

The METROWEST DAILY NEWS

Stepping up against domestic violence in Framingham



*Abbie Herrman, 15, of Framingham, dons a pair of flags while walking in the third annual "Walk to Break the Silence" at Framingham's downtown common on Saturday morning.
Daily News and Wicked Local Photo/ Shane Gerardi*

By [Jonathan Phelps](#), Daily News Staff
October 18, 2014 11:09PM

FRAMINGHAM — Stephanie Deeley stood before a crowd of a couple hundred in downtown Framingham Saturday morning to speak about her sister, Kimberly Boleza Parker. Parker was a victim of domestic violence, Deeley, of Framingham, said.

"We lost her on March 10, 2013," she said before the start of Voices against Violence 3rd annual Walk to Break the Silence hosted by Voice against Violence, a program of South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC).

Parker, 45, died at her East Bridgewater home of causes that have not yet been determined. The family has been in and out of court for charges against Parker's husband, Richard, who

faces a charge of assault to murder amid others against his wife from an alleged incident in 2011. There have been no charges in her death, but the family has voiced their suspicions.

"We as Kim's family and friends support this walk because we hope to prevent another family from suffering such a devastating loss," Deeley said. "Join us in shining a light in those dark corners and raising our voices to call attention to this issue."

Mary Gianakis, director of Voices against Violence, says the event keeps growing each year. They surpassed its \$25,000 goal by raising \$30,000 with 20 teams and more than 300 people donating. Several hundred people participated in the walk.

"It is a great opportunity to come together and say, 'This has to stop,'" she said. "The violence has to stop."

James Cuddy, executive director of SMOC, said the walk is to remember the victims of domestic abuse. "It is also a walk of hope," he said. "We hope for the future. It is a very good place to be."

Congresswoman Katherine Clark participated in the walk and, as the keynote speaker, thanked everyone for "putting words to this silent epidemic."

"We can't forget the victims. We can't forget the survivors trying to put their lives back together," she said. "We can't just wait until the NFL makes the headlines. We have to make this a priority on the national level."

Police Chief Ken Ferguson said the department is working to create awareness. "We always want to be more effective," he said.

The event also featured art displays, games and face-painting. Many people waved purple flags as they walked along the 3-mile course.

The Framingham High School football and volleyball teams participated in the walk. Former District Attorney Gerry Leone serves as honorary chair.

One of the walkers, Meg Mullins of Framingham, said she got out of a very abusive situation with a man with the help of resources through SMOC. "I lost everything and I'd hate for other women to go through what I went through," she said. "I am here to support the victims dealing with domestic abuse."

Deeley said there's a perceived shame that prevents victims from speaking out.

"This is a fight we will not win quickly. We will not win by being quiet. None of us will win alone," she told the crowd. "But make no mistake: We will win and will do that together."

Jonathan Phelps can be reached at 508-626-4338 or jphelps@wickedlocal.com. Follow him on Twitter @JPhelps_MW.