

2021 Being Brave Show Script for Digital Playbill

VOG:

[6:45 pm]

Thank you for joining us for 2021 Being Brave, An Evening Honoring Survivors of Domestic Violence. Our show will begin in 15 minutes. Please settle into your seats.

For the men joining us tonight, there is a segment called The Man Stand. When prompted, please join other like-minded men on stage with your “end domestic violence masks” as you symbolize that you are standing against all types of domestic violence.

If you have not done so already, please visit our shop in the lobby where you can purchase “The Gift of Time” by Lauren Weinstein. This is a new graphic novel about Town Clock CDC. You can also purchase art prints by our Town Clock CDC residents. All proceeds benefit the work of Town Clock CDC and our residents.

[6:50 pm]

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[6:55 pm]

Thank you for joining us for 2021 Being Brave, An Evening Honoring Survivors of Domestic Violence. Our show will begin in 5 minutes. Please settle into your seats.

[7 pm/Show Start]

VOG – Welcome to Being Brave 2021 – An Evening Honoring Survivors of Domestic Violence

VOG:

The conversations this evening may be difficult to hear, but are necessary. If in any way you feel uncomfortable or triggered, or need to speak to someone, there are two confidential, domestic violence advocates here tonight. Representatives from the North Brunswick Domestic Violence Response Team are available to speak with you privately. You can find them outside the exit doors for this theater.

It is never our intent to trigger anyone, however the very nature of what we are presenting may have that effect. And if you are in a situation at home which is unsafe, please call the National Domestic Violence 24/7 Hotline. That number is: 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-799-SAFE. Thank you for supporting the work of Town Clock CDC.

VOG - Now, hear directly from one of our Town Clock CDC's residents.....

[Start Survivor Video]

SPREADING OUR WINGS

By E. Denise Peoples

In the absence of a mother's arms, she swaddles her baby tight. The essence of that blanket means warmth and safety for the young, not because the mother doesn't care to be there but because of all her cares. She knows every layer she wraps around her seed represents strength, protection, kindness and love. Each tucked corner depicts a mother's security. That point is a lock & key that not only is the infant safe but secure from all harm. This happens if you're lucky. Because just like the wrapped child that's shielded there is a child that is not. Life's corners become untucked, unwrapped or loosened & they are prey to the elements. You see absent wraps & corner mean arms flinging & legs kicking producing projection most likely to the edge.

Both scenarios produce, without assistance, growth. The child grows. Differently they abound. They learn life differently. Wings begin to grow. That growth is sometimes expanded by encouragement. On the other hand, some wings are clipped, cut or maybe yanked out. You may have to battle & not flutter. You may have to run when you want to fly. And seeking safety over soaring is your temporary position. But because there is a God you still got your wings. Large & majestic, expanded or not! It's those days you take those same wings and layer by layer wrap yourself. Every layer does its part.

1. womb covered-that's where life is, not just birth
2. gut? check – so you are not gut checked by foolery
3. chest for a man is his source of pride but for a woman it's a source of nourishment. The greatest target for the opponent of life.

But yes I am covered!!! Now you are covered!

Wait, you feel I forgot my shoulders? I could never cover them! They are the foundation for those who are to come after me so they must stay visible.

So what happens to my head? Well it houses my thoughts & they are my dreams. Dreams I see, dreams I hear and dreams I speak into existence. All of that cannot be covered. The world is waiting for it all!

Why not my feet, legs & thighs you ask? Because I have to be able to run, mark time, kneel, pray and sometime kick & scream swaddled or not!

And my unshielded backside? Oh I leave that open on purpose. You ask why, someone may kick you? Exactly! See you can't kick me without propelling me!

When you nudge me I may stumble but it's always forward. And when you propel me, I get a pep in my step. That gives me momentum. Momentum brings about a security. And I feel safe to unwrap my wings. Now you see my glory, you see my strength, my determination, kindness and my love. Out in the open for all to see. Life's lessons are the wind beneath my wings. Yes, I embrace the experiences of my legs and arms fluttering through life because I wasn't swaddled. Or maybe I was & foolishly untucked my own corners. But nevertheless I NOW FLY! Yes, we are great & we are bruised! But we were made to fly! So spread your wings. Spread your wings! Make no apologies! Let's spread our wings! And fly child fly! This is you! This is me!!!! Worriers, victors, overcomers, ladies & gentlemen this is Ahmed Wallace!

