nephew, younger brother. The boys you teach,

coach and mentor. All need you to help them grow into healthy young men.

Boys are swamped with influences outside of the home — from friends, the neighborhood, television, the internet, music, the movies... everything they see around them. They hear all kinds of messages about what it means to "be a man" —that they have to be tough and in control. There are numerous conflicting and some harmful messages being given to boys about what constitutes "being a man" in a relationship.

Boys need your advice on how to behave toward girls. Boys are watching how you and other men relate to women to figure out their own stance towards girls. So teach boys early, and teach them often, that there is no place for violence in a relationship. ●

For more information visit:  
[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)

## No More!

*A life that has for so long been  
controlled by manipulation and fear,  
So many times left broken  
and in tears.*

*Broken bones and bruises followed  
by promises allowed to heal,  
Names and accusations,  
confusion at the appeal.*

*Was it really appeal,  
or just a distorted view?*

*A victim of the lies, a victim  
of "I don't know what to do".*

*Attempts to do what's right,  
attempts to inspire change,  
Feelings of defeat when things  
remained the same.*

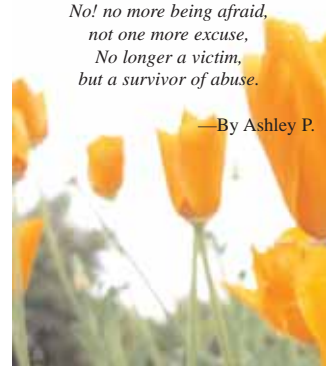
*A will to be happy,  
a will to stand fear in the face,  
Determination to finally escape  
this dreadful place.*

*Emergence out of darkness,  
finally able to see the light,  
Finally the courage to stand up  
and fight the fight.*

*No more being afraid,  
no more running away,  
No more looking back and  
living like yesterday.*

*No! no more being afraid,  
not one more excuse,  
No longer a victim,  
but a survivor of abuse.*

—By Ashley P.



## Meghan Fox Donates to Women's Shelter

Megan Fox donated her appearance fee for Eminem's Love The Way You Lie music video to the Sojourn House, a shelter for abused women! She gave the undisclosed amount to Sojourn, which "provides battered women and their children a safe space to regroup, rebuild, and reestablish their self-esteem and lives".

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# Teen Violence IS Abuse

**T**een Dating Violence is not a form of violence that has become more prevalent in recent years. Adolescent intimate partner violence has always existed but has often been ignored by the community. This type of violence is often attributed to "teens being teens". Teen Dating Violence is not a case of "teens being teens".

Teen Dating Violence is ABUSE and its prevalence is increasing. Endabuse.org states that nearly one in ten high-school students (8.9 percent) has been hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend. They further state that one in four teen girls in a relationship (26 percent) say she has been threatened with violence or experienced verbal abuse. These statistics show this is an issue that affects all teens nationwide. Brooklyn teens are not exempt. One of Charles J Hynes first initiative as District Attorney of Brooklyn was to create the Domestic Violence Bureau. The Domestic Violence Bureau has specialized Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs) to prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence as well as the Victim Services Unit who provide comprehensive services to victims of Domestic Violence.

The Brooklyn Youthful Offender Domestic Violence Court (YODVC), first created in 2003, was the first court to address domestic violence cases among teenagers between the ages of 16-19. It is a court model that has been



By Rebecca

replicated in other jurisdiction. YODVC is a specialized court that works under the coordination of the Center for Court

Innovation. Different stakeholders, such as the Kings County District Attorney's Office, the Defense bar and court-approved community-based programs work together to address the needs of both victim and offender. The Judge and court personnel have been trained to address the specific needs of adolescents who come into contact with the criminal justice system. The District Attorney's office has one assigned Assistant District Attorney and an assigned victim advo-

cate to all YODVC cases. Another YODVC partner is a program: STEPS to End Family Violence. The STEPS program offers the Teen Accountability Program (TAP) to qualifying males between the ages of 16-19 as an alternative to incarceration. The program is a 12-week educational program designed to teach young men to be accountable for their abusive behavior.

YODVC is best illustrated by Tina and Robert (not their real names). Tina, who is 17 and pregnant, is assaulted by her partner Robert, who is 18. Robert is arrested and a full order of protection is issued. Tina does not want her relationship with Robert to end and wants him to be involved in their child's life but she wants the abuse to stop. At the Brooklyn DA's office, Tina is able to meet with the ADA and advocate assigned to the case. Her high risk pregnancy prevented her from continuing school.

