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## **Saving Families, Saving Lives: DEMANDS INCREASE FOR UNDISCLOSED HOUSING FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS**

The Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation Responds  
With A Generous **\$100,000.00 Grant for Expansion**

**Waltham, MA / Franklin, MA / Greater Boston & Metro West - REACH** Beyond Domestic Violence, Inc., headquartered in Waltham MA, is proud to announce a generous \$100,000.00 Grant for Expansion, awarded by the Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation.

Since 1981, REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, Inc. has answered over 30,000 hotline calls and has provided shelter to more than 1,450 adults and children. Nearly 5,000 survivors have received legal help and over 1,500 have attended support groups held at REACH locations. To date, over 1650 volunteers have contributed almost 175,000 hours to REACH.

But it simply isn't enough. **The demand for REACH services is outpacing the supply.** Last year, REACH housed more people than ever – over 120 women and children, representing almost 4,000 nights of shelter. However, due to a lack of space, REACH was forced to turn away nearly 400 people seeking emergency shelter.

“Domestic violence is a hidden crime. Victims suffer silently, terrified for themselves and for their children. The decision to leave an abusive relationship is a courageous one – not only because of the threat of increased violence, but because leaving can mean homelessness.” said Laura Van Zandt, Executive Director of REACH. “This is the reality of “why doesn't she

leave?” It is a very intimidating decision – and many victims wonder, where will I go? This is why we are always looking for ways to increase awareness, which is crucial.” Van Zandt emphasizes that, “Because victims often suffer silently, the published statistics of adults and children struggling with Domestic Violence do not reflect the true scope of this growing dilemma.”

Still, these statistics are alarming. Domestic violence accounts for a quarter of all recorded violent crime in New England. One in four women will experience some form of violence by a partner during their lifetime. Every week, two women die as a result of domestic violence.

A team of dedicated women founded **REACH**, an acronym for **R**efuge, **E**ducation, **A**dvocacy and **C**Hange, in 1981 as an all-volunteer hotline called “Waltham Battered Women Support Committee, Inc.” Today, REACH is a leading provider of safe housing and support for individuals and families fleeing domestic violence. REACH offers emergency shelter at confidential locations and is the first-point resource for domestic violence victims of 27 Greater Boston and Metro West communities. Over the past 25 years, the organization has also initiated support groups, individual counseling, specialized children’s services, community-based victim advocacy programs, legal advocacy, outreach programs, educational literature and training throughout Massachusetts.

“The Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation was first to confirm their support through a very generous grant when we needed it the most. This \$100,000.00 grant will help fund our expansion goals to double our space for adults, children, and families who need emergency shelter,” said Christine Konys, President of the Board of Directors of REACH.

Said Thomas R. Venables, President and CEO of Benjamin Franklin Bank and the Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation, “Domestic violence is an epidemic that, if left unaddressed, will grow to devastate more of our neighbors, families, friends and colleagues. We are proud of our commitment to help REACH do what they do best, to *reach* out into our local communities and improve lives.”

REACH is embarking on a \$2.5 million dollar capital campaign to fund a new facility, programs, and services to help survivors and families become self-sufficient. REACH hopes other local organizations will follow Benjamin Franklin Bank's courageous lead.

For additional information, please visit our website at [www.reachma.org](http://www.reachma.org).



**Pictured above from left to right:**

Christine Konys, President of the Board of Directors of REACH, Mariane E. Broadhurst, SVP Retail Banking of Benjamin Franklin Bank, Thomas R. Venables, President & CEO of the Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation, Laura Van Zandt, Executive Director of REACH

Event: REACH Beyond Domestic Violence Inc.'s 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on May 18, 2006 in Waltham MA.

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**Pictured above:**

Keynote Speaker, Governor Jeanne Shaheen with Thomas R. Venables, President & CEO of the Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation

Event: REACH Beyond Domestic Violence Inc.'s 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on May 18, 2006 in Waltham MA.

**BOILERPLATE:**

The Benjamin Franklin Bank Charitable Foundation was founded in 2005 by Benjamin Franklin Bank. Benjamin Franklin Bank is a subsidiary of the Benjamin Franklin Bancorp, Inc. The Bank is a full-service community bank originally chartered in 1871 with nine branch locations: 58 Main Street, Franklin, MA 02038 and 231 East Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038; 4 North Main Street, Bellingham, MA 02019; 1 Mechanic Street, Foxborough, MA 02035; 76 North Street, Medfield, MA 02052; 221 Main Street, Milford, MA 01757; 40 Austin Street, Newtonville, MA 02460; 75 Moody Street, Waltham, MA 02451 and 1290 Main Street, Waltham, MA 02453.

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