[Ahmed Wallace performs]

VOG - Introducing our host for the evening, award-winning writer, producer, podcaster -- and member of the New Jersey Broadcasters Association Radio Hall of Fame -- **Bert Baron**.

BERT

Thank you, thank you.

I am honored to be here tonight as your host. On behalf of Town Clock Community Development Corporation, I welcome all of you here at the beautiful New Brunswick Performing Arts Center... and welcome all of you watching at home via livestream. [Wave]

It is with deep gratitude that we thank you for supporting our mission to **provide permanent, affordable, safe housing and supportive services for survivors of domestic violence and their children**. Our vision is to **end the cycle of domestic violence by giving survivors time**.

As you saw, we were inspired by our residents to create ***Spreading Our Wings*** as our year-long program theme for 2021. Town Clock CDC is a catalyst that encourages and supports our residents to ***Spread Their Wings*** as they journey to regain their independence and rebuild their lives.

They are safe.

Each is in her own permanent, affordable home and receiving supportive services.

And as we all well know, having a home provides you the opportunity to be still, to be safe and to be healed.

As you can imagine, this was not always the case for a survivor of domestic violence and that is why we are here. Through performances of spoken word, art and song, we will gain a better understanding of what a survivor's experience is like. We will learn the importance of listening to their stories. We will be inspired by the triumphs of our residents and other survivors as they learn to ***Spread Their Wings!***

During the last 2 years, many of the residents of Town Clock CDC have been on a journey of healing and self-discovery by creating art. To represent their creative spirit, we have commissioned a very special artist to be with us here on the right side of the stage. **Laura Da-quila** is a professional artist who will be sketching and painting watercolors of tonight's performances. Laura understands our residents first-hand, because, she too, is a survivor of domestic violence. Laura, thank you for being here tonight to share your art with us. We will check in with you throughout the evening to see your beautiful and inspiring work.

Please let's welcome Laura.

Joining us again this year, is one of the prominent figures in the City of New Brunswick, NJ, where Town Clock CDC is based. We are delighted to bring to the stage Mayor James Cahill who will present a proclamation to Town Clock CDC President Rebecca Escobar and Executive Director Rev. Susan Kramer-Mills.

MAYOR CAHILL

Thank you and good evening. Welcome to the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center and to what is sure to be a special and memorable evening.

We come together tonight to show our love and support for Town Clock CDC and all the survivors of domestic violence it serves.

Town Clock CDC has been a cornerstone in New Brunswick's ongoing commitment to help those in need and the belief that no one should ever have to live in fear in the confines of their own home, or with the constant threat of violence from someone they may have trusted at one time.

Tonight, through art, performance, and through spoken word and a powerful show of unity, we will together as one, send a loud and clear message that domestic violence in any form is unacceptable and that its victims deserve safety, support and to live with dignity.

I urge you to continue to support Town Clock CDC throughout tonight's event and beyond. There is no force more powerful than like-minded individuals with a common goal.

Thank you for joining us this evening and for being a part of this powerful cause.

Rebecca Escobar and Rev Susan Kramer-Mills please join me on stage.

[Mayor reads proclamation]

BERT

Thank you Mayor Cahill. We are very proud of the work Town Clock CDC is doing to help the community of New Brunswick and the greater central Jersey area.

We want to acknowledge that women are not the only people who experience domestic violence. There are men who are survivors too. Domestic violence can happen in all types of partner relationships. Tonight we continue our mission of awareness that this behavior must stop!

An evening like this is the result of a dedicated team of workers, volunteers, and the tremendous support of committed sponsors. Please take a moment to give a round of applause to all the sponsors seen on the screen and in the digital Playbill. Please patronize these sponsors as they are supporting this mission along with you.

Tonight we will honor various people and organizations that are supporting survivors of domestic violence. Our first award this evening is **The Outstanding Advocate Award** and it will be presented by Town Clock CDC Executive Director, **Rev. Susan Kramer-Mills**. Please welcome her to the stage.

SUSAN

The Outstanding Advocate Award is given typically to an individual or group who challenges perceptions and educates the public about domestic violence. In response to the challenge of educating students during the pandemic, Gisela Ciancia, Roosevelt School Principal, New Brunswick, will be honored for helping Town Clock CDC children, all of whom experienced domestic violence. Principal Ciancia is receiving this honor in recognition of all educators who help the 1 in 15 children exposed to domestic violence each year. In addition, we want to recognize the extra challenges ALL educators faced during the pandemic.

