

February 2003

DVTF Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of the Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force

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Community Domestic Violence Awards

The Task Force will be hosting an evening of:

Desserts * Entertainment * Awards

Nomination Form

*Awards will be presented on Tuesday April 22, 2003
at 6:30 P.M.*

Silverdale Lutheran Church, Ridgetop Blvd.

The purpose of the Awards is to bring recognition to those in our community who work especially hard to eliminate DV in Kitsap County. We are looking for not only individuals, but groups, businesses, organizations, etc. that may or may not provide direct service to people but who recognize the importance of the issue by developing programs, setting policies, and enacting practices to deal with Domestic Violence. Deadline for nominations is March 24th. You can mail the form to: KCDVTF, PO Box 48, Bremerton, WA 98337 or email it to: kcdvtf@silverlink.net. This form is also available at our website: www.kcdvtf.org

Nominee: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Your Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Describe the activities or accomplishments of the nominee (use more space if necessary):

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The Price Women Pay for Boys Being Boys

By Jackson Katz

First published in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer
Sunday, May 13, 2001

My old high school football coach was fond of telling us that we were boys playing a man's game. We took it as a compliment, and why not? It was a nice boost for our adolescent male egos, and in truth we were burdened by few of the responsibilities of actual men. We knew that if we were ever called on our behavior, we could fall back on the tried and true excuse of "boys will be boys."

In a just world, adults and adolescents are supposed to be held accountable for their behavior, especially when it harms others. But sadly, in recent years accountability – for adults or young people – has not been greatly in evidence in the male sports culture.

That's why something that happened in Baltimore last month was so notable. The story: A 16-year-old junior varsity lacrosse player at St. Paul's, a prestigious, predominantly white independent school whose lacrosse team was ranked No. 1 in the nation, videotaped himself having sex with a girl from another private school. He then showed the tape, made without the girl's knowledge, to a small group of teammates, and a few nights later a varsity player showed it to two dozen team members.

When the girl found out about this betrayal and her parents alerted the authorities, the reckoning was swift and sure. Robert Hallett, the school's headmaster, expelled the male student and suspended several others. Then, at a school with a long and proud lacrosse tradition, he sent an unmistakable message to the rest of the team. He canceled the varsity season.

The girl has suffered a traumatic event whose effects she might feel for the rest of her life. She immediately withdrew from school. One can only hope that with lots of help from family, friends and therapists she'll be able to get on with her life somewhere else.

For the young men on the lacrosse team, this regrettable episode provides one of those life lessons that coaches like to talk about as one of the benefits of team sports. The lesson is about silence and complicity. There were many disturbing aspects of this case, but the one that has probably caused the most second-guessing is the fact that numerous guys had prior knowledge of their teammate's plans. But no one said or did anything to prevent or interrupt them. Not even seniors. Or the team captains.

Why not? One possible explanation is that few of the boys on the team thought they were doing anything wrong. They've grown up immersed in a popular and pornographic culture where the sexual degradation of women is so common as to seem unremarkable. In that sense it shouldn't surprise us that they didn't even stop to think about how humiliated she would feel.

Another explanation exists. In organized team sports, leadership on and off the field is constantly invoked as a highly prized ideal. Yet when it comes to men speaking out about other men's sexism or violence toward women, few high school boys, or adult men, have been willing to provide that leadership.

This is not an insignificant failure. According to the U.S. surgeon general, battering is the leading cause of injury to women. One in four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. Sexual harassment is a daily fact of life for millions of women and girls. And things aren't getting better.

One recent survey showed that 25 percent of teens know someone in their school who has been in an abusive relationship. Most gender violence is perpetrated by men who are not athletes. But when male athletes in high school, college or the pros are caught treating women in stereotypically sexist, physically abusive or sexually assaultive ways, because of their status and prominence in male culture they reinforce the idea that being disrespectful to women is part of the very definition of being a man.

When individual male athletes or entire men's sports organizations take an active public stance against gender violence, they set a powerful example for other men and boys. Consider the Seattle Mariners' groundbreaking "Refuse to Abuse" campaign against domestic violence. When respected professional baseball players like Jamie Moyer and Carlos Guillen support the cause, they send the message to other men that it is OK for them to speak out, too.

If we want to reduce gender violence, we need to discourage men from being passive bystanders in the faces of our peers' abusive behavior. Fortunately, it appears that increasing numbers of men across the country -- including a growing number of high school and college student-athletes -- are getting involved in programs aimed at reducing teen relationship abuse, rape and sexual assault.

But positive peer influence is not enough. We need to make it clear to potential perpetrators that there will be consequences for abusive behavior. Responsible leaders in the sports culture, including athletic directors, coaches and general managers, need increasingly to display the kind of courage that Robert Hallett at St. Paul's did when he refused to excuse the thoughtless cruelty of the lacrosse team.

If we want our boys to grow up to be healthy men and to treat women -- and each other -- with respect and dignity, we need to stop saying that "boys will be boys" and demand a higher standard.

You can get more information on Jackson Katz by visiting his website: www.jacksonkatz.com

The Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force is a 501c3 non-profit organization.
If you would like to make a donation please contact us at 360-373-5392 or by email:
kcdvtf@silverlink.net
Together we can *create a community free of domestic violence.*

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Do not add tax. We will call you to make drop off/pick up arrangements.

Send this form and your check or purchase order to: Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force, P.O. Box 48, Bremerton, WA 98337. We do not take credit cards at this time. Questions? Please call 360.373.5392 or drop us an email at: kcdvtf@silverlink.net