

The Retreat

Where Violence Ends and Hope Begins

Remembering Blanca Soto



January 26, 1980 - July 31, 2009

“Domestic Violence happens every day in our community. Not just in Western Suffolk, not just in Nassau, not just in New York City, but right here in our quaint little town. ...”

- Jeffrey Friedman, Executive Director of the Retreat, The Painful Truth, Sag Harbor Express, 8/7/09

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Where Violence Ends and Hope Begins

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Executive Director

Jeffrey A. Friedman

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board, staff, and the women and children of the Retreat we so proudly serve, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for the support of our community. During a time when our country is facing unprecedented economic challenges, the Retreat feels and acknowledges the impact of the nation's economic downturn, and the tough choices that coincide.

Organizationally, we have seen dramatic funding cuts from Federal, State and local government, in addition to a substantial drop in private donations. Simultaneously, demand for our services has been accelerating at a record-breaking pace. Domestic violence service requests at the Retreat increased 33.7% in the most recent 12-month period, just as organizational resources have begun declining.

We are finding that during these trying economic times, household stress levels are swelling, and consequently incidents of emotional, physical and mental abuse have spiked. Potential clients are even more frightful to abandon their abuser(s) and face the negative financial ramifications. Because employment is very difficult in the current economic climate, even the most resourceful women and children are feeling increasingly desperate and trapped.

The services of the nonprofit that I lead help victims to find safety, independence, and empowerment. Perhaps as importantly, through our targeted and confidential outreach and anonymous service offerings, we help people who are enduring such terrifying and soul-depleting abuses to identify their situations and to feel safe in talking about them and seeking immediate short- and long-term solutions.

None of us can be certain about the future but we can decide today to make a difference in the lives of others. Your continued financial support of the Retreat will enable us to continue to offer our services free of charge to all victims of domestic violence and their children on the North and South Forks of Long Island.

I am asking you to use this opportunity to make a donation today to ensure that the Retreat can continue to help keep the women and children living in our community safe from family violence.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Friedman
Executive Director



United Way of Long Island

13 Goodfriend Drive, East Hampton, NY 11937
24 Hour Hotline: 631.329.2200 Administrative Office: 631.329.4398 Fax: 631.329.2944
www.theretreatinc.org

Other Ways You Can Help

OneCause

Support the Retreat with Every Online Purchase YOU Make!

Are you looking for a simple, easy way to support the Retreat? We've got it! The Retreat has joined OneCause to help you turn your everyday purchases into *much-needed contributions* to the Retreat, **at no extra cost to you**. When you shop through OneCause you will save money and earn up to a 20% contribution on every eligible purchase you make at hundreds of well known merchants.

It is as easy as 1-2-3 to get started!

1. Go to www.onecause.com/causes/the-retreat-inc
2. Fill in your profile information and select the Retreat to support.
3. Start shopping through OneCause!

Volunteer

Donate your time and become a volunteer! The Retreat is always in need of volunteers. We need help with everything - from helping out with the administrative duties (answering phones, data entry), to working at the thrift store, to lending time at the shelter. Volunteering for a few hours a week or once a month is a huge help to our organization. For more information and to sign up for an orientation meeting contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 631.329.4398.

Consign Your Classic Car

Do you have a classic car you are thinking about selling? If you answered "Yes" then do so through the Retreat and our partners at American Concours Foundation. We make the process of selling your classic car painless for you, since WE do all the work! You (the seller) sets the price, and when the car sells, YOU retain the principle on the car and the buyer pays a premium that gets donated to the Retreat. For more information call 631.899.3800 or email bid123sold@rallye.com

Shop at the Retreat Boutique!

Visit the Retreat's Thrift Store in the Bridgehampton Commons (next to Ann Taylor Loft and Gap Kids). The Boutique has a wide array of clothing, furniture, and other great finds!

Hours: Wednesday - Monday from 10:30 AM - 6:00 PM. For more information or to donate call: 631.537.3845 or Email: boutique@theretreatinc.org

Holiday Food & Toy Drives

Leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday, the Retreat will be holding a **food drive** collecting non-perishable food items to provide both our clients and their families a Thanksgiving dinner.

