

Mayor's Youth Leadership Council

Youth Services Bureau, Stamford, Connecticut

“He apologized and said he would get help.”

Affidavit from the Los Angeles Police Department

Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of the MYLC Alert. Produced by the Mayor's Youth Leadership Council, which is a program of the Stamford Youth Services Bureau, the MYLC Alert addresses safe schools and communities, with an emphasis on teen dating violence, youth activism, leadership, and advocacy.

This issue takes a look at the Chris Brown and Rihanna incident; legislation that was proposed by the members of the MYLC chapter at Stamford High School; and upcoming activities that raise awareness about teen dating violence.

Let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Chris Brown and Rihanna: The police report

You've all heard about it the incident, but how many of you have read the report issued by the Los Angeles Police Department in response to the incident between Chris Brown and Rihanna? See below for excerpts. A word of caution: it's not an easy read. ("Brown" is Chris Brown and Robyn F is Rihanna; source: www.usmagazine.com/news/read-the-full-police-report-from-chris-browns-attack-on-rihanna-200953).

"On Sunday, February 8, 2009 Brown was driving a vehicle with Robyn F as the front passenger. Robyn F picked up Brown's cellular phone and (saw) a three-page text message from a woman Brown had had a previous relationship with.

A verbal argument ensued and Brown pulled the vehicle over on an unknown street. (Brown) reached over Robyn F with his right hand and opened the car door and attempted to force

her out. Brown was unable to force Robyn F out of the vehicle because she was wearing a seat belt. When he could not force her to exit he took his right hand and shoved her head against the passenger window...causing an approx 1 inch raised circular contusion.

As Robyn F turned to face Brown (he) punched her in the left eye with his right hand. He then drove away in the vehicle and continued to punch her in the face with his right hand while steering the vehicle with his left hand. The assault caused Robyn F's mouth to fill with blood and blood to splatter all over her clothing and the interior of the vehicle. Brown looked at Robyn F and stated, 'I am going to beat the s--t out of you when we get home! You wait and see.'

Robyn F picked her cellular phone and called her personal assistant. She stated, 'I am on my way home. Make sure the cops are there when I get there' (since the greeting was playing the message was not captured). After Robyn F faked the call, Brown looked at her and stated, 'You just did the stupidest thing ever. Now I really am going to kill you.'

Brown continued to punch Robyn F on her left arm and hands, causing her to suffer a contusion on her left triceps that was approx 2 inches in diameter and numerous contusions on her left hand.

Brown held Robyn F close to him and bit her on her left ear. She was able to feel the vehicle swerving from right to left as Brown sped away. He stopped the vehicle in front of [address] and Robyn F turned off the car removed the key from ignition and sat on it. Brown did not know what she did with the key and began punching her in the face and arms.

Brown began applying pressure to Robyn F left and right carotid arteries causing her to be unable to breath. She began to lose consciousness. She reached up with her left hand and began to attempt to gauge his eyes in an attempt to free herself. Brown bit her left ring and middle fingers and released her."

We suggest you share this alert with the teens in your life. US magazine printed an article about Chris Brown and Rihanna that included the Los Angeles Police Department's affidavit. The responses to the article offer a fascinating commentary on dating violence. You may want to check them out at www.usmagazine.com/news/read-the-full-police-report-from-chris-browns-attack-on-rihanna-200953.

Teen dating violence in Connecticut: MYLC's response

Yep, teen dating violence happens in the Nutmeg State. In fact, 13 percent of teens surveyed in Connecticut said they experienced *physical dating violence* last year. To the dismay of many, Connecticut ranks 9th among states that report such violence. In fact, Connecticut's rate of teen dating violence is higher than the national average of ten percent.

You will note that we italicized *physical dating violence*. That's to highlight the fact that Connecticut - until this year - did not collect data about emotional-verbal abuse, which members of MYLC have found to be much more prevalent among teens in Fairfield County.

Advocacy

Thanks to the advocacy efforts of the members of MYLC, Connecticut's Department of Public Health revised its state-wide survey to include a question about emotional-verbal abuse. When coupled with data about physical dating violence, the new data will give policy makers, service providers, parents and teens with a much more accurate picture of teen dating violence. The new data will be collected when the Department of Public Health administers its survey in March 2009.

MYLC's other advocacy effort is aimed at the Connecticut general assembly. HB6494, which members of MYLC proposed in December 2008, calls for the teaching of teen dating violence in middle schools and high schools. Luke Lomanto, a member of the MYLC Executive Committee, testified at the Education Committee's public hearing on the bill. He was joined by two-dozen members of MYLC at the press conference that was held before the hearing.

Volunteer Program

Affectionately called Project Mango (which means absolutely nothing), MYLC's volunteer program takes members into the domestic violence safe house in Stamford. Every week during the school year members do homework with the children, play games and just hang out and talk.

The activity could also be as simple as holding a 4-month old baby whose mother fled a violent situation at home. That's what Annie Drowne and Heather Wilson of MYLC did during their visit on March 3.

Public Awareness

This is where members of MYLC shine. Don't get us wrong, they do great work when it comes to advocacy and volunteering, but their minds shift into overdrive as they think of unique ways to capture people's attention. "Everything we do is part of a campaign," said Andrea Soto of the Executive Committee. "We don't do one-shot deals. It's an ongoing effort to change the way people think about dating violence."

Teen dating violence

It isn't an argument every once in a while, or a bad mood after a bad day. It's a pattern of controlling behaviors that one partner uses to get and maintain power over the other.

- 10 percent of teens surveyed in America experienced physical dating violence last year (Centers for Disease Control)
- 13 percent of teens in Connecticut experienced physical dating violence last year (Department of Public Health)
- Connecticut is ranked 9th in the nation among states that report teen dating violence (Department of Public Health)

Examples of MYLC's public awareness activities include the Chairs Project, the Balloon Garden, body art photos, silent vigils, street outreach, House Parties, the Storyline Project and many more.

In fact, you need to stop at the Ferguson Library on Thursday, March 12 or Friday, March 13 from 3 - 4:30 PM for our Body Art Exhibit. Body art is just as it suggests. Members of MYLC write words or slogans about dating violence on their arms, neck or face, we take a photo of the writing, and blow it up into a huge poster. We will have six posters on display at the library. Stop by and meet some of our members as they distribute information to passers-by.

Resources

There are several groups you can turn to for advice and information about teen dating violence. See below for a partial list.

Youth groups in Fairfield County, Connecticut

1. Mayor's Youth Leadership Council in Stamford at 203.977.4643
2. YNet Program, which is MYLC's partner in Greenwich: 203.869.6501, ext 176
3. Center for Youth Leadership, which is MYLC's partner in Norwalk: 203.852.9488
4. RYASAP in Bridgeport at 203.579.2727

Professional groups in Fairfield County, Connecticut

1. Sexual Assault Crisis and Education Center in Stamford at 202.329.2929
2. Domestic Violence Crisis Center in Norwalk and Stamford at 203.853.0418
3. Domestic Abuse Services in Greenwich at 203.869-6501, ext 171

Report Abusive Dates

And let's not forget MYLC's RAD campaign. Coined by members last year, RAD stands for "report abusive dates." They ask people their age and others to program Connecticut's dating violence hotline number under RAD in their cellphone. The hotline number is 888.774.2900.

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For more information, please contact:
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