

CHOOSE

RESPECT

# Hartford, Connecticut

## The National Initiative

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the Choose Respect initiative, a national effort to help youth form healthy relationships to prevent dating abuse before it starts. The initiative targets 11–14 year olds and the caring adults in their lives with the message that dating abuse is not just unacceptable, but also preventable by choosing respect. Launched in 10 sites in the United States in May 2006, the Choose Respect initiative was implemented as an integrated communications effort leveraging a mix of creative materials, media and public relations, promotional partnerships, community partnerships, training and technical assistance, and community events and activities. This comprehensive approach delivered positive relationship messages and skills to America's youth, their parents, and other influential adults. Central to the initiative was a national partnership formed with the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). The national launch celebrated numerous accomplishments, including reaching approximately 26 million people by print coverage, exposing 5.8 million people to the national media tour, and attracting more than 325,000 people to Choose Respect community events.

*The key partners really worked very well together. We worked as a team and, individually, we each tried to contribute significantly to the success of the project.*

~ Joanne Zannoni of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., Lead Partner in Hartford



## 2006 Activities and Events

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) was the lead community partner, working closely with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), for the implementation of the Choose Respect initiative. Many accomplishments were achieved during 2006, including the following:

### » Choose Respect Game Nights

CONNSACS/CCADV hosted five Choose Respect game nights with their local WNBA team, the Connecticut Sun. Nearly 400 youth, their parents, and other caring adults involved in their lives spoke with a Connecticut Sun player and were given Choose Respect t-shirts and gift bags. The youth also created Choose Respect posters, which were displayed for the crowd at center court during halftime.

Youth completed pretest surveys on attitudes toward dating violence, prior to attending the game nights. These youth will complete posttest surveys after CONNSACS/CCADV conducts Choose Respect presentations for them in the fall.

Respect. Give It. Get It.

## » Choose Respect Media Coverage

Substantial media coverage from a variety of sources helped to publicize Choose Respect. Interviews about the Choose Respect initiative and community activities were conducted with the *Hartford Courant* newspaper, the local CBS radio affiliate, and two local television stations. Moreover, ESPN aired an overview of Choose Respect during the first game night's halftime.

## » Choose Respect Partnerships

To educate and recruit additional partners, CONNSACS/CCADV provided existing partners with Choose Respect overviews and recruitment materials. The overwhelming interest and support of more than 45 local partners provided connections to schools, which have allowed for follow-up activities to the game nights. Local partners included more than 20 sexual assault and domestic violence member agencies, as well as Boys & Girls Clubs, the Department of Children and Families, the Salvation Army, and faith-based organizations. Local partners were very appreciative of being able to participate in the game nights; this goodwill has led to further collaborative activities. In addition, strong collaborative efforts of the Connecticut Sun aided the initiative greatly.



## Contact Information

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### » Choose Respect

**Website:** [www.chooserespect.org](http://www.chooserespect.org)

### » CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

**Website:** [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