It is with great pleasure that I present this year's OUTSTANDING ADVOCATE AWARD to **Gisela Ciancia**, principal of the Roosevelt School in New Brunswick.

GISELA

Thank you, Town Clock Community Development Corporation. It is an honor to be here and to have been selected for The Outstanding Advocate Award.

As an educator for 17 years, I have seen many ups and downs...

But these last two years with the pandemic and teaching virtually presented many new challenges for educators than anticipated. It also created more challenges for our students, especially those at risk.

When we see children in person every day, educators can see changes in their behavior and physical appearance. However, it was more difficult to assess the emotional and physical wellbeing of our students over the computer because so many would hide behind a screen. We learned quickly that we had to rely on our gut feelings. And, intuition is actually why I am speaking to you today.

After multiple attempts to engage one particular student in learning, it was clear that there was more to her story than “a student who did not want to do her work”. When I spoke to her mom, I could hear the desperation in her voice, which led me to ask, “Do you need me to meet you at your home?” Mom was surprised, but replied, “yes.” As is required, a representative of the NBPD Juvenile Dept. accompanied me on the home visit to Town Clock.

The student had been with us at Roosevelt since kindergarten, so we have been part of her and her mother’s brave journey to escape domestic violence and start a new life. During the home visit, we quickly realized that the isolation of the pandemic was causing this child serious emotional trauma. We immediately secured specialized services for our student to help her cope.

This is the part of the journey that is rarely spoken about... Surviving Domestic Violence is far more than getting out... Surviving often requires a long healing process, especially for children.

As Helen Keller stated, "Alone We Can Do So Little. Together We Can Do So Much." It has not been easy, but we're happy to see so much progress with our students. Nowadays, she happily comes to school. When I last spoke to her, she said, " I am doing pretty good; I am making new friends and my teachers are very sweet."

As a school principal, it is my role and the responsibility of my team, to ensure that our students' needs -- academically, socially and emotionally-- are being met inside and outside of school. We're so grateful that our student has the support that she needs, because children can only thrive when they feel safe in school, at home, and in the community. This family's journey is a story of courage, strength, and support between the family, Town Clock, and the school. It is an example of how there is success and worth in having a village. Mom has always been open and honest about her journey, as she hopes that her story will help her daughter and others understand their self-worth. Together we can make the impactful differences that ultimately save lives.

To you my love as you sit in the audience today, I want you to remember that you are loved and you are worthy. The strength within you will carry through life, but even when you are far gone from Roosevelt... know that our doors are always open. We love you and believe in you.

[Video]

VOG - Introducing the The Gift of Time by Lauren Weinstein, performed by Abigail Hawk, Meridith Grundei, Chantal Jean-Pierre

[Comic Performance]

VOG - After the show, please visit our shop in the lobby where you can purchase "The Gift of Time" by Lauren Weinstein. This is a new graphic novel about Town

Clock CDC. You can also purchase art prints by our Town Clock CDC residents. All proceeds benefit the work of Town Clock CDC and our residents.

Returning to the stage, Rev. Susan Kramer-Mills

SUSAN

“Art is for healing ourselves, and everybody needs their own personal art to heal up their problems.” This was said by one of our most accomplished singers - Linda Ronstadt. At Town Clock CDC, Art is an essential path on the healing journey for our residents.

Award-winning graphic novelist, Lauren Weinstein, has been providing art classes for our residents for close to two years. We are thrilled to have her as part of the Town Clock family. We are grateful for her work on the graphic novel, *The Gift of Time*, which you just saw an excerpt performed.

This past summer was very special, because through a generous grant from her alma mater, Lauren hosted a trip for some of our residents to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We viewed the Alice Neel exhibition.

I was not familiar with Neel’s work, but immediately saw why Lauren chose this exhibition for us to see. Alice Neel’s paintings showed people - in all their colors and gender expressions - in all their difficulties - in all life circumstances. That’s why the exhibition was aptly titled: *People Come First*. Her paintings depicted: grief at losing a child, sitting in the mental health clinic, many nudes - even one of a pregnant woman which was considered ground-breaking at that time. So many of her pictures were of mothers with their children. The diversity was beautiful. We all immediately connected to Neel’s art.