"Adopt a Family" is where people in the community sign up and get matched with our clients (and families) to provide them with gifts for the holidays. Contact the Retreat (631.329.4398) in November to find out more about this fulfilling project!

News

The Retreat is happy to announce a new Food Program providing gift cards from Waldbaum's and Stop & Shop to Suffolk County residents.

The Retreat's Food Program is a needs-based program that is open to the general public.

Applications can be obtained:

- At the Retreat Thrift store
- By E-mail
advocate@theretreatinc.org
- Through Retreat Direct Service Providers
- By downloading the form from www.theretreatinc.org

Applications are approved on a first come, first serve basis. Applications that include documentation of income and expenses will have priority over those without documentation.

For more information call 631.329.4398

Now Available!

View the Retreat's annual report on www.theretreatinc.org or call 631.329.4398 to request a copy be mailed to you.

Community Gathers to Remember Blanca Soto and all Victims of Domestic Violence

Article from the East Hampton Press, August 11, 2009 by Carolyn Kormann

Mourners crowded into Scoville Hall in Amagansett on Wednesday evening to honor the life of Blanca Soto, who was stabbed to death by her husband less than a week before, and to reflect on ways to stop the epidemic of domestic violence in the community.

The Retreat, the East End's only shelter for victims of domestic violence, had organized the gathering to focus the attention of the community on the hidden horror of domestic abuse and the dire need for funding to support the shelter, which has seen its government aid, from the town, county and state, slashed over the last year. Private donations are also down 80 percent. "I'm here to tell you that domestic violence happens every day in our community. Not in Western Suffolk, not in Nassau, not in New York City, but right here in our quaint little town," Jeffrey Friedman, the executive director of The Retreat, told the crowd of about 100 people, many of whom were crying. Ms. Soto's children, he added, "will grow up without a mother."

Mr. Friedman had invited several members of the community to address the crowd before the candlelight vigil in Ms. Soto's memory. Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman of the Jewish Center of the Hamptons spoke first.

"We remember a young mother whose life was cut off so tragically," he said. "We're not here merely to cry but rather to remember by taking action, to ensure that in our world acts such as this are not accepted."

As he spoke, David and Diego Soto, Ms. Soto's 9- and 11-year-old sons, filed into the hall with their grandmother and other family members. "God will bless us with his power and will to build a community that is safe for women and children, the aged, and all who are vulnerable," Rabbi Zimmerman said as they sat down in the front row.

Mary Bromley, a psychotherapist and a founder of the Retreat, addressed the crowd next.

"Blanca Soto, I did not know you. I did not hear your screams," Ms. Bromley said.



"But 25 years ago, I knew you, and this entire town heard you loud and clear." She explained the way community leaders had joined forces to establish the Retreat in the mid-1980s.

"Are we still listening? Are we sure of our priorities?" she asked, pointing out that funding from East Hampton Town for the Retreat had been eliminated. "Our Town Board needs to remember you as well, Blanca." Ms. Bromley urged people to press government officials and Town Board candidates running for election this fall, to bring back the funding for the Retreat.

As she spoke, Ms. Soto's son Diego stared at the picture of his mother on the cover of the program. In the photo, she is smiling calmly with the full, rosy cheeks of youth, squinting down happily at whoever took the picture. The wind is blowing her brown wavy hair up, and she's holding her long skirt as if to make sure she doesn't step on it while walking down a hill. With only a blue sky behind her, and the ground cropped out of the photograph, she looks like she is floating.

East Hampton Town Police Captain Edward Ecker next told the crowd that he had decided not to talk about the investigation of the tragedy last week, but said

that from the investigation he had found that "she was truly a beautiful person and a wonderful mother." He said that the police would keep working hand in hand with the Retreat, Ms. Bromley and anyone who fights domestic violence.

Stacey Bellem, a counselor and educator who used to work for the Retreat, emphasized to the crowd the importance of the Retreat's various services, which include a 24/7 crisis hotline, a shelter, domestic violence prevention education, legal advocacy and counseling. Ms. Bellem also said how happy she was to see men in the audience, as the majority of aggressors in domestic violence cases are men.

