

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Edge of Darkness

In 2008, as filming wrapped on Mel Gibson's *Edge of Darkness* in Boston, he made a surprise \$25,000 donation to Casa Myrna Vazquez, the city's largest provider of shelter and supportive services to victims of domestic violence. It was not a random choice: his location scouts had briefly considered one of Casa Myrna's shelters for some exterior shots in the film. Casa Myrna was grateful to him for supporting our work, and told him so.

Two years later, Casa Myrna is grateful again – but for a very different reason. He's making the case for our work, and proving our oft-repeated point that domestic violence crosses all socio-economic, ethnic and cultural divides. Audiotapes of Gibson spewing vitriolic abuse, death threats and more at Oksana Grigorieva are a stark reminder that we still have a long way to go, as a society, in embracing the simple but powerful message that domestic violence is wrong. Always.

The tapes are also a reminder that we need to impart that lesson to our children, both in what we say and in what we do.

"It needs to be an ongoing conversation, because teaching lifelong lessons about respectful behavior in relationships is not a one-shot deal," said Deborah Collins-Gousby, Co-Executive Director.

Think the kids in your life are too young to be a part of this conversation? Think again. You're never too young to learn that there is a right way and a wrong way to behave toward a partner in a relationship. Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers learn from the adults around them. If what they're learning at home is violence and abuse, be prepared: those lessons last a lifetime. Instead of allowing the intergenerational cycle of domestic violence to be perpetuated in our homes and families, we should be teaching our young people that there is no excuse for abuse. Ever. Maybe our celebrities will get the message too.

Casa Myrna Vazquez is Boston's leading non-profit working to end domestic violence in the lives of women and children. Founded in 1977, the agency operates three residential programs in the city of Boston for women and children made homeless by domestic violence, the state's most comprehensive range of fully bilingual supportive services, and the only statewide domestic violence hotline in Massachusetts (SafeLink, 877-785-2020). Casa Myrna's range of programs includes legal advocacy services, individual counseling and support groups, children's services, housing search assistance and advocacy, financial literacy education, teen dating violence education, public awareness campaigns and education to key stakeholders on the issue of domestic violence.

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