

## DA Ryan Donates More Than 100 Cell Phones To Voices Against Violence

**“Access to communication tools is a lifeline for victims and survivors of domestic violence,” said the Middlesex District Attorney.**



*Pictured left to right: Framingham Police Chief Ken Ferguson, Chief, D.A. Marian Ryan, and Mary Gianakis, Executive Director, Voices Against Violence*

By Susan Petroni (Patch Staff) - February 12, 2016 5:31 am ET

FRAMINGHAM, MA - Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan has announced the donation of over 100 forfeited cell phones to benefit Voices Against Violence, a service offered by the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) to end sexual and domestic violence.

“Access to communication tools is a lifeline for victims and survivors of domestic violence allowing them to remain connected to their loved ones,” said Ryan. “Through our partnership with Voices Against Violence this donation will provide critical resources for individuals who have experienced this type of violence.”

The cell phones, obtained through the drug forfeiture process, are priced and recycled for parts; the value of the parts will go directly to Voices Against Violence and will be used to purchase pre-paid calling cards for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

“We applaud District Attorney Ryan’s ongoing commitment to victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence and to local community based programs like Voices Against Violence. The monies raised through this effort will go a long way towards ensuring that victims have access to the critically important, life-saving services they need,” said Mary Gianakis, Executive Director of Voices Against Violence.

Voices Against Violence is a service offered by the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) located in Framingham.

Voices Against Violence staff members work to empower victims and survivors to help themselves and their children and work in partnership with individuals and families to ensure their safety, create stable home environments, gain independence, and to develop personal and economic self-sufficiency.

District Attorney Ryan is addressing issues surrounding domestic violence through a comprehensive approach using education, training and outreach in addition to prosecution to promote prevention and provide resources for victims.

District Attorney Ryan recently expanded her Office’s Domestic Violence Pro Bono Initiative, a first-of-its kind partnership, designed to address the significant gap in the way domestic violence victims are served during the restraining order process. The office has partnered with 13 Boston-area civil law firms to identify victims who need legal assistance and then assign a private attorney to provide representation free of charge. Assistant District Attorneys are unable to represent domestic violence victims during the restraining order process because the order is a civil document.

District Attorney Ryan also works to raise public awareness about domestic violence and inform the community about resources that are available through programs like Cut It Out, a nationwide domestic violence prevention program geared towards salon professionals.

Last year District Attorney Ryan’s Office’s donation of forfeited cell phones provided the Transition House in Cambridge with \$794 in calling cards for victims living in the shelter.

\*\*\*