"We need to examine that piece as well, and that requires funding," she said. The Retreat offers an antiviolence reeducation program that seeks to help men take responsibility for their actions and learn alternative coping strategies to violence.

A domestic violence survivor, who asked that her name be withheld, spoke to the crowd and said that even though she did not know Ms. Soto, she knew that as battered women they had shared a lot of the same feelings.

"You think you're alone, you live in fear, but you're also in denial and try to convince yourself that it's not so bad," she said. She said that, 25 years ago, she too almost lost her life to domestic violence, but her brother came to her defense and, in doing so, her first husband lost his life.

She said her abuser was an alcoholic, but that as hard as it was for him to admit that he had a problem and needed help, "it was just as hard for me to admit that I needed help," she said.

The Painful Truth

Posted on 07 August 2009; Sag Harbor Express

The alleged murder of Blanca Soto, an East Hampton resident and mother of two young sons, is a painful reminder that domestic violence remains prevalent in our seemingly peaceful community.

Living where we do, in a largely prosperous waterfront community, it is often easy to imagine ours is a world untouched by domestic violence. These crimes often occur behind closed doors, shrouded in social stigma, the pain and feelings of shame leading to many unreported incidences, allowed to continue in silence. How many of our mothers, our daughters and our sisters on the East End know what it is to be Blanca Soto? We believe many more than we are even remotely aware of.

The Retreat, located in East Hampton, but the only not-for-profit organization on the East End devoted solely to providing support to victims of domestic violence and preventative education to the community, is unique in the resource it offers us as a community. It is the only organization to provide a safe haven for abused women from Riverhead to Montauk. Statistics show that one in four women will experience domestic abuse sometime in their life, and if this number is true then thousands of women in our community are in need of the services provided by The Retreat and even more are in need of the educational resources The Retreat provides our area schools in the hopes of stopping domestic violence abuse before it begins.

This organization was founded over 22 years ago, but its existence is in peril due to drastic funding cuts from local municipalities, as well as the county and state. Southampton Town

decreased their funding last year and East Hampton Town has completely eliminated financial support of The Retreat, right at a time when members of the community need this resource more than before. Outside of the grim real estate and employment statistics we have been poring over as a nation during this recession, one very real statistic is — in a troubled economy — domestic violence becomes an even greater threat.

The director of The Retreat, Jeffrey Friedman, said this week that requests for the organization's service in the last year have increased by a whopping 34 percent. At the same time, The Retreat is grappling with funding cuts that take away from counseling and educational services, only making the hard work they do all the more difficult. These cuts, whether government officials are willing to acknowledge this or not, directly hinder this important group's ability to educate our community about the threat of domestic violence and possibly prevent such horrific crimes from occurring in our seaside resorts.

Many municipalities pay for this kind of service through tax dollars in human service departments. The towns of Southampton and East Hampton have had The Retreat provide this service privately to our community for decades. Now, as we face multi-million dollar deficits likely in both of our towns, funding to The Retreat has been cut beyond recognition in addition to slashed budgets for human services on the state and county level.

The reality is while we all may not have known Blanca Soto, we all likely know a Blanca Soto. Domestic violence is not a problem that can be ignored, but The Retreat, no matter the financial state of our communities, should be made a priority — as the last week's events painfully show.

DOES YOUR PARTNER...

- Track all of your time?
- Constantly accuse you of being unfaithful?
- Discourage you from having relationships with family & friends?
- Make fun of you or humiliate you in front of others?
- Anger easily when using drugs or alcohol?
- Destroy your personal property or sentimental items?
- Threaten to harm you or your children?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick or bite you or your children?
- Use or threaten to use a weapon against you?

SU PAREJA

- ¿Está siempre pendiente de todo lo que usted hace?
- ¿Le acusa constantemente de serle infiel?
- ¿Le aleja de familiares y amigos?
- ¿Se enoja fácilmente cuando consume drogas o bebidas alcohólicas?
- ¿Se burla de usted o le humilla delante de los demás?
- ¿Le destruye objetos personales o artículos que tienen un valor sentimental para usted?
- ¿Amenaza con hacerle daño a usted o a sus hijos?
- ¿Le golpea, le da puñetazos, le abofetea, le muerde o le da patadas a usted o a sus hijos?