After being referred to the Family Justice Center, Tina was able to find out about GED programming, childcare info, and a teenage mother support group. Meanwhile Robert is attending the TAP class and is learning about accountability, gender roles, and how domestic violence affects children.

Tina and Robert are an example of how YODVC can be used to help engage, stop, and break the cycle of violence with adolescent batterers and victims. ●

**Eat your vegetables.**

**Don't play with matches.**

**Finish your homework.**

**Respect women.**



**AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS.**

Violence against women is not part of our traditions. Harmony relies on our ability to respect, honor and nurture all our relatives. We must teach the boys in our life early and often that this is what it means to be a warrior and that violence never equals strength. A safer world is in their hands, help them grasp it.

[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org) **Family Violence Prevention Fund**

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# Children Learn From Parents

Children who witness domestic violence are at an increased risk of having abusive relationships as adults, researchers have found. Being abused as a child and having behavioral problems also increases the risk of being violent as adults. Receiving excessive punishment is another risk factor.

U.S. researchers from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and the New York State Psychiatric Institute followed 540 children for 20 years from 1975. If this study has one clear piece of advice for parents, it is never, ever hit each other in front of your children.

Professor Terrie Moffitt, Institute of Psychiatry. They, and their mothers were interviewed in 1983, 1985 to 1986 and in 1991 to 1993. They were then sent a questionnaire in 1999 on recent life changes, work history, aggressive behaviour and relationship history, including any violent relationships.

If a pattern of violent behavior towards a partner has been established, it is difficult to change say the researchers. They say more needs to be done to develop prevention programs that can help children before they reach adolescence.

Addressing behavioral problems in children may also help prevent them being violent as adults, the researchers said.

## Breaking the cycle

If a child was hit by their parents, they



were much more likely to see violence as a way of resolving problems as adults, the researchers found. But seeing violence perpetuated between parents was found to be the greatest risk factor for being the victim of a violent partner as an adult.

Both men and women who witnessed domestic violence were likely to grow up to abuse their partners.

Miriam Ehrensaft, the psychologist who led the research, said once patterns of violent behavior are established, they are very difficult to break, so families need help early in children's lives to break the cycle.

She said: "If families are targeted

before children reach late childhood, patterns of excessive punishment may be prevented from becoming entrenched and later reproduced in adolescents' fledgling romantic relationships."

She added: "Punishment from mothers may serve as a model for physical expression of anger. This acceptance of coercive, power-based norms as ways of regulating conflict may have direct implications for young adults' means of conflict resolution with partners, independent of a disruptive behaviour disorder."

## Female aggression

Professor Terrie Moffitt, of London's

Institute of Psychiatry, has carried out research in the UK and New Zealand which came to similar conclusions.

She told BBC News Online: "This study's findings ought to change the focus of programs to stop domestic violence."

"Today, we try to treat batterers, but not very successfully, and only after they have already injured their family members."

"Tomorrow, it should be possible to prevent domestic violence, by working with the aggressive youngsters who grow up to batter their partners."

Professor Moffitt added: "The study also shows that aggressive young girls become involved in violent domestic relationships."

"Many battered women's advocates will resist this information, because they prefer to think of women only as victims. But the evidence is clear that to stop domestic violence, we need to work with aggressive girls."

"If this study has one clear piece of advice for parents, it is never, ever hit each other in front of your children."

The research is published in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. ●

Source: Story from BBC NEWS:

Published: 2003/07/24

## Teen Dating Abuse Prevention Tool

To mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the *That's Not Cool* Campaign is launching an innovative new teen dating abuse prevention tool:



videogames! "Txt\_Invdr," and "Nude-E Calls" are based on the common digital dating abuse themes of unwanted text messages and pressure to send a nude or private picture.

The new games was launched on October 5, so visit [www.that'snotcool.com/games](http://www.that'snotcool.com/games) to check them out and share them with teens! *That's Not Cool* is organized by the Family Violence Prevention Fund in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women and the Advertising Council. The Campaign's goal is to encourage teens to draw their own lines about what is, or is not, acceptable relationship behavior. ●

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# Rihanna & Eminem's "Love the Way You Lie"— Powerful or Over the Top?

