

## 3 Running Boston Marathon to Support Voices Against Violence

The runners have a goal to raise a minimum of \$7,500 for the Framingham organization, whose mission is to end sexual and domestic violence.



By Susan Petroni (Patch Staff)

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- About 1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men in Massachusetts have experienced sexual violence victimization.
- More than 1 in 7 women have experienced rape.
- 11 percent of high school students and 6 percent of middle school students reported being physically hurt by a date sometime in their life.

Just last month, The Middlesex District Attorney's Office said a Framingham woman was killed by her boyfriend, who then took his own life.

In Framingham, those experiencing sexual and domestic violence can turn to Voices Against Violence. The organization, under the South Middlesex Opportunity Council's umbrella (SMOC) has a mission to end sexual and domestic violence.

Next Monday, April 20, three runners will run 26.2 miles in the 119th Annual Boston Marathon, as part of Team Framingham to raise money for the Framingham-based organization.

The three runners are:

- Lauren O'Connell
- Phillip Mooney
- Eric Johnson

This is Mooney's second Boston Marathon. He has raised \$1,124 or about 45 percent of his goal of \$2,500.

"Domestic violence and rape is a serious matter, and I am grateful for also having the opportunity to raise funds for a program that's willing to address the issue within the local community," wrote Mooney on his fundraising page.

This will be O'Connell's third Boston Marathon but her first since 2008. She has raised \$1,611 for Voices Against Violence, which provides free and confidential services to victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Framingham and MetroWest. Services are provided in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and are available to everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, according to the organization's website.

"This is an amazing organization and I am hoping that you will support such a worthwhile cause," wrote O'Connell on her fundraising page.

Voices Against Violence services include a 24-hour hotline, crisis intervention, confidential short term emergency shelter, counseling and support groups, information and referrals, and medical, legal and criminal justice advocacy.

To support the Violence Against Runners, individuals can also make donations to Team Framingham.

Questions regarding Team Framingham can be sent to [MarathonBibs@framinghamma.gov](mailto:MarathonBibs@framinghamma.gov)