If yes, you are not alone...24 hr hotline 631.329.2200

2009 Events at a Glance

Madeleine and Gus Lockwood of Country Club Pools and Spa,

held a raffle of a six person spa to benefit the Retreat. 100% of the ticket sales went directly to support the Retreat's domestic violence services. Congratulations to winners Pat and Joan Lyons - we hope you are enjoying your spa!

1st Annual Juried Art Show

May 9, 2009 - Opened at Hampton Road Gallery to overflowing crowds. 100% of the entry fees went directly to support the services of the Retreat. The Juried show was open to anyone and the three jurors (Ann Chwatsky, Helen Harrison and Gavin Spanierman) picked the top 30 entries which were on display opening night. Congratulations to Jane Johnson - "Best in Show" and winner of a solo exhibit at Hampton Road Gallery. First Place went to Jane Kirkwood "Girl with Shovel", Tied for Second Place was Wendy Ross "Rolling Man, 2008" and sculptor Lannie Hart "The Cabalists Tattoo", and Third Place Elliot Koslof with "North of Canal Street".

Thank You to our talented, generous and dedicated Event Committees, we couldn't have done it without you!

Golf: Barbara Butler, Cindy Feinberg, Pat Kyle, Stephen D. Lamson, Kent Rydberg, Bethany Shene-Becker, Madeline Stoller

Artists Against Abuse: Art - Ann Chwatsky, Peter J. Marcelle. Gala - Miche Bacher, Helen Barer, Cathleen Civale, Richard Demato, Cindy Feinberg, Betsy Nichol, Barbara Olton

NYC Luncheon: Eileen Ekstract and Karen Silverman (co-chairs) Richard Demato, Cindy Feinberg, Nina Gillman, Penny Glazier, Caroline Hirsch, Hon. Bruce M. Kaplan, Pat Kaplan, Michele Gerber Klein, Jean Meisel, Carol Roman, Marcia Roma, Linda Schaps, Barbara Shapiro, Kathleen Tait, Nancy Weber

Kelsey And Camille Grammer Host 14Th Annual Artists Against Abuse Gala To Benefit The Retreat



Clockwise from upper left - Former NFL Player Donald McPherson, Karen Silverman and Board President Richard Demato; Celebrity Hosts Camille and Kelsey Grammer; Event Design by Maria McBride

June 27, 2009—Guests were dazzled as they entered the Wellness Center of East Hampton's The Ross School. Maria McBride, contributing editor of Brides Magazine, created a sense of vibrancy and hope by using a décor design of red and white hues. The evening included cocktails, food and entertainment as well as a silent auction of specially commissioned hand-painted ceramic plates by artists including Peter Max, Jane Johnson and Peter Dayton, and a live auction of select original works of art. Host Kelsey Grammer generously donated TWO walk-on roles for his new ABC comedy, "Hank", which caused quite a bidding war and garnered \$23,000. This year, our Gala raised over \$250,000 for The Retreat.

Sebonack Golf Club Classic to Benefit the Retreat

May 26, 2009 - Participants gathered at the panoramic, 300-acre Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, NY to enjoy a gorgeous day on the links, a cocktail reception and dinner. Former heavyweight boxing champ Gerry Cooney entertained guests as host of our Live Auction.



Harvey & Karen Silverman, Andy Hayworth and Gerry Cooney



Sebonack Golf Club - view from the Clubhouse



Board Member Cindy Feinberg with boxer Gerry Cooney

Wahine Paddle to Benefit the Retreat

July 11, 2009—Paddlers for Humanity is an all-volunteer, non-profit in East Hampton, NY, which raises funds and awareness through a series of paddling adventures and challenges for worthy, neighboring non-profits in our community. This summer, Paddlers for Humanity, (P4H) organized and hosted the first annual Wahine Women's Only Paddle. Women of all ages traveled across the waters in kayaks, paddleboards and outrigger canoes to support The Retreat. The 5-mile course began at Louse Point, Amagansett and finished at Maidstone Park in East Hampton. Participants enjoyed a post-paddle barbecue in the park with their families. This event raised awareness for the Retreat and the Shelter Food Program.



