

# *Women Are Safe, Inc.*

P O Box 2

Centerville, TN 37185

**HOTLINE : 1-800-470-1117** (Dickson, Humphreys, Perry Counties) **729-5730** (Hickman County)



## **Who Does Your Child Look Up To?**

***Someone is watching how we act and react, what we say and how we say it, what we do and how we live. Children... they watch, learn, and imitate. Be an example. Don't tolerate domestic violence.***

These words are printed on the wall of my office as a reminder to all who enter that it is so important to not just “talk the talk”, but to “walk the walk” as well. Without a doubt, the most important role model for a child is his parents, but there are so many other powerful influences as well – friends, neighbors, television, the internet, music, movies, video games, etc. Very often the message our society sends to boys is that they have to be tough and in control to be a man. Imagine how these messages will be translated in their relationships.

Like it or not, celebrities are a powerful influence on our youth. Our children look up to famous actors, athletes, musicians and other public figures. Think of the message it sends when these individuals fail as role models, when they batter their partners, and we as a society continue to admire them and pay to see them perform?

What does it mean when a company continues to use a known batterer as its celebrity spokesperson? When a violent actor is written about and cast as a heartthrob? When a singer beats his girlfriend, and his next love song reaches number one on the charts? We see news reports all the time detailing the bad and often illegal behavior of those in the spotlight.

When we hear these things as parents, we should take the opportunity to discuss these issues with our child, making sure they know we don't condone the behavior and that there is nothing to admire in those violent actions. If there is a particular star you know your child admires, do some checking up to see if they are worthy of your child's admiration.

If we continue to idolize celebrities after they are known to be violent to their partners, we perpetuate domestic violence by helping to create an environment in which violence is viewed as acceptable. Celebrities, and the media that publicize and employ them, must be held accountable. It is up to us, as consumers of entertainment, to make sure that this happens. Below, I have listed just a few public figures. For a complete list, go to

<http://www.endabuse.org/celebritywatch/index.php?Fame=N>

Did you know?

1. **“Stone Cold” Steve Austin** - WWE Professional wrestler “Stone Cold” Steve Austin, whose real name is Steve Williams, turned himself in to police on charges of assaulting his wife, fellow WWE performer Debra Williams. In June 2002, Debra Williams called police to the couple’s house in San Antonio, and police saw a “large noticeable welt” beneath her right eye, reports *Entertainment Weekly*. Austin was not at the house when police arrived and he was not arrested. In August 2002, Austin turned himself in, posted \$5,000 bond, and was released pending future legal action.

2. **Rae Carruth** - In January 2001, professional football player, Rae Carruth, was found not guilty of the murder of his girlfriend Cherica Adams, but guilty of conspiracy to commit murder. The jury acquitted Carruth of first-degree murder, but found him guilty of three other felony charges: conspiracy to commit murder, shooting into an occupied vehicle, and using an instrument with intent to kill an unborn child. Carruth could face up to 25 years in prison. Carruth was originally charged with hiring three men to shoot Adams in a drive-by shooting. Adams, who was pregnant at the time of the attack, slipped into a coma and then died after giving birth to a son, who is in the custody of her parents.

5. **Eric Clapton** - On April 16, 1999, members of the National Task Force on Violence Against Women protested outside Eric Clapton's live performance in Washington, D.C. The demonstration was held to protest the lyrics of a new song, Sick & Tired: "I'm gonna get me a shotgun, baby, and stash it behind the bedroom door. I may have to blow your brains out, baby. Then you won't bother me no more." "That Eric Clapton could be so oblivious to [domestic violence and violent language toward women] is disheartening," Boston Herald columnist Margery Eagan wrote.

6. **Eminem** - Eminem, whose real name is Marshall Mathers, is a critically acclaimed and extremely popular rap musician who has courted controversy throughout his highly successful career. Marshall Mathers LP was the second-best-selling album of 2000. Marshall Mathers LP sold 7.9 million copies in the United States alone. Wife abuse, murder, rape, and other forms of violence against women and gay people are consistent themes throughout the music of Eminem, who is easily the most popular white rapper ever. On both his albums, he performs songs about murdering his wife, Kim. Eminem also was arrested for attacking a bartender with a gun; he said he believed the bartender had flirted with his wife.

7. **Richard Hatch** - *Survivor I* winner Richard Hatch was found guilty in September 2001, of domestic assault. Hatch was sentenced to one year of probation for an August incident in which he allegedly shoved his ex-boyfriend, Glenn Boyanowski, down a flight of stairs.

8. **Sergei Krivokrasov** - Sergei Krivokrasov, a hockey player on the Nashville Predators, was ordered to undergo counseling as a part of an agreement

for dismissal of a domestic violence charge brought by his wife, Natalia Krivokrasov. Natalia Krivokrasov reported that her husband kicked and slapped her, pulled out her hair and pushed her down the stairs following an argument.

**9. Charlie Sheen** - In June 1997, actor Charlie Sheen pleaded no contest to physically abusing his former girlfriend the December before and received a one-year suspended sentence and two years probation. Sheen must also pay \$2,800 in fines and restitution, attend counseling sessions, and perform 300 hours of community service. He is forbidden from contacting his ex-girlfriend.

The Family Violence Prevention Fund's newest campaign, Coaching Men Into Boys, has a public service announcement that speaks volumes in a few simple words and I think sums up this article best.

*"How do you stop a 30 year old from beating his wife? Talk to him when he's 12".*

For more information on Coaching Men Into Boys, go to <http://toolkit.endabuse.org/Resources/CoachingBoys>