But the one picture which caused us all to pause and discuss, was the nude that Alice Neel had done of her 6-year-old daughter in 1934. The child stands defiantly, hands on hips, staring at the viewer. The backstory of this painting caused us to

ponder. You see, Neel's partner at the time, the Cuban painter Carlos Enriquez, took the daughter to Cuba when Alice Neel lost her custody battle. Gutted by despair, Neel was hospitalized after attempting self harm. She only saw her daughter Isabetta three more times in the fifty years that followed.

Our residents quietly stood before this picture in deep thought. So much strength exudes from the daughter's face. Yet so much sadness could be felt from the artist. This painting was all that Alice Neel really had of her daughter. And in many ways represents how many of our residents, and other survivors of domestic violence, miss their children. Some women have left their children behind in order to flee for their life. Some have lost custody battles. Some continue to fight for custody. Some are fortunate to be able to raise their children.

Alice Neel survived her trauma of the loss of her child, but it is a sadness that never totally healed. Our residents, standing in front of that painting, felt Neel's pain. How does one go on living? How does one lose it all - home, work, even family and friends - and not lose one's self?

There is a new Netflix miniseries, titled MAID, which accurately depicts a young survivor of domestic violence by the name of Alex. It shows the ups and downs Alex experiences when she leaves an abusive relationship. It shows how she struggles to take her child with her. How she does not have a safe place to go, so she sleeps in her car. How she tries to find a job. How the courts threatened to take her child away because she has nothing.

In desperation to get money and housing, Alex signs up to become a housekeeper. It's the only job accessible to her. Yet, the position is underpaid and often abusive. But she needs a job in order to get transitional housing with rental assistance in order to keep custody of her child. The requirements of the system can be debilitating.

The miniseries also shows how difficult it is to get good childcare, especially, if you don't have a support system that can care for the child when the mother is

sick. It demonstrates how a parent faces losing a job or even hourly wages if they can't work because of the child's illness. It's an endless, no-win cycle.

The series shows how our well-intentioned social service system is overwhelmed with the amount of people needing assistance. How little affordable housing there is, let alone that it is safe and clean. Not to mention if supportive services are offered, which is rare.

This young woman's resiliency is due largely to the fact that she is fighting to have her daughter with her. That is what gives her strength to carry on. Children give many of our residents strength to rise up and overcome, even when they are feeling broken.

In their 1985 song Broken Wings, the group Mr. Mister sings this refrain:

Take these broken wings
You've got to learn to fly, learn to live, love so free
And when we hear the voices sing
The book of love will open up and let us in ... yeah, yeah

How does one heal broken wings? Healing requires 1) good, supportive care 2) a safe place to live, and 3) time. Getting those three components just right is complicated. It's also very rare to find facilities that offer all three.

At present, there are only three locations in the entire State of New Jersey that offer permanent, affordable, safe housing with supportive services. Only 17 apartments with a specific program for survivors are available. It certainly is not adequate for the thousands of victims, which on average total about 70,000 cases in New Jersey alone. Town Clock CDC is the largest facility in NJ at Dina's Dwelling with 10 apartments for women and children, and The Barbara Littman House for a woman with up to 5 children.

And just to be sure that we understand the severity of these statistics: domestic violence is the number one cause of female homelessness in the United States. 57% of homeless women cite that domestic violence is the root cause why they don't have a place to live.

You've got to learn to fly, to live, and to love... Those words echo in the song refrain. But that's easier said than done. Rebuilding lives requires a safe place, which is affordable. Rebuilding lives requires supportive services including education, job training, life skills, therapy, coaching and more. It requires dedicated staff that deeply cares and works beyond the time clock. It requires a Board and volunteers who are willing to give of their time and raise money. Rebuilding lives requires supporters and advocates like all of you -- here tonight and watching via livestream -- who support Town Clock CDC, support our residents and support the need for a housing-first initiative to end the cycle of domestic violence.

Your support empowers our advocacy work and our goal to help other organizations follow our model and develop more housing opportunities for survivors of domestic violence. Eventually we hope to reach our long-term goal of scaling our program and having at least two housing facilities in every state based on our model.

