

**For Immediate Release**

**Ray Leonard Jr. To Be Keynote Speaker at The Safe Alliance Men For Change Breakfast & Silent Auction**

**Charlotte -** Safe Alliance proudly announces that the 18th annual Men For Change Breakfast and Silent Auction will take place Tuesday May 19, 2015, at Time Warner Cable Arena. Doors open at 7 AM.

We are honored to announce that Ray Leonard Jr., son of boxing legend Sugar Ray Leonard, will be our keynote speaker and will share his personal story.

Leonard Jr. has endured a unique life experience dealing directly with the issues of trauma, domestic violence and sexual abuse. He had a front row seat viewing family battles that lead to his mother’s suicide attempt, his father’s abuse and drug use, and the emotional scars that began as a child and didn't begin to heal until he was much older. He will discuss how growing up in the spot light and trying to present the image of a positive strong African American family made it even tougher for the family to cope with the issues and the continuous facade.

Sugar Ray Leonard detailed in his memoir “The Big Fight: My Life In and Out of the Ring” how he had been sexually abused as a teenager by a former coach and a benefactor. He told of his dark side manifesting in rage, depression, drug abuse and domestic violence. Leonard Jr. was a witness – and is now fighting back with a crusade against family violence.

He recently conducted 21 days of domestic violence “bystander intervention” training for the Navy in three different countries – the response to his message was powerful and he will be returning soon for additional programs with naval personnel.

Leonard Jr. shares this video message about his enthusiasm for addressing the Men For Change audience: <https://youtu.be/iNQTqs5ubTE>

Men For Change is a group of individuals – business, faith and community leaders - who come together as one to raise public awareness about the realities of domestic abuse and violence against women with a goal of providing hope and solutions for people in crisis.

The Men For Change Breakfast is an invitation-only event. Table captains recruit friends, business associates and Safe Alliance supporters to the breakfast and silent auction with the goal that attendees will make generous financial donations to support the domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and trauma services provided by Safe Alliance.

If you would like to know more about Men For Change and the work of Safe Alliance in our community, please contact Director of Donor & Corporate Relations Savannah Smith at 704 367 2733 or Savannah.Smith@safealliance.org.

**Safe Alliance**

Safe Alliance supports victims of domestic and sexual violence, and child abuse and helps people build safe, healthy relationships. We do this through a continuum of shelter, counseling, legal and advocacy services assisting over 20,000 people a year in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Union and south Iredell counties while reaching 20,000 more through advocacy and education.

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