

Coaches Devise Game Plan to Mentor Boys and Young Men to Create a Healthy and Respectful Manhood

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Verizon Foundation, A CALL TO MEN Team Up With Baltimore Ravens Defensive Lineman Chris Canty and CBS Sportscaster James Brown to Help Coaches Develop Young Men of Character

BALTIMORE, April 16, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Several hundred coaches from area middle and high schools, colleges and universities, and community leagues met on Tuesday (April 16) to draft a new game plan to learn how to develop, mentor and lead young men and help build their character.

The [Verizon Foundation](#) and [A CALL TO MEN](#) – a leading national violence prevention organization – brought the second installment of their national training series, entitled A Call To Coaches: Your Voice Counts, to Baltimore. This half-day, interactive seminar was designed to equip coaches and community leaders with resources to prevent abusive behaviors by promoting respect, non-violence and healthy relationships. The first training session was held recently in North Carolina, drawing more than 400 coaches and community leaders who pledged to use their power of authority and leadership to encourage boys and young men to have a healthy and respectful manhood.

The Baltimore session brought together several members of the NFL community and domestic violence prevention advocates, including Chris Canty, Baltimore Ravens defensive lineman; Willis Whalen, NFL Players Association manager of player affairs and development; CBS Sportscaster James Brown; Joe Ehrmann, president of Coach For America and former Baltimore Colt; and led by Tony Porter and Ted Bunch, co-founders of A CALL TO MEN.

"A healthy relationship begins with respect," said Bunch. "Breaking down traditional stereotypes about manhood is essential, and that begins in the locker room. For instance, it's not cool to demean a teammate by saying he throws like a girl. When a coach takes the lead and stops that kind of language, men and young men listen."

The training session enabled coaches and community leaders to learn about fostering healthy manhood and gave them access to free resources for talking with athletes about healthy relationships. Participants left the training with a list of action items and resources to continue the conversation with their teams and in their own communities.

Brown, who has been an outspoken advocate for the importance of engaging men in domestic violence prevention, said: "Coaches play an extremely important role in shaping who young athletes will become – not only on the field, but in society and in their own relationships. When coaches and community leaders are positive mentors and role models, they instill character, respect and other healthy qualities in their players or the youths they lead. These coaches can take an active role in breaking the cycle of violence in our society, molding young men who will value women."

Resources from the training also will incorporate elements of the Verizon Foundation's recently launched [Your Voice Counts](#) awareness campaign (www.verizonfoundation.org/yourvoicecounts), which features Brown and is designed to engage and empower men to speak up and be a part of the solution to end domestic violence.

Verizon Foundation Program Director Susan Sullivan said: "Domestic violence is a hidden epidemic in the United States, and it has devastating impacts on individuals, families and communities alike. Verizon's commitment to ending domestic violence is long-standing. It's time to start a powerful conversation focused on new ways that men and women can work together to end domestic violence."

[Your Voice Counts](#) includes a series of public service announcements; a get-involved action guide; and a range of resources developed by [A CALL TO MEN](#) and the [Joyful Heart Foundation](#), a national organization focused on healing and empowering survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Your Voice Counts and its resources were created specifically for men, and offer a variety of ways people can make a difference in their communities by speaking out against domestic violence.

Materials from the A Call to Coaches training seminar will be available soon for public download on the [Your](#)

[Voice Counts](#) website. The next A Call To Coaches: Your Voice Counts training session will take place in Seattle on May 7. For more than a decade, Verizon has been a champion of ending domestic violence through its various business units and its philanthropic foundation. Verizon supports a broad range of programs that include:

- Training healthcare practitioners and first responders about screening for signs of abuse.
- Engaging men as role models and advocates for prevention.
- Educating teens about preventing dating violence.
- [Collecting no-longer-used wireless phones and accessories](#), with proceeds supporting and furthering domestic violence prevention programs.
- Allowing all Verizon Wireless customers to easily connect with a domestic violence counselor by dialing #4673 (#HOPE).

The Verizon Foundation is focused on accelerating social change by using the company's innovative technology to help solve pressing problems in education, healthcare and energy management. Since 2000, the Verizon Foundation has invested more than half a billion dollars to improve the communities where Verizon employees work and live. Verizon's employees are generous with their donations and their time, having logged more than 6.65 million hours of service to make a positive difference in their communities.

For more information about Verizon's philanthropic work, visit www.verizonfoundation.org; or for regular updates, visit the Foundation on Facebook (www.facebook.com/verizonfoundation) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/verizongiving).

About A CALL TO MEN

A CALL TO MEN works to create a world where all men and boys are loving and respectful and all women and girls are valued and safe. A CALL TO MEN (ACTMen) works nationally and internationally to galvanize a movement of men committed to ending violence and discrimination against women and girls. Previously, ACTMen partnered with the Verizon Foundation and the NFL Players Association on the Training Camps for Life initiative, teaching teens about healthy and respectful relationships. ACTMen is a founding partner of the Engaging Men Campaign and is contributing to the development and launch of the campaign, outreach efforts and educational resources. For more information about ACTMen visit www.acalltomen.org.

About Verizon

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