



Father keeps daughter's memory alive

Doctor plans remembrance for daughter

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NEW ALEXANDRIA, Pa. -

Saturday would have been the 21st birthday for a local woman, but it's a milestone that won't be reached because she was killed as a teenager.

The woman's father has stepped up to make sure no one faces the same violence that took his daughter's life.

"When you lose a child to a violent homicide, it's the worst thing ever," said Dr. Gary Cuccia. "It's something that never goes away."

Cuccia talked Wednesday about his daughter, Demi Brae Cuccia, who was stabbed to death five years ago by an ex-boyfriend. He said he has channeled his pain into efforts to stop teen violence by getting legislation passed to protect others.

"I had an email from a parent who thanked me because she was finally able to talk her daughter into getting a PFA (restraining order) against a pretty abusive and controlling boyfriend," he said. "And after hearing my daughter's story, she realized that this is unhealthy."

Cuccia is preparing for Saturday's night of remembrance for the Demi Brae Cuccia Awareness Organization to honor his daughter.

Cuccia takes her story to schools to teach kids to recognize the warning signs of unhealthy relationships.

"It's my goal that they take a little piece of my daughter's story home with them, and they may not have to fall back on it that day but somewhere in their life, chances are they, or someone that they know, experiences teen dating violence and they can fall back on and learn something from the assembly," he said.

Cuccia has more than 250 businesses and individuals supporting Saturday's event at Rizzo's Malibar Inn.

"They (students) say 'thank you for sharing your daughter's story,'" he said. "I'm sure my daughter, Demi, would be smiling down on that knowing her story is touching young lives and saving young lives."

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