Rihanna and Eminem's for their single, "Love the Way You Lie" has been making sensational headlines and stirring many a debate. Guess this is because Rihanna has been a victim of domestic violence and The rapper, known for his turbulent relationship with ex-wife Kim Mathers - his song, Kim, graphically fantasized about murdering her - has said he enlisted Rihanna because she was the perfect person to pull the song off.

In the video for the single, Megan Fox and Lost's Dominic Monaghan star in the story about a troubled couple in a volatile relationship. The topic is something that is obviously close to Rihanna's heart, and Eminem spoke about working with the director to make something important and thought-provoking.

Rihanna herself has been quoted as saying the song 'was something that needed to be done and the way he [Eminem] did it was so clever.

Commenting on the video, Terry O'Neill, president of the National Organization for Women thinks Rihanna is unwittingly glorifying domestic violence. "She's narrating the story, and she's not judging it," says O'Neill. "And so she may not intend to be glorifying it, but she is." Marjorie Gilbert, executive director of anti-violence group Break the Cycle, agreed. "The danger is that pop culture defines our social norms," she told the AP. "We don't want the message of this song to be



The duo performing at an awards show

that this kind of relationship is acceptable. 'So this song has to be viewed in the context of real information from adults, like parents and teachers.'

Amy Littlefield of Gender Across Borders (a feminist blog) states, "I have to admit, when I first heard Eminem and Rihanna's 'Love the Way You Lie,' I was impressed. The song is a frighteningly accurate depiction of the cycle of violence. It's so true to the model popularized by the domestic violence movement that it could be used as a teaching tool. Each verse cycles through arguments and apologies: the promises a perpetrator makes to a victim to prevent her from leaving. While the perpetrator at first attempts to normalize his behavior, the end result is escalation and the murder of the victim, played by Rihanna.

What do you think is the video powerful or over the top? 86% of voters at [www.popsugar.com](http://www.popsugar.com) reported that it was an amazing video with a powerful message, while 14% did not like it. ●

## Oliver Samuels "PUPPY LOVE" \$400 to a lucky fan for 20th Anniversary



Oliver Samuels' latest play, "Puppy Love," will be staged in Hartford, Brooklyn, Washington, D.C., Queens, NJ and Bronx from October 22-31 after successful performances across the UK, Canada, Guyana and several Caribbean islands.

"Puppy Love" is written by Patrick Brown and directed by Trevor Nairne. The cast consists of Oliver Samuels, Dahlia Harris, Earle Brown and Natalee Cole.

Like other Oliver Samuels-Patrick Brown plays, "Puppy Love" is for the entire family and this thrilling romantic comedy has won rave reviews in the British press.

The year 2010, and the staging of "Puppy Love" in the tri-state, symbolizes 20 years of joint production and unity between Oliver Samuels and Herman Hall, publisher of *Everybody's*, the

Caribbean-American Magazine. "The first Oliver show we presented was on July 21, 1990 and since then we have worked with Oliver each year sometimes presenting more than one production in a year," says Hall.

"I can't believe it is 20 years since working with Herman Hall. He is a promoter I'm very, very comfortable with and trust very much. But, I must thank the fans because they are the ones who are responsible for 20 years of collaboration," Oliver states.

As a result, \$400 will be given to a lucky fan at each of the six performances in celebration of the 20th anniversary (1990-2010) of productions between Oliver Samuels and *Everybody's* magazine. Each person in the audience at each show is eligible to get the \$400. ●

Picture: The cast on stage in Georgetown, Guyana: Dahlia Harris (Denise), Oliver Samuels (Dick), Natalee Cole (Karen) and Earle Brown (Harry).

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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & IMMIGRANTS

# Get Out of Green Card Slavery Now!

BY PEARL PHILLIP

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their homes, but unfortunately not everyone does. Behind the white picket fence, the two-door garage home, the high-rise apartment — in all types of homes — lurks the horror of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a vicious cycle that rears its ugly head in different forms.

### What is domestic violence?

According to the *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, domestic violence also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV), can be broadly defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation. Domestic violence has many forms including physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse (e.g., neglect); and economic deprivation. Domestic violence may or may not constitute a crime, depending on local statutes, severity and duration of specific acts, and other variables. Alcohol consumption and mental illness

can be co-morbid with abuse and present additional challenges alongside patterns of abuse. Awareness, perception and documentation of domestic violence differ from country to country, and from era to era. According to the Centers for Disease Control, domestic violence is a serious, preventable public health problem affecting more than 32 million Americans, or over 10% of the U.S. population.

