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

The Retreat's All Against Abuse Gala Raises More Than \$1 Million for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking

EAST HAMPTON, NY — June 9, 2026 — The Retreat's annual **All Against Abuse Gala** drew more than 200 supporters, community leaders, and advocates to a sold-out evening on Saturday, June 6, at the Southampton Arts Center in Southampton Village, and the results were historic.

Together, attendees raised more than \$1 million, the most in the gala's history, to sustain The Retreat's lifesaving services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking: a 24-hour multilingual hotline, emergency shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, prevention education, and fatherhood training. The milestone was made possible in part by a profoundly generous anonymous gift to honor the contributions of Gail Rothwell.

Guests arrived to a luminous cocktail hour, enjoying gourmet hors d'oeuvres and handcrafted cocktails by Art of Eating as they explored the galleries and gathered in Southampton Art Center's newly renovated gardens. Retreat staff were on hand to speak about their programs and connect with guests, joined by young volunteers of Pitch Your Peers Teen Leaders who elegantly modeled bespoke outfits available at The Retreat Boutique.

This year's gala paid tribute to a woman whose impact on The Retreat is immeasurable. The evening celebrated the enduring legacy of former Board President Gail Rothwell, a leader whose vision, generosity, and unwavering commitment to survivors helped shape the organization into what it is today. Ms. Rothwell brought elegance, tenacity and deep purpose to everything she touched, and she was passionate about The Retreat's mission. Her work translated directly into safety, stability, and renewed hope for countless survivors.

The program was led by Gala Committee Co-Chair and longtime Retreat champion Norma Cirincione, alongside Executive Director Cate Carbonaro, who emphasized the event's theme, "Purpose and Possibility."

"Our purpose is clear," Ms. Carbonaro told the audience. "Create safety, healing and hope for survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual abuse... But how do we talk about possibility right now? Because things are hard. For survivors across Long Island, the math doesn't work. Rent is unaffordable. Gas is expensive. Childcare is out of reach. Leaving an abusive relationship has never been easy – but right now, for so many, it feels economically impossible."



Ms. Carbonaro then described two possible outcomes for a survivor ready to leave: one in which no one answers the hotline and there is no room in the shelter, and another in which The Retreat is there to answer. The difference, she made clear, is everything: It is what donor support makes possible.

"Possibility is not naive. It is not looking away. It is what lets you look someone in the worst moments of her life in the eye and say, 'We are here. Something is better on the other side.'"

One of the evening's most powerful moments came when guest speaker Michelle Taormina, a survivor who turned to The Retreat years ago in a moment of crisis, took the stage to share her story of healing, resilience, and the life she has built for herself and her family since leaving an abusive partner. Her words moved the room and reminded every person present exactly why they were there.

"For nine months, The Retreat became our home. They gave us legal help to fight for custody. Therapy, food, clothing, childcare – even no-cost summer camp for the kids," Michelle said. "They gave my children stability and dignity when our world felt like it was crumbling."

The program also featured a short film by Toyshop Studio. This powerful 90-second reel traced The Retreat from its humble origins in East Hampton nearly 40 years ago to the expansive, life-changing operation it is today, serving survivors across Long Island.

The evening culminated in a spirited live auction led by auctioneer Harry Santa-Olalla, igniting enthusiastic bidding throughout the room. The night's most electrifying moment came when longtime Retreat supporter Bobbie Braun placed a breathtaking bid for additional support from the Neuwirth Foundation. This gesture of extraordinary generosity brought the crowd to its feet. When asked what inspired her giving, Braun quoted her father, "I did it because I can, and I did it for all who can't."

The auction featured coveted lots including an idyllic getaway for six to the Cotswolds; the chance to select your own French château for 10; and a private garden tour with legendary chef Ina Garten at her home. The evening closed with a raffle paddle drop, sending one fortunate guest home with an exquisite Bottega Veneta handbag.

Guests were then invited to linger in the Southampton Art Center's beautiful garden, celebrating the evening's success over champagne and desserts beneath the summer sky.

New this year, The Retreat's online silent auction was extended by an extra day. This gave supporters everywhere more time to bid on an exceptional array of offerings. Highlights included a luxurious trip to Tuscany for eight; a private chef dinner with Elena Apostolides; a personal atelier experience with Kiki de Montparnasse; and one-of-a-kind artwork by Oscar Molina, Kathy Buist, Georgia Suter and Theresa Lawler. Bidding closed on June 8 at 5PM.

Supported by Key Philanthropic Leaders

This year's event was made possible through the generosity of key sponsors and supporters, including The Yaffa Foundation; Norma Cirincione; Jackie Mitchell and Michael Goldstein; Ellie Kurrus and Alastair Cairns; Kristen



Erickson, Jen Steven & Sixth Street; Susi and Peter Wunsch; Bobbie Braun & The Neuwirth Foundation; and Wright & Co.

We are also immensely grateful for our business sponsors: Art of Eating, Dan's Papers, Purist magazine, Spark Hamptons, Toyshop Studio; Riverhead Building Supply; Wölffer Estate; and Zabi's Wines and Spirits, whose generous support made the evening possible.

Among the many supporters in attendance, The Retreat was thrilled to welcome Kara Ackerman, daughter of The Retreat's late founding board member, Judie Ackerman, along with her husband, Peter Soriento; New York State Assemblyman Tommy John Schiavoni; Adam Hornbuckle, representing the Office of United States Senator Charles Schumer; East Hampton Town Supervisor Kathee Burke-Gonzalez; Her Royal Majesty Queen Angelique-Monet of Eti-Oni, Osun State, Nigeria; and publisher Cristina Cuomo.

Four Decades of Standing With Survivors

For nearly 40 years, The Retreat has been a steady, unwavering presence for survivors of domestic abuse in crisis, offering safe shelter, counseling, legal representation, and educational outreach, all at no cost. In 2025 alone, The Retreat delivered more than 13,000 legal services, accompanied nearly 808 individuals through the court system, and answered more than 3,000 calls to its multilingual 24-hour hotline. Across the East End and beyond, The Retreat also brought prevention education directly to schools and communities, because lasting change begins long before a crisis call is ever made.

Every Act of Support Changes a Life

The Retreat welcomes all who wish to be part of its mission, whether by volunteering, donating, or simply helping to spread the word. To learn more about The Retreat, upcoming events, and ways to get involved, please visit allagainstabuse.org or call 631-329-4398.

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To see the latest news coverage, press releases and updates highlighting The Retreat's programs, events and community impact, please visit <https://allagainstabuse.org/about-us/newsroom/2/>

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About the Retreat: The Retreat is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving all of Long Island. The Retreat creates safety, healing and hope for those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, while working every day to prevent and break the cycle of violence. 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.