



STEPS to End Family Violence Gets Benefit Surprise

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STEPS to End Family Violence celebrated the success of its jail and prison-based services as well as its new re-entry programming for women at its annual benefit on October 1st at the Highline Loft -- and got a very pleasant surprise as well. Eve Ensler, Tony Award winning Playwright, author of *THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES* and founder of V-Day, gave more than just the Keynote Address. She also made a surprise pledge that V-Day will donate \$20,000 to STEPS to support their services for formerly incarcerated domestic violence survivors.

"I can't think of anything more important than helping a woman come out of prison into welcoming arms, come out of prison into a job, come out of prison into fortune, community, support," said Ensler. "One of the things we need to be thinking about is the connection between women in prison and violence against women."

"Eve's gift means so much. Not just because of what it will do for STEPS clients, but also because it comes from the one person who is fulfilling STEPS mission on a global scale," said STEPS Founder, Sister Mary Nerney. Ensler and Sister Mary Nerney have both worked extensively with survivors of domestic violence at Bedford Hills State Prison. Eve Ensler taught a writing workshop for the women there, and Sister Mary facilitates groups for some of the same women who were incarcerated for crimes related to their abuse.

Honorees at the event included Bob Dennison, the former Chair of the NYS Parole Board; the law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, and Garrison, LLP; the Women in Prison Project of the Correctional Association; and program volunteer, Nancy Sicardo.