

Penn State Public Broadcasting presents "Domestic Violence: The Other Side of the River"

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA (September 27, 2005) - Penn State Public Broadcasting (PSPB) presents its production of "Domestic Violence: The Other Side of the River," an original drama that explores the pressing issue of domestic abuse on Wednesday, October 12 at 8:00 p.m. on WPSX-TV. The reality-based drama was written by Carol Schafer, Ph.D., associate professor of theatre and women's studies at Penn State Beaver campus, and Grace Coleman, executive director of Crisis Center North in Pittsburgh.

"Domestic Violence: The Other Side of The River" was initially created as a theatrical stage presentation to help educate the public about the dynamics of domestic abuse, to give voice to the experiences of women and to reach those currently experiencing violence. The program was produced and directed in PSPB studios by Jerry Sawyer.

For two years writers Schafer and Coleman interviewed victims and survivors of domestic violence in various stages of victimization and recovery. The results led them to seek the stories of those who worked with domestic violence victims to demonstrate the impact that interpersonal violence has not just on the lives of victims, but on the community as a whole. Schafer and Coleman wanted to bring the stories to life as part of an educational campaign. Focusing on a series of domestic violence situations, the production introduces viewers to connections and patterns of domestic abuse that become all too familiar and inter-related.

"The broadcast version is able to isolate faces, reactions, emotions and relationships that, while powerful in live performance in a theater, can become even more real to the video viewer as the limitations of stage disappear and we are left with the tension of face to face, personal interactions," said Sawyer.

Key roles in the production are played by Carla Delaney, Jaime Slavinsky, Corey Bisbal, Randy Oliva, Nardi Novak, Sam Nicotero and Ariana Moses with music by Lisa Y. Ferraro

"Domestic Violence: The Other Side of the River" was produced by Penn State Public Broadcasting in collaboration with the Crisis Center North in Pittsburgh, a domestic violence resource/response organization. Production funding for this program has been provided by Verizon Wireless. The original play premiered at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh.

Penn State Public Broadcasting serves 29 counties in central Pennsylvania and produces over 300 hours of quality local television programming each year.

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"Domestic Violence: The Other Side of the River"

Production Bios:

Carol Schafer (Director and Co-Author):

Carol Schafer has written over twenty original scripts and directed numerous productions. She is an associate professor of theatre and women's studies at Penn State University's Beaver Campus outside of Pittsburgh. She serves as vice president of the board of directors of Crisis Center North.

Grace Coleman (Producer and Co-Author):

Grace Coleman is the executive director of Crisis Center North as such she has served on numerous committees and task forces dedicated to addressing domestic violence. Grace has published research in state, national, and international journals. Additionally, she serves as a college instructor at Penn State University's Beaver Campus teaching classes in communication and women's studies.

Jerry Sawyer (Producer and Director)

Jerry Sawyer, the producer for this program, has been a television producer/director for the past 10 years. He recently produced for broadcast the opera, "York: The Voice of Freedom" and has had recent documentaries broadcast statewide, such as: "Pennsylvania Bed & Breakfasts: The Human Connection," and "Pennsylvania Train Stations: Restored & Re-Vitalized." Jerry's studio based experience includes "Scholastic Scrimmage," a quiz tournament for broadcast involving 58 area high school teams, a live monthly call-in program, "Your Health with Kristine Clark," and a live how-to program devoted to "Holiday Crafts." He is also a playwright, which has helped him produce dramatic projects for use in training videos in such areas as domestic violence and effective workplace relationships.

Acting Company Bios:

Carla Delaney:

Playing the role of 'Lauren,' Carla Delaney attended Point Park College for Musical Theater and has been a professional actress for the last decade. A Pittsburgh native, she has worked in many capacities both on and off stage, in management, as a teacher and as a stage performer for such companies as: Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, The Pittsburgh Public Theatre, The Pittsburgh City Theatre and The Penn Avenue Theatre.

Jaime Slavinsky

Playing the role of 'Justine,' Jaime Slavinsky has worked in theatre, film, commercials, and industrials in the Pittsburgh area for the past ten years. With a degree in acting from Point Park University, Jaime also has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with the Atlantic Theatre Company Acting School in New York City.□

Corey Bisbal

Playing the role of 'Stevie,' Corey Bisbal is a student at Center High School in western, PA. He avidly participates in many of his high school theatre productions and is a member of Center's High School Marching and Concert Band.

Randy Oliva

Playing the role of 'Josh.' Randy Alan Oliva arrived in Pittsburgh in 1992 and has been very active in the theatre scene. Randy has had leading roles in "The Philadelphia Story," "Jeffery,"

"Once in a Lifetime," and "The Fellowship of Actors and Directors." He also has had the privilege of performing the lead in the off-Broadway production of "Cowboy Void" in 2003. Oliva has been seen in local and national commercials as well. During the school year, Oliva tours with educational shows for Gateway to the Arts and Little Lake Outreach Program. In 1995, he started "Mystery's Most Wanted," where he and his talented cast are seen throughout Pennsylvania, New York, and Chicago.

Nardi Novak

Playing the role of 'Mary,' Nardi Novak appeared in various roles with professional and community theatres in Pittsburgh. She recently finished a run as Big Mama in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" in New Jersey. Novak has appeared in films, television shows, industrial training films, and commercials, and she also does voice-overs. Under the name Leonarda Obarski, Novak directed for a wide range of Pittsburgh theatre companies and received the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette award for Best Ensemble Direction in 2000. Before retiring, Novak was a trainer for the Center for victims of Violence and Crime in Pittsburgh.

Sam Nicotero

Playing the role of 'Patrick,' former radio deejay and talk show host, Sam Nicotero keeps active in area theatre and independent films. He has appeared in "Hoffa," "The Mothman Prophecies," and many plays including two seasons at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre.

Ariana Moses

Playing the role of 'Missy,' Ariana Moses originally hails from New York City and is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College. Since moving to Pittsburgh two years ago, she has been in numerous shows, working with local children's, community, and semi-professional theatre. "The Other Side of the River," however, was her first Pittsburgh performance.

Music:

Lisa Y. Ferraro

Lisa Ferraro created the original music for "Domestic Violence: The Other Side of the River." She has opened for various acts at Star Lake Amphitheatre/Post-Gazette Pavillion, performed at Heinz Hall with Marvin Hamlisch, the Pittsburgh Pops, and performs regularly at such venues as the Three Rivers Arts Festival, James Street Tavern, Fosters, and the Pittsburgh Jazz Society. Additionally, Lisa founded the non-profit organization, Soul Call, Inc., which is dedicated to providing children with alternatives to foster care.