Photo credit - Kyril Bromley

2nd Annual Hamptons Pursuit Road Rallye to Benefit the Retreat



July 26, 2009

Participants dusted off their classic cars and motored to The Hayground School in Bridgehampton where they began their 30-mile tour of the Hamptons countryside. Car enthusiasts gathered at the Finish Line at Kalbacher's Auto in East Hampton to swap road stories, enjoy a barbecue luncheon by Foody's and participate in an online auction of classic cars. The Rallye event has gained popularity in its second year with a participation increase of 50%, coordinated by the American Concours Foundation.

Do you have a classic car you want to sell? It is a very simple process and a win-win situation for YOU (the seller) and the Retreat. The seller retains the principle (that they set) on the car and the Retreat will get a buyers premium. The Rallye team takes care of all the details from photographing your car to putting it up on www.bid123sold.com. Contact the Rallye Office at 631.899.3800 or email them at rallye@bid123sold.com

Beach Boot Camp To Benefit The Retreat

September 5, 2009—Participants joined Fitness & Spa Director Candice Monte of Gurney's Inn at the world-renowned resort and spa in Montauk, NY for an hour-long workout on the Atlantic Ocean. This Community event, was organized by Eleanor Donnelly.



Fitness instructors Candice Monte and Janeen Puka

Jeffrey Friedman Runs The Hamptons Half-Marathon To Benefit The Retreat

September 26, 2009—Executive Director Jeffrey Friedman took his passion and hope to the streets of the East Hampton area during autumn's first weekend, running 13.1 miles in the Hamptons Marathon-Half Marathon to raise awareness and funds for domestic violence prevention and assistance on the East End.

ROCK THE HARVEST At Pindar Vineyards To Benefit The Retreat

September 26, 2009—The much-anticipated second annual Independent Music and Wine festival at Pindar Vineyards in Peconic, organized by the unstoppable Josh Horton, delivered high-energy performances under a blue sky in the sunlit field from noon till 6pm. The day was phenomenal, and garnered much needed awareness from the North Fork Community. In conjunction with the festival, a Bike Run was organized which took bikers from Long Beach in Sag Harbor to the Peconic festival.

We need your help now more than ever! The Retreat's private donations are down by 80%. Government aid from the town, county, and state was slashed over the last year.

"In my line of work I see some of the most horrific crimes, hear the heartbreaking stories from victims," began Nancy Grace, Headline News Anchor. "But I also see the other side, the anger which turns to resolve, the determination to stop violence and injustice. "Children are the helpless victims of domestic violence. Children are the reason we all need to stand up and say no more."

- Nancy Grace

"Domestic Violence does not just occur in other communities... The tragic death of Ms. Soto is a wake up call for our community. Domestic violence continues to be happening all around us, even though we might not be aware of it because it is not talked about, seen or heard. It is our communities hidden epidemic".

- Jeffrey Friedman, Executive Director of the Retreat, The Painful Truth, Sag Harbor Express, 8/7/09

"Blanca Soto, I did not know you. I did not hear your screams," Ms. Bromley a psychotherapist and a founder of the Retreat. "But 25 years ago, I knew you, and this entire town (East Hampton) heard you loud and clear....Are we still listening?"

- Mary Bromley

"You think you're alone, you live in fear, but you're also in denial and try to convince yourself that it's not so bad," she said. She said that, 25 years ago, she too almost lost her life to domestic violence, but her brother came to her defense and, in doing so, her first husband lost his life. She said her abuser was an alcoholic, but that as hard as it was for him to admit that he had a problem and needed help, "it was just as hard for me to admit that I needed help," she said. She encouraged people to talk about domestic violence, not look the other way. "It's happening all around us," she said.

- A survivor of domestic violence The East Hampton Press, Community Gathers to remember Blanca Soto and all victims of domestic violence by Carolyn Korman, 8/8/09.



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