



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Carey London, Marketing Manager
(631) 329-4398 ext. 124

FEBRUARY IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH (TDVAM)

The Retreat Works to Support and Empower Teens

EAST HAMPTON, NY (February 3, 2025) – February is **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM)**, and The Retreat is dedicated to spotlighting the crucial importance of fostering safe, healthy and respectful relationships for youth—empowering families with the tools to support teens in building lasting, positive connections.

In 2010, Congress declared the month of February to be National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. TDVAM is a month-long campaign dedicated to raising awareness about teen dating abuse. Every February, young people and their loved ones join together across the country for a national effort to raise awareness about the issue of teen dating violence. This year's theme is "**Respect That**," focusing on how mutual respect can transform relationships.

Tips for Parents and Caregivers: How to Address Dating Violence

Having open conversations with your teen is essential. Create a safe, judgment-free space for dialogue. Teens need to know they can trust a parent or caregiver as they navigate relationships. Here are some ways you can support them:

- **Recognize the signs:** Watch for controlling behavior, jealousy, or stalking—red flags of unhealthy relationships.
- **Talk about digital safety:** Discuss the importance of privacy and staying safe online and off. Don't know where to start? [Use our free conversation starter cards.](#)
- **Practice supportive listening:** Focus on being present and validating their feelings by saying things like "I hear you," and "I can understand why you feel that way."
- **Use resources:** Leverage available tools to guide your conversations and learn together. [Visit The Retreat's TDVAM page for resources.](#)

Teen Leadership Council

Although TDVAM spotlights teen dating issues for the month, The Retreat works with teens throughout the year in its Teen Leadership Council (TLC). Started in 2010, TLC creates a safe space for students to discuss what they notice happening in teen dating and other relationships. It teaches them how to prevent abuse and



promote respect in all relationships as well as help build awareness for The Retreat. Teens work together, learning about violence prevention and leadership to promote awareness and safety in the community.

This winter, members have been exploring important topics to better support themselves and their peers. Key lessons include:

- **Types of Abuse:** Identifying and understanding various forms of abuse, including emotional, physical, digital, financial, and sexual abuse, as well as how they present in relationships.
- **Offering Support:** Practicing empathy, validating feelings, and listening without judgment to friends who may be experiencing abuse.
- **Setting and Respecting Boundaries:** Practicing how to set personal boundaries and respect others' boundaries or limits.
- **Healthy Relationships:** Discussing boundaries, mutual respect, and recognizing unhealthy behaviors like stalking or manipulation.

The next Teen Leadership Council session will begin in mid-March. For more information, visit <https://allagainstabuse.org/programs/teen-leadership/>.

For additional resources on TDVAM, visit AllAgainstAbuse.org/Events and click on “**February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**”.

###

About the Retreat: The Retreat is a safe haven for families in crisis across Suffolk County. The not-for-profit agency provides comprehensive domestic violence support services for children and adults, as well as violence prevention programming. If you or someone you know needs help, call The Retreat’s 24-hour hotline at (631) 329-2200. For more information, visit allagainstabuse.org or follow @allagainstabuse on Instagram and Facebook.