

SMCFA QUARTERLY

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1 SUMMER 2009

COMEDY FOR A CAUSE



On Wednesday, May 13, 2009, laughter came to Southern Maryland when Comedy Central headliners Jesse Joyce and Ray DeVito performed to benefit the Center for Family Advocacy. The show, held at Leonardtown High School, was "as good as anything I've ever seen at the professional clubs in New York," said audience member Jeanne Chandler.

"It was most impressive that we had comedians of this caliber right here in Leonardtown," another audience member, Judge Karen Abrams, said.

James Howe, who attended the event said, "The audience started laughing from DeVito's first joke, and didn't stop until Jesse Joyce performed his last joke. I looked around and people were laughing so hard they were crying."

Jesse Joyce, who is Executive Director Laura Joyce's nephew, had offered to do the show to help raise funds for the Center in the increasingly tough economy. Joyce brought longtime friend and colleague Ray DeVito, another performer on the national comedy club circuit, as his warm-up act.

"After the reception our comedians got this year, I can't wait to bring them back next spring," said Laura Joyce. "While there's nothing funny about domestic violence, these generous performers can help us raise serious money, and we're incredibly grateful to them, and to our community for coming out to show their support."

Next year the Center plans to change venues, due to some difficulties with the sound system. In addition, Joyce says ticket prices will be decreased slightly, to \$20.00, "which is a huge bargain compared to comedy clubs in D.C. or New York," DeVito noted.

Keep your eyes open for notices about ticket sales in April of next year for the chance to see these gifted comedians, who have performed on Leno, Comedy Central, the E! Network, at comedy clubs in every state and 13 countries, and for the troops overseas.

** Pictured (Left to Right): Ray DeVito (Comedian), Laura Joyce (Executive Director), and Jesse Joyce (Comedian)


Staff Anniversaries


Norma Howe (Paralegal) - 3 Years - July 10, 2009


Jamie Fee (Court Advocate) - 1 Year - August 5, 2009


Four dedication contributes to our success...


SMCFA UPCOMING EVENTS:

 September 12, 2009
14th Annual Golf Tournament
Placid Harbor
Hollywood, Maryland

 October, 2009
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Various Events/Observances

 October, 2009
1st Annual Dance Marathon
To benefit SMCFA
Location: To be Announced

 November, 2009
3rd Annual SMCFA Awards Dinner
Café des Artistes
Leonardtown, Maryland

 December, 2009
Annual 'Adopt a Family' Project
Headquarters: SMCFA Admin Office
Hollywood, Maryland

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**SOUTHERN MARYLAND
CENTER FOR
FAMILY ADVOCACY**

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14TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

On Saturday, September 12, 2009, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers will host the 14th Annual Golf Tournament to benefit the Southern MD Center for Family Advocacy. The tournament is held on the private course at beautiful Placid Harbor in Hollywood, Maryland. With golf, tennis, swimming, and more, the day is full of fun, food and friendship and provides critically needed support to the Center!

It's no secret that 2008-2009 has been challenging for many people; nowhere is this more true than in our line of work. When the economy hits rough waters, domestic violence increases. At the Center, the sole provider of legal and advocacy services to victims of domestic violence in Southern Maryland for 30 years, requests for services have increased by 45% over just the past six months. Meanwhile, decreased funding has made it even more difficult to meet the crisis of need occurring in these difficult economic times.

By purchasing a sponsorship and/or donating a raffle or auction prize, you not only advertise your business to our golfers; you also show our guests what true Southern Maryland hospitality is all about. Most importantly, *you help us help victims*. Green/Tee Sponsors receive a custom sign with their business name displayed at various holes on the course. Silver, Gold and Platinum Sponsors receive a larger, custom-made sign or banner, which is displayed at the start of the course in full view of our guests throughout the day.

When you contribute to the Center, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, your support is 100% tax deductible and goes to providing free legal and advocacy services. We rely on your generosity, now more than ever: this year, the Center will help over 1000 victims of domestic violence secure Protective Orders and other legal safeguards. Without the support and generosity of our community, we would be unable to provide these services, and victims of domestic violence would be at even greater risk. Last year your support helped us raise \$16,000 in one day! Let's make our 14th Annual Golf Tournament an even greater success, a day of fun and friendship that helps bring about a life free from violence for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Thank you in advance for your support! If we can answer any questions or provide help of any sort, please don't hesitate to contact us, and be sure to register early, as our tournament fills up quickly!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SMCFA is currently seeking individuals to fill several volunteer positions.

Volunteer Court Advocate – *attend court hearings to provide support and information to clients; assist with safety plans.*

Intake Assistant – *conduct phone interviews with persons requesting family law services.*

Childcare Assistant — *supervise children while the parent is in court seeking a Protective Order or other safeguards.*

For more information, contact
(301) 373-4141.





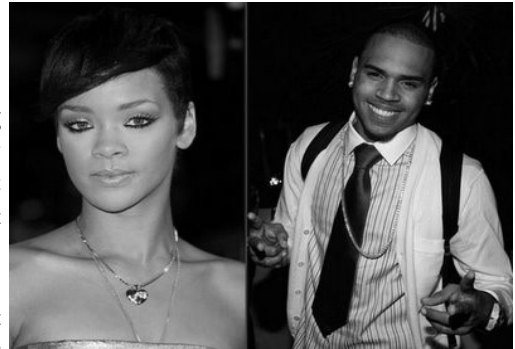
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Laura Joyce, M. A.

