
**Monroe College Hosts Annual “DiVA Talk 2023”
Virtual Town Hall Focused on Domestic Violence Issues**

*Impressive Panel of Speakers from Across the Bronx Explored Issues of Femicide
and Ways of Working Together to Effect Change in the Community*

BRONX, NY, November 2, 2023 – [Monroe College](#), a national leader in educating first generation and international students, last Thursday hosted “DiVA Talk 2023,” a virtual town hall meeting to address local domestic violence issues, interventions, and trends, as well as share the diverse support resources available to Bronx residents.

The annual DiVA Talk event, held each October to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month, brings together people from multiple disciplines who have committed themselves to addressing this public health crisis and to helping support and empower survivors.

This year’s DiVA Talk program centered on the growing issue of femicide, which is broadly defined as the intentional murder of women or girls because of their perceived gender identity. Civic leaders, survivor support advocates, members of law enforcement, health and human services professionals, and members of the public were warmly welcomed to the virtual event by Melissa Cebollero, Associate Vice President for Community Affairs at Montefiore Einstein and DiVA founder.

Guyline Harrison, Dean of the School of Criminal and Social Justice at the College, and Kenny Agosto, Bronx Community Services Bureau Associate in the Bronx Borough President’s Office, made opening remarks and shared a powerful poem highlighting the link between domestic violence and femicide.

“We are proud of the DiVA Initiative and our collective work to prevent domestic violence by assessing trends and patterns and sharing important resources,” said Dean Harrison. “Through continuous programming, symposiums, and strong collaborations with community partners, we embrace our collective responsibility to encourage our youth and young adults to seek, model, and engage in healthy relationships.”

She added: “Domestic violence and intimate partner violence present significant public health and public safety challenges to our communities. Prevention and awareness are vital to our long-term efforts in reducing domestic violence and other forms of relationship abuse.”

Other speakers included Monroe adjunct faculty member and survivor support advocate Anne Paulle; Stephanie McGraw, domestic violence survivor and founder of W.A.R.M (We All Really Matter) and Maureen Curtis, Vice President, Criminal Justice and Court Programs at Safe Horizon. Faye Roberts-Paul, Assistant Director for Student Engagement and Special Events with Monroe's School of Criminal and Social Justice, shared important information on self-care strategies for survivors.

The keynote address was given by Dr. Catherine Stayton, Director of the Injury Epidemiology Unit in the Bureau of Epidemiology Services at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Dr. Stayton helps lead the Steering Committee there that is responsible for developing and implementing domestic violence prevention initiatives.

Professor Paulle moderated the lively and engaging panel discussion and was honored for her life's work in supporting survivors.

Quentin Walcott, Executive Director at CONNECT, was also honored during the program for his exceptional accomplishments surrounding intimate and gender-based violence prevention. He also participated in a panel discussion during the event. An accomplished anti-violence activist, educator, and writer, Mr. Walcott has focused his work on raising awareness of domestic violence issues and engaging men and boys as allies and activists in the movement.

The most recent data published by the United Nations underscores the severity of the worldwide femicide crisis. The UN reports that, in 2021, five women or girls were killed on average every hour by an intimate partner or family member. Additionally, the organization reports that 30 percent of women aged 15 and older around the world – which equates to an estimated 736 million women or nearly one in three – “have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life.”¹

Launched nearly 20 years ago, the DiVA initiative was first convened as a series of domestic violence awareness and intervention projects by Melissa Cebollero, formerly the Health and Human Services Director in the Bronx Borough President's Office under Adolfo Carrion; the program continues to be led by Vanessa Gibson, the current Bronx Borough President. Professor Anne Paulle, moderator of a panel at the event, was among the first survivor support advocates to join with her. She was the Director of the Bronx Domestic Violence Programs at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services at the time.

¹ “Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women”: www.unwomen.org

The DiVA name -- which reflects the initiative's focus on Domestic Violence Awareness - is given to a number of programs to help individuals in crisis and their families. DiVA programs range from talks such as the one held last Thursday, to immediate crisis intervention assistance and longer-term counseling and support. DiVA services have included inclusive spa/outreach, theatrical performances and telephone hotline services for the Bronx community.

ABOUT MONROE COLLEGE

Founded in 1933, Monroe College is a recognized leader in urban and international education. The College is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, especially among first-generation students. The strength of its warm, supportive culture is reflected in the personal connections fostered among students, faculty, and staff.

Monroe educates close to 8,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from campuses in the Bronx, New Rochelle, and Saint Lucia. Students may also take courses online. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroecollege.edu>.

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