### Signs of domestic violence

Domestic abuse often escalates from threats and verbal abuse to violence. And while physical injury may be the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic abuse are also severe. Emotionally abusive relationships can destroy your self-worth, lead to anxiety and depression, and make you feel helpless and alone. No one should have to endure this kind of pain and your first step to breaking free is recognizing that your situation is abu-



Get out now before it's too late!

sive. Once you acknowledge the reality of the abusive situation, then you can get the help you need.

There are many signs of an abusive relationship. The most

telling sign is fear of your partner. If you feel like you have to walk on eggshells around your partner—constantly watching what you say and do in order to avoid a blow-up—chances are your relationship is unhealthy and abusive. Other signs that you may be in an abusive relationship include a partner who belittles you or tries to control you, and feelings of self-loathing, helplessness, and despair.

### Immigrants and Domestic Violence

While domestic violence is a horrible experience for anyone, it is especially painful and damaging for immigrants. Imagine coming to the United States for a chance at a better life only to find yourself in an abusive relationship, made

worse when there are children involved and you are dependent on your abuser (U.S. citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) for your legal status).

According to the Mayor's Office to Combat Violence, challenges faced by immigrant victims of domestic violence are especially relevant in New York City where 36% of the population is foreign-born, and over 120 different languages and dialects are spoken. Immigrant women (most likely victims) may be less likely to report abuse than non-immigrant women due to language barriers, cultural differences, and a fear of deportation if they are not legally documented to live in the U.S.

Young, foreign-born women in New York City have been found to be at greater risk of being killed by their partners than any other group of women. Very often, no one knows about the abuse until it is too late. It is the policy of the New York City Police Department not to inquire about the immigration status of crime victims, witness, or others who call or approach the police seeking assistance.

### Barriers for Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a complex problem in general, but cultural influences can

*continued on the next page*

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# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & IMMIGRANTS

## Stop Green Card Slavery/ *continued from previous page*

complicate the problem further and magnify the effects of abuse on women living in diverse communities. Cultural influences can create barriers which prevent immigrant victims of domestic violence from reaching out for help. There are three key barriers:

### Limited Information

The victim may:

- Not be aware that domestic violence is against the law in the United States.
- Believe that religion permits corporal punishment of wives.
- Not realize they have rights in the U.S. or that police and other service agencies will provide help regardless of immigration status.
- Not be aware that services are available in their own language or know how to access services.

### Social Pressure

The victim may:

- Believe that preserving the family reputation or community is more important than his/her personal rights.
- Believe that police should not be involved in what they consider to be "family matters."
- Believe that discussing marital or family problems with others may be tremendously shameful to them.
- Believe that there is greater honor in

persevering through adversity than in seeking assistance to ensure personal safety.

### Fear of Authorities

The victim may:

- Fear deportation because spouse threatens to expose status even though, as a domestic violence victim, s/he may be protected from deportation.
- Fear police, based upon negative experiences with police in their country of origin.
- Fear losing custody of children upon separation from the spouse.
- Fear losing support or being outcast from his/her cultural community.
- Fear loss of financial stability/support because spouse controls access to finances.

### The Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA)

The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) is a United States federal law. It was passed as Title IV, sec. 40001-40703 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 HR 3355 and signed as Public Law 103-322 by President Bill Clinton on September 13, 1994. It provided \$1.6 billion to enhance investigation and prosecution of the violent crime perpetrated against women, increased pre-trial detention of the accused, imposed automatic and mandatory restitution on those

convicted, and allowed civil redress in cases prosecutors chose to leave unprosecuted.

VAWA was drafted by then-U.S. Senator Joseph R. Biden's office with support from a number of advocacy organizations including National Coalition Against Sexual Assault, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Legal Momentum and The National Organization for Women, which described the bill as "the greatest breakthrough in civil rights for women in nearly two decades."

VAWA was reauthorized by Congress in 2000, and again in December 2005. The bill was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 5, 2006. VAWA will be up for reauthorization in 2011.

VAWA is a gender-neutral law and allows immigrant victims of domestic violence to self-petition for a Green Card for themselves and their children.

