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An Important Evening in LA with Mary Kay

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By: Valerie Milano – West Hollywood, CA (Hollywood Today) 9/28/11

Domestic violence is a dirty little secret no one wants to talk about. Well, luckily someone does. The Mary Kay Foundation hosted a pink carpet event in Los Angeles @ Live! Sunset – the old Tower Records – last night (9/27) to showcase 3 films on domestic violence, a contest with a \$20,000 prize contribution to a shelter in the name of the winning team. The teams were provided a crew and celebrity narrator. Now through October 31st, Mary Kay will donate \$1 for each new Facebook fan until they reach a million dollars.

Before the screenings, Director of US Marketing, Leah Harrington told the audience “The Mary Kay Inspiring Stories program was created to inspire and empower women by bringing a voice to the important issue of Domestic Violence, a cause championed by the Mary Kay Foundation, which is committed to changing the lives of women and children worldwide.”

“When my grandmother, Mary Kay Ash, founded Mary Kay Inc., she set out to create a company that would change the world for women. And change she did – and continues to do in so many different ways – through the business opportunity, with amazing products that make women look and feel beautiful but most importantly for this evening, through the philanthropic endeavors carried out by the Mary Kay Foundation.” Explained Karen Rogers, Vice President of the Board for the Mary Kay Foundation.



Before the screening the 3 lovely narrators spoke with HT exclusively for a few minutes giving their personal thoughts on their experience in the project. Maria Menounos, a television journalist herself, (“Entertainment Tonight”, “Access Hollywood”, “Extra”), told us that Mary Kay approached her to get involved, “Women’s causes always interested me as a journalist. I don’t have any personal connections with domestic violence but something important to me and I wanted to be a part of this. I started *Take Action Hollywood* (TAH) – whose mission it is to use the power of media and film to affect the social change. “

Menounos was moved after a trip to Africa and began *TAH*, “The Clinton organization and others poured millions of dollars into women’s projects. All the statistics show if you invest in a girl she will spend 80% of that money on healthcare, childcare and education. If you spend the same amount on a guy he will spend 30% – 40% of that. Even from an economically selfish point of view we are the better investment. I have seen in first hand in Nairobi. “ And she lent her voice to Team Get Dreams.

Television actress Joanna Garcia Swisher, (“Reba”, “Party of Five” “Royal



Pains”) was also contacted to become a part of this project and the Mary Kay Foundation. She said she was humbled and even a bit terrified, “because domestic violence is the leading cause of death in women and to me it screams of “epidemic”. And it screams to join forces and the idea of working with a company that spends money where their heart is and that is a rare initiative to save lives. Then the journey began; meeting women on my team – so impressed that they shared their stories. They became so proficient as sound girls and camera women. Empowering and getting out of your element – all with hope and desire to raise awareness of this epidemic.”

Joanna is also involved teaching English as a second language, Make the Commitment, whose purpose is to raise awareness about [cervical cancer](#) as well as an organization called We Reach, a charity with an advisory board from the entertainment industry in an effort to help empower young girls around the country organize charity events in their hometowns. “I work with Step Up Women, my husband (Nick Swisher of the Yankee’s fame) and I. An organization of women that came together at a very difficult time in the founder’s life.”

Actress Alexa Vega rounded out Team Give Joy had been looking at causes to become involved for awhile, “I wanted to be able to give a voice for what I could. And when I looked at the statistics 1 in 4 women are associated with domestic violence. I have 4 sisters and thought that this could affect one of them.”

Ms. Vega was duly impressed with each of the participants on her team, and spoke of how brave they were to share their stories of hurt and manipulation. “ She also talked about Mary Kay’s commitment to this cause. “Think of this project alone. Women made it-women inspiring women. There was only one man in our crew, poor guy. And this whole production was made not just by women but aspiring filmmaker women.”

Currently, Alexa is involved with Generosity Water, building as many wells as possible for those with no access to fresh water with her church – Oasis. (see previous story I wrote <http://www.hollywoodtoday.net/2010/07/01/generosity-water/>)

An empowering and inspiring evening for a cause no one really wants to talk about except these committed and caring women.

“Although high-profile cases of domestic abuse may attract headlines, thousands of domestic violence stories will go unheard. Mary Kay Inspiring Stories gives a handful of these stories a platform to send a message to survivors. There is help and there is indeed hope.” Reminded Karen Rogers.