It's a huge dream, but we are hopeful. As hopeful as seeing a hummingbird in downtown New Brunswick. Yes. Indeed. I would not have believed it if I had not seen it myself. Our residents, staff and volunteers came together to create a beautiful flower and vegetable garden this past summer. Plants and bird feeders were dropped off by many donors. Some of our residents added to the ambiance by providing solar accent lights and other decorations. The beautiful, safe and nourishing environment they created for themselves also attracted an unexpected, but welcome visitor – a hummingbird looking for sustenance. And once she appeared, provisions were made to help our unofficial mascot, who

returned daily until the season changed and she was strong enough to fly along the next path in her journey.

We all recognized the symbolism our little hummingbird had for all of us. We were sorry to see her leave, but we knew it was time for her to spread her wings and fly free.

Thank you.

VOG - Introducing. Vinroy Brown and The Elevation Singers

[Performance]

VOG - The Outstanding Volunteer Award, presented by Rev. Susan Kramer-Mills

SUSAN

The Outstanding Volunteer Award is given to an individual or group who is a driving force in volunteering and/or philanthropy. The United Methodist Church of New Brunswick will be honored for its ministry to feed the hungry, whose numbers grew during the pandemic. They also provided meals to domestic violence survivors and their children, who reside at Town Clock Community Development Corporation.

It is with great pleasure that I present this year's OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD to **Reverend Cynthia Stouffer**, Pastor, United Methodist Church of New Brunswick.

CYNTHIA

It is a great honor to be able to share with all of you tonight as we celebrate the survivors of domestic violence. I am continually in awe of the amazing work that

Town Clock does on behalf of so many. We are glad to help support the women and children who have found a home at Town Clock.

Tonight I am accepting this award for my church family, the United Methodist Church at New Brunswick, but I am also accepting on behalf of the many volunteers and partners that allow us to be engaged daily in the mission and ministry in our city.

When the pandemic began - it was a young man - not even a member of my church, who saw the need and began cooking meals and serving them outside our Liberty Street doors each night. I give thanks for his courage and for the many others that came alongside us in this past year.

I want to thank our partners who provided us with meals weekly. They include: Archangel Raphael's Mission and John El-Maraghy, God Will Provide Ministry in East Brunswick and Pastor Artem, Praise English Ministry from Praise Presbyterian Church, Ethnos Ministry and Pastor Yucan and Elijah's Promise.

Thank you to our interns Sabina, Hillary, and Ethan, who coordinate and make sure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

And, most importantly, thank you for our volunteers and captains, some of whom are here tonight. John, Anton, Karen, and so many more; this ministry is built on the shoulders of people who are willing to give generously of their time and their hearts.

What we have learned over the last year and a half is that we are much better when we come together to care for the needs of others. There is an abundance of resources when we are willing to walk with one another. I am so grateful to accept this award on behalf of all those who continue to offer hope in the midst of our city. Thank you.

VOG - Coming back to the stage, our host Bert Baron

BERT

Let's check on our artist Laura Daquila. Your work is so beautiful and inspiring. We will check in with you one last time at the end of the show. As a quick reminder, after the show, you can visit our shop in the lobby where you can purchase ***The Gift of Time*** by **Lauren Weinstein** or one of the art prints by our Town Clock CDC residents. Please note, 75% of the sale of the art prints goes directly to our residents. We haven't forgotten about our online viewers, you can go to TOWN CLOCK CDC DOT ORG to make your purchases. All proceeds benefit the work of Town Clock CDC and the residents.

Our next award will be The **Outstanding Provider Award**. Let's welcome back **Rev. Susan Kramer-Mills**.

SUSAN

The Outstanding Provider Award is given to an individual or group who provides emergency services to survivors of domestic violence. Tonight, we honor Safe+Sound Somerset for its work on the front lines through the pandemic, supporting an increasing number of victims of domestic violence and providing them with critically needed services.

It is with great pleasure that I present this year's OUTSTANDING PROVIDER AWARD to **Tonya F. McKinley** on behalf of Safe+Sound Somerset.