### Getting a Green Card Without Your Spouse

Victims of abuse who are married to U.S. citizens or LPRs can file for their residency status (green card) on their own behalf and on behalf of their children. This is called the self-petitioning process. You must complete an immigration form and file supporting documents. There is also a fee to apply, but you may be eligible for a fee waiver. Please talk to an immigration attorney

for additional information and assistance.

If your spouse is not a U.S. citizen or LPR or you were never married to your abuser, you may be eligible for a U type visa when they become available. U visas will be available for victims of all crimes if they have information that will be helpful in the prosecution of the perpetrator of the crime and have suffered substantial injury. Again, speak to an immigration attorney for more information and assistance.

### Stop Green Card Slavery

As a victim, you have to remember that domestic violence and abuse are used for one purpose and one purpose only: to gain and maintain total control over you. An abuser doesn't "play fair." Abusers use fear, guilt, shame, and intimidation to wear you down and keep you under his or her thumb. Your abuser may also threaten you, hurt you, or hurt those around you. Immigrants who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault should know that HELP IS AVAILABLE Call 718-834-0190 or 718-363-7788 and schedule an appointment for a FREE consultation to stop Green Card slavery today. The road to recovery starts with you, today. Call now. ●

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## SMALL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

# Employee Abuse In the Workplace

BY TERRY L. WYNNE

**E**mployee abuse in the workplace is emotional and psychological abuse not covered by law and occurs among employees, managers, and customers.

### Examples of Employee Abuse

This type of verbal and emotional abuse includes put-downs, bullying, intimidation, harassment, shame, coercion, exerting values of power, being overworked to the extreme, lying, condescension, creating feelings of powerlessness, being made to feel insignificant or inferior, excessive demands of perfection, inconsistent application of practices, not providing employees sufficient information to perform, depriving of rights/benefits, inappropriate nonverbal behaviors, ignoring, belittling, talking down to another, making judgments, setting up situations for failure, and double binds.

Employee abuse occurs among employees, managers, and customers.

### Why People Act Abusively

Reasons why people act abusively include to protect themselves, to get their portion, to manipulate, to intimidate, to defend themselves, to maintain their territory, for revenge, having a mental health disorder, acting out, control, fear, modeling from the organization, feeling threatened, insecurity, acting the only way they know how

to act, habit, feeling devalued, feeling trapped, being in a culture that condones abuse, anger, impatience, using abuse to achieve results, lack of social skills, having been treated like an object themselves, not having developed the ability to empathize, and viewing others as a means to an end.

### How Recipients of Abuse Feel and Act

Recipients of employee abuse may feel harassed, insecure, intimidated, protective, rebellious, devalued, suspicious, uncomfortable, withdrawn, embarrassed, trapped, hurt, worthless, unappreciated, exploited, powerless, angry/furious, revengeful, unacknowledged, hopeless, oppressed, lack of motivation, fearful, and inadequate.

### Recipients of abuse may have a variety of behaviors or reactions such as the following:

- If an employee, manager, or customer abuses an employee, that employee's reactions may include a desire to retaliate, absenteeism, withdrawing, and low productivity.
- If an employee abuses a manager, the manager's reactions may include labeling the employee as a troublemaker, taking disciplinary action, or believing the employee is trying to make the manager look bad.
- If an employee or manager abuses a customer, the customer's reactions may

include a desire to retaliate, leaving, asking to see an upper-level manager, and filing an complaint with the Better Business Bureau.

### Costs and Consequences of Employee Abuse

Costs and/or consequences of abuse can affect everyone involved. Consequences to the organization may include absenteeism, turnover, retraining, replacement, inefficiency, low morale, disruption, lawsuits, and lower productivity.

Consequences to the recipient of abuse may include low self-esteem, loss of sense of belonging, and lower productivity.

Consequences to the abuser may include lawsuits, time spent on meetings to resolve conflicts, and potential loss of friends. If an organization ignores abuse, it should expect that the abuse may escalate or spread, and/or employees may take sides.

Terry L. Wynne, a Licensed Professional Counselor with two graduate degrees, is the Owner of The Professional Edge, an organization specializing in training, career counseling, and freelance writing. As a speaker for national and state conventions as well as for corporations, professional organizations, and webinars, Ms. Wynne has taught seminars on over 35 topics including "Coping with Stress," "Time Management," and "Employee Abuse in the Workplace."

