



Suzanne Cecala, Press Office
(518) 457-5744 or (518) 457-5800
STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
www.opdv.state.ny.us

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**State, County and Local Officials Unveil “Coaching Boys Into Men,”
the state’s 2007 – 2008 Domestic Violence Public Awareness Campaign**
Campaign kicks off in Buffalo at P.S. 79

For the first time ever, New York State will launch a year-long, multi-media campaign designed to engage men as partners in the fight against domestic violence.

The campaign, “Coaching Boys Into Men,” recognizes that men can be uniquely instrumental in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of boys and that men can prevent domestic violence by teaching boys to respect women.

Lt. Gov. David A. Paterson, Assistant Secretary for Criminal Justice Denise E. O’Donnell and Amy Barasch, executive director of the state Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) were joined today in Buffalo by Mayor Byron Brown, Superintendent of Schools Dr. James Williams and a host of local, county and state officials to announce the campaign at a press conference at P.S. 79 – P.F.C. William J. Grabiarez School of Excellence.

At the press conference, officials were flanked by a dozen eighth-grade boys from the school wearing bright orange t-shirts emblazoned with “Awaiting Instructions” – identical to those featured in the campaign – to reinforce the message that all leaders can shape boys’ views and opinions on this important issue.

OPDV Executive Director Amy Barasch is available for telephone interviews about the campaign and the state’s other domestic violence initiatives from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. today. Please call 518-457-5800 to arrange an interview during that timeframe.

The statewide campaign consists of TV and radio public service announcements, billboards, bus shelters, phone kiosks, print advertising and web advertising. The public service announcements feature a father teaching his son various sports and end with the message: “Teach him early. All violence against women is wrong.” Posters and brochures in five languages – English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Russian and Chinese – are in development and will be available free of charge from OPDV.

Originally developed by the Ad Council in partnership with the Family Violence Prevention Fund, a national anti-domestic violence non-profit organization, the “Coaching Boys Into Men” campaign has been expanded and customized for New York State and promotes the state’s Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault hotline (English, 1-800-942-6906; Spanish, 1-800-942-6906; and in New York City, 311). All media is donated.

“As a man who has witnessed the corrosive effects of domestic violence, I realize that we must set an example and explain to our children that ‘real men’ respect women and don’t intimidate or harm them,” Lt. Gov. Paterson said. “I know that today’s youth want to do the right thing, and they’re looking to us to show them how.”

Added Executive Director Barasch: “Boys are awaiting instructions from the mentors in their lives. This campaign invites men to work with us to teach boys that strong men respect women. Together, we can stop violence against women.”

Earlier this month, Gov. Eliot Spitzer proclaimed October as Domestic Violence Awareness month. The state’s Domestic Violence Advisory Council also will meet this month; the council was established to make recommendations on the state’s response to domestic violence, and facilitate coordination among state agencies and between different levels of government.

“All too often, those of us who work in the criminal justice system deal with the terrible consequences of domestic violence; we react after the damage has been done to families,” said Assistant Secretary O’Donnell, who also serves as commissioner of the state’s Division of Criminal Justice Services. “The beauty of this campaign is that it is proactive and preventive. By empowering the boys of today – the men of tomorrow – it is our hope that we can change attitudes and change the collective consciousness of our communities.”

The Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence is the state agency charged with improving the response of state and local communities to domestic violence. It provides guidance to the governor and state agencies on policy and legislation; conducts statewide community outreach and public education programs; and trains professionals on addressing domestic violence in a wide array of disciplines, including child welfare, law enforcement, local district social service providers, and health care professionals.

The Ad Council has helped create some of our country’s most memorable slogans, such as “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” and “A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste.” The Ad Council is a private, non-profit organization that marshals volunteer talent from the advertising and communications industries, the facilities of the media, and the resources of the business and non-profit communities to deliver critical messages to the American public.

For more than two decades, the Family Violence Prevention Fund has worked to end violence against women and children around the world. The fund continues to break ground by reaching new audiences including men and youth, promoting leadership within communities to ensure that violence prevention efforts become self-sustaining, and transforming the way health care providers, police, judges, employers and others address violence. The “Coaching Boys Into Men” campaign and materials will be available soon from the OPDV website:

www.opdv.state.ny.us.