TONYA

Safe + Sound Somerset is honored to accept the Town Clock Community Development Corporation Outstanding Provider Award. Our agency is a team of advocates who have steadfastly placed themselves on the front lines by

partnering with survivors of domestic violence to discover a pathway to safe, independent living. We truly understand and appreciate the work Town Clock does to advance its housing-first mission and help survivors. In 2020, Safe + Sound Somerset quickly transitioned from 100% in-person to remote to ensure there was no lapse in trauma-informed services; as a result, we were able to serve over 4,000 survivors. The services included 5,506 nights of shelter through our emergency safe house and transitional house programs and \$154,000 financial assistance which included rental assistance for 24 survivors and flexible funding assistance (childcare, transportation, utility) for 23 survivors participating in the newly launched domestic violence housing first initiative—an initiative built on a foundation of partnership and empowerment to help survivors find safe housing rapidly. Now, imagine this vision of a mother holding her child with one hand, placing the key in the door to her new home with the other hand. She walks in, and tears of freedom and peace stream down her face, and she exhales. That's courage! That's Being Brave! For this reason, Safe + Sound Somerset is committed to providing access to receive confidential services that offer safety and healing 24 hours, seven days a week.

VOG - Performing her latest single, ***Falling In Love***, welcome to the stage **Keyona Lashawn**.

[performance]

VOG - It is our pleasure to introduce R&B Superstar and close personal friend of our 2021 Being Brave Award Recipient Ms. Melba Moore. Please welcome to the stage **Mr. Freddie Jackson** along with **Rev. Susan Kramer-Mills**.

SUSAN

The Being Brave Award is given for outstanding leadership in empowering women and breaking the cycle of domestic violence. Prior recipients of the Being Brave Award include -- Sheryl Lee Ralph -- Actor, Philanthropist and Activist -- and -- Tarana Burke -- Activist and Founder of the #MeTooMovement. I am delighted to be here tonight with Freddie Jackson, who knows this year's honoree very well.

FREDDIE

[FREDDIE REMARKS]

MELBA

[MELBA REMARKS]

Bert's Interview Questions for Melba Moore

Ms. Moore, you are a legend, an icon and a star of stage, TV, movies and of course, the music industry. So many of us have our favorite Melba Moore songs and memories of you from the 70s and through the decades. Looking at your social media, you are still very busy in 2021. What motivates and drives you?

This year Town Clock CDC's theme is Spreading Our Wings, as a survivor of domestic violence, how do you continue to spread your wings?

What encouraging words would you have for other survivors of domestic violence that are here tonight, listening online or may hear this message at a later time?

Thank you, Ms. Moore for your resilience and for your support of Town Clock CDC.

VOG:

Now for the moment we have been waiting for, performing Lean On Me Tony Award Winner, multifaceted entertainer and R&B Legend and our 2021 Being Brave Award Recipient - MS. MELBA MOORE.

[Melba Performs]

BERT

Tonight, we now invite ALL the men in our audience (who are able) to join us on stage for #TheManStand. Please put on your “End Domestic Violence” masks, rise up and walk to the left and right sides of the theater. Along the walls, you will see an open door to get on stage. There will be volunteers there to guide you.

We honor and recognize these men for showing their solidarity with survivors of domestic violence. They are proudly wearing purple masks with the wording - End Domestic Violence.

While the men are coming to the stage, we want to remind you to use the links in your digital playbill to donate to this worthy cause.

There also are many men who could not be here in person tonight, but who feel strongly about breaking the cycle of violence. Please hear what they have to say.

[VIDEO PLAYS]

BERT

When we stand in solidarity, we can effect change. Please welcome - Robert Rawls - director of the New Brunswick Fire Department.

ROBERT

To paraphrase a well-known quote... Being Brave is NOT the absence of fear, it IS the strength to face fear.

As firefighters, we try to face fear head on, every day. So we recognize bravery when we see it in others. The women of Town Clock CDC and all people who stand up to domestic violence ARE BRAVE. **Let me repeat:** The women of Town Clock CDC and all people who stand up to domestic violence ARE BRAVE.

That's why all of us at the New Brunswick Fire Department support #TheManStand and the work of Town Clock CDC. Our firefighters participated in the first Man Stand. I am proud to have more of our firefighters represent our department again tonight. And, we look forward to standing up to domestic violence every day and at future Being Brave events.

On stage tonight, we also have with us many men from New Brunswick and the greater New Jersey community standing against ALL harmful actions, such as pressuring, shaming, insulting, demeaning, controlling, intimidating, and threatening behavior. They are fathers, sons, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, nephews, husbands, partners and friends standing up to protect the lives of their loved ones.

We also have with us student athletes from Rutgers University, who are committed to ending domestic violence. Kyle Holder -- who was a very accomplished member of the Rutgers Men's Track and Field team from 2012 through 2017 -- will represent all of us by sharing his story. Please help me welcome Kyle Holder.