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# OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

## President Obama On Domestic Violence

Awareness/*continued from page 1*

we recognize the tremendous progress made in reducing domestic violence, and we recommit to making everyone's home a safe place for them.

My Administration is committed to reducing the prevalence of domestic violence. Last year, I appointed the first-ever White House Advisor on Violence Against Women to collaborate with the many Federal agencies working together to end domestic violence in this country. Together with community efforts, these Federal programs are making important strides towards eliminating abuse.

The landmark Affordable Care Act also serves as a lifeline for domestic violence victims. Before I signed this legislation in March, insurance companies in eight States and the District of Columbia were able to classify domestic violence as a pre-existing condition, leaving victims at risk of not receiving vital treatment when they are most vulnerable. Now, victims need not fear the additional burden of increased medical bills as they attempt to protect themselves and rebuild their lives.

Individuals of every race, gender, and background face domestic violence, but some communities are disproportionately affected. In order to combat the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault in tribal areas, I signed the Tribal Law and Order Act to strengthen tribal law enforcement and its ability to prosecute and fight crime more effectively. This important legislation will also help survivors of domestic violence get the medical attention, services, support, and justice they need.

Children exposed to domestic violence,

whether victims or witnesses, also need our help. Without intervention, they are at higher risk for failure in school, emotional disorders, substance abuse, and perpetrating violent behavior later in life. That is why my Administration has launched the "Defending Childhood" initiative at the Department of Justice to revitalize prevention, intervention, and response systems for children exposed to violence. The Department of Health and Human Services is also expanding services and enhancing community responses for children exposed to violence.

Ending domestic violence requires a collaborative effort involving every part of our society. Our law enforcement and justice system must work to hold offenders accountable and to protect victims and their children. Business, faith, and community leaders, as well as educators, health care providers, and human service professionals, also have a role to play in communicating that domestic violence is always unacceptable. As a Nation, we must endeavor to protect survivors, bring offenders to justice, and change attitudes that support such violence. I encourage victims, their loved ones, and concerned citizens to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1 800-799-SAFE or visit: [www.TheHotline.org](http://www.TheHotline.org).

This month — and throughout the year — let each of us resolve to be vigilant in recognizing and combating domestic violence in our communities, and let us build a culture of safety and support for all those affected. ●

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## DA Hynes Talks About New Strangulation Bill

Domestic Violence has always been an issue very important to me as my mother, Regina Drew, was a victim of domestic violence. In fact, when I first took office, creating a Domestic Violence Bureau was one of my top priorities. We will be commemorating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a long schedule of events and conferences. One of the most notable events was a Barrier Free Justice Meeting on October 5 from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, which discussed a new strangulation law that Governor Paterson passed, which goes into effect on November 11. The new statute, "Criminal Obstruction of Breathing/Blood Circulation and Strangulation", makes strangulation a violent felony whereas it used to be a misdemeanor if there were no actual physical injuries. The new bill introduces a whole new section of penal laws.

Often, strangulation doesn't leave obvious physical injuries. Choking or strangling someone by compressing her neck, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness, was not considered an assault because of lack of physical evidence. Now, prosecutors can point out voice changes or difficulty in swallowing and other non-physical symptoms. Some victims suffer traumatic brain injuries resulting from strangulation. This was a very important piece of legislation because it allows prosecutors more evidence to introduce into court. The statute also allows us to examine a broader range of



Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes accepts a gift of artwork from Wanda Lucibello, Chief of Domestic Violence Special Victims Division. The artwork was created by the children of domestic violence victims, in the Brooklyn Family Justice Center Margaret Place Playroom. It was presented to DA Hynes in commemoration of Domestic Violence.

behavior in these domestic violence cases.

Prior to this new statute, the laws of assault had to be used when a victim stated "he choked me". However, at least half, or more, of non-lethal strangulation cases had no visible evidence of physical injury. Hence—the cases were difficult on their facts to fit into the assault statutes. Hence, often near-lethal cases were treated as minor incidents. Moreover—the necessary and critically important follow-up questions were not asked—regarding loss of consciousness, voice, breathing, swallowing changes, etc. Our evidence questionnaire, developed specifically for these very serious cases, has been utilized to enhance and charge these cases effectively, even using the existing law. The brand new law, once it goes into effect, will allow the more serious cases to be charged as violent felony crimes, and will allow more of the cases where there are non-visible physical injuries to be charged. ●



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