Whether the news comes from Facebook, Twitter, or more traditional media sources, my teenage sons continue to be inundated with stories about singers Chris Brown and Rihanna. If you've been on another planet recently, here's the story: Brown allegedly attacked Rihanna, breaking her nose, choking her, and leaving her with blackened eyes and bite marks.

The facts—from police reports, Rihanna's police statement immediately after the assault, and photographs—should be all that matters. Unfortunately, as is often the case with dating or domestic violence, innuendo, excuses and misconceptions take over. Because Rihanna and Brown were dating, a brutal assault is suddenly a misunderstanding, or a 'fight' between lovers. When one person attacks another—not in self-defense, and not during a mutual altercation—it is *not* a fight, and there *is* no misunderstanding: one is a victim, and the other is an out-of-control bully, plain and simple.

Some reports reference a text message that 'provoked' Brown. If a message even exists, whatever it might have said, it provides *no justification for physical violence*. A real man, when provoked, controls himself. He rolls with the punches; he doesn't dole them out to his partner. That sounds logical, yet over half the teens responding to a recent Boston Health Commission survey faulted Rihanna for the attack. So, while our children may understand in theory that a one-sided attack is unacceptable, many blame the victim. This is especially true when the victim returns to her abuser, yet seems free to leave, as Rihanna does: she has money; they have no children together; many role models are urging her to ditch him. If you listen more closely, though, you hear the mixed messages. For instance, Brown's family says he wasn't raised to be violent, so something (Read: *Rihanna*) must have set him off (fact: Brown has said that his stepfather was violent with Brown's mother, and we know that children raised in violent homes are much more likely to be abusive or abused in their own adult relationships). Similarly, the influential performer and businessman Sean "P. Diddy" Combs excuses Brown, urging the public to cut him some slack for his 'mistake' (fact: domestic violence is *not* a mistake: it is an intentional act meant to intimidate and control another person). Mistakes merit an "Oops" but "Oops" doesn't cut it when you punch, bite and choke someone.



Women often stay with their abusers, and it *is* confusing, but look at the history and it begins to make a tragic sort of sense. Rihanna reported that the recent violent attack wasn't the first; his violence toward her has worsened over time—as it almost always does. Remember Oprah's stark statement: "If a man hits you once, he will hit you again." And he will hit you—and bite you, and choke you—*harder*. Most physical violence escalates, beginning with mental and emotional abuse, and it is this escalation that provides the answer for why she stays, whether 'she' is the wealthy, successful and beautiful Rihanna or a more average woman living life beneath the radar.

Abusers gradually chip away at their victims' self-esteem: by degrading and denigrating them, over time abusers rob an individual of her sense of power and self worth until she eventually believes she deserves the abuse, deserves no better. Helping a victim regain her power and self-esteem is often the biggest challenge for those working with victims. As a community—family members, co-workers, neighbors—one of the most effective ways to address this challenge is to reinforce to our young women that no one ever deserves abuse, and to teach our young men that nothing ever justifies it.

When my teenage sons are angry with each other, I counsel them to *talk or walk*. In the heat of battle, with adrenalin surging, this can seem nearly impossible, but self-control is an essential ingredient of adulthood. You don't get the very dubious satisfaction of punching someone who irritates or insults you, but you do get the long-lasting benefit of knowing you've walked away as a man. Being an adult has never meant instant gratification, and being powerful has never been about whether someone cowers when you're nearby.

When we hear news about dating or domestic violence, we can have a profound influence on our own children—and with one-third reporting violence in their dating relationships, this is essential—but also on future generations. We can turn the moment into one of education and self-discovery. By encouraging our children to understand that provocation isn't justification, that mistakes don't leave scars, and that the dynamics of abuse aren't about love, but about power and control, we will create change. And, if we teach our children to talk it out or walk away in moments of anger, we will each contribute to ending all forms of violence: today, and in the future. There are few better legacies we could leave.



THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND
CENTER FOR FAMILY ADVOCACY

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Hollywood, MD 20636

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Fax: 301-373-4147

Website: www.smcfanet

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday—Thursday
8:30am—4:30pm

Friday
8:30am—3:30pm

Closed daily Noon—12:30pm

MISSION

The purpose of the Center is to promote a zero tolerance policy toward interpersonal violence. This purpose is promoted by providing lay advocacy services, legal advice and representation, information and referral, and other related services to survivors of domestic violence. This purpose is achieved both independently and in collaboration with the judicial system and other service providers, law enforcement, the educational system, concerned citizens, elected officials and community leaders, and business/industry in Southern Maryland. Specifically, the Center shall provide any survivor of domestic violence with timely and free access to the professional services of advocates and attorneys, regardless of the age, gender, race, religion, creed, color, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital, social, or economic status, or any other demographic or psychographic factors of the survivor. The Center shall oversee programs that provide direct delivery of services with special emphasis on the needs of women as primary victims and children as secondary victims.

SMCFA Quarterly



The Southern Maryland Center
for Family Advocacy

P. O. Box 760
Hollywood, Maryland 20636

Place
Stamp
Here

TO: _____