(Robert Rawls join the other men on stage)

KYLE

My story begins freshman year when my Track and Field captain invited the team to a meeting for a group called SCREAM athletes. I didn't know what it was, but there was free pizza. Well free food got me in the door, but what kept me coming back was this amazing group of men and women who were advocating against sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, harassment and more. I recognized that this message unfortunately needed to be amplified. I say unfortunately because we don't have these conversations enough, especially as men. That's why I'm honored to be here as part of TheManStand to encourage these conversations to end violent behavior.

So I took off running (track pun intended)... I became very involved in SCREAM athletes... which stands for Students Challenging Realities and Educating Against Myths. Soon my teammates and I were performing improvisation skits to educate thousands of our peers on the need to confront misogynistic, derogatory behavior and dehumanizing language.... We were encouraging other men to be role models for their friends... and challenging people to be positive active bystanders.

Eventually, I became the person people felt comfortable calling in the middle of the night for help. Students called me when someone forced themselves on them, or when they were in a relationship that became dangerous. Every call came for the same reason... they didn't know what to do, and they were afraid to call the police, go to the hospital, reach out to services, or speak to almost anyone else.

It hurt my heart every time, and there were many nights when I wished I wasn't the guy to call because witnessing such devastation took an emotional toll on me too. However I could not imagine what those women would have done if they didn't have someone to call at that moment.

All I did was listen and offer resources. People suffering after a traumatic experience don't need to hear how they were at fault or could have avoided the situation. I think we all have a duty to create a survivor-centered culture where no one is scared to seek help.

That is my vision for our community as a whole, and the issue is extremely personal for me. A while ago, I met a very special young lady who did not realize she had been emotionally abused for years by a man who belittled her into thinking she was powerless and weak. It wasn't until he physically assaulted her that she sought a way out.

She made the brave decision to end the relationship... Thinking the worst was behind her, one day she was dropping off the last of his belongings when she faced death head on. If not for the intervention of a positive active bystander, my beautiful wife Alma may not be sitting here with us tonight.

Several people tried to tell her SHE shouldn't have gone by herself... and SHE should have known better. I am embarrassed that her community was not there to support her and failed to place the blame on the person who committed the crimes.

After seeking resources with people who supported her, she now tells her story with pride, strength and courage so other individuals suffering a similar situation can see that they do not have to go through it alone. I could not be more honored to spend my life with her.

I hope that my wife's story and my experiences inspire you to seek help or provide helpful information to someone in need. Throughout the state, there are many places like Town Clock and public and private resources where survivors are supported. And with each additional positive active bystander, we are one step closer to creating truly survivor-centered communities.

BERT

Thank you Kyle, Director Rawls and all the men here tonight, on the video and at home who are committed to the safety of women and being part of #TheManStand.

<<Clap>>

BERT

Let's take a final look at the artwork of Laura Daquila. Laura, as a survivor, what does it mean to you to be here tonight?

[Laura Answers]

BERT

Let's applaud her for capturing the essence of Spreading Our Wings during tonight's Being Brave event.

Tonight has been an inspirational journey. We have embraced who we are as survivors, as advocates, and as allies. We have embraced what is possible when we join together as individuals, businesses and corporations with the goal of healing, creating safe homes, and building communities.

Every donation helps create more permanent, affordable homes and services for survivors of domestic violence. But do not just stop with your donation. Spread the messages you heard tonight and tell others about Town Clock CDC and our residents.. Let them know that the goal of this evening is to continue scaling this innovative, effective work. To help communities around the country build at least two of these facilities in every state of our incredible nation. Visit us at TownClockCDC.org/Donate and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & YouTube – Follow, like, share and comment. This is critical to raising awareness and helping more survivors.

Again we thank all of our sponsors for their support and dedication to women's empowerment.

Thank you to our honorees, our incredible performers and especially our wonderful Next Level Band and Singers directed by our Musical Director Devin Harris.

A special thank you to the New Brunswick Performing Arts Center team and the 2021 Being Brave Production Team and our volunteers.

Please review the digital Playbill for a full list of everyone who helped tonight. Let's give them a well-deserved round of applause.

I can't think of a more appropriate way to end the show than with the song **Golden!** As these women live their lives like it's golden - and they spread their

wings to survive and thrive. Thank you for your commitment to Town Clock Community Development Corporation.

Go forth, Be Brave and continue Spreading Your Wings!