

Stop the violence

Meredith Baxter will address domestic brutality at fundraiser

*By Angie Fenton
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Domestic violence doesn't discriminate.

Not even against Emmy nominee Meredith Baxter, best known for her role as Elyse Keaton on the 1980s sitcom "Family Ties." The 59-year-old actress will be the keynote speaker Wednesday at the annual Mary Byron Foundation Gala, a fundraiser for the Louisville-based charity whose mission is to stop domestic violence nationwide.

Before coming to Louisville, Baxter talked to The Courier-Journal from Santa Monica, Calif.

Q: Why did you choose to speak at the Mary Byron Foundation Gala?

A: What they do there really resonates with me. They're into finding solutions to domestic violence. I think it's very complex, I think it's very difficult, and young women -- it's predominantly young women -- are victims of this, and they don't know what to do or where to go. ... They think they're the only ones, that there's no way out. I like that (the foundation) is into finding long-term solutions.

Have you been affected -- indirectly or otherwise -- by domestic violence?

It's hard to find anybody nowadays who hasn't.

What do you plan to talk about at the gala?



"I think it's important to share that anybody -- anybody -- can be affected by domestic violence," said Meredith Baxter.

You know, I'm going to talk about, there's been domestic violence in my life, but I'm going to talk about it in very general terms. I'm not going to be citing incidents or anything.

Predominantly, people think that (if) a person's life looks so together, they certainly haven't been affected. So, I think it's important to share that anybody -- anybody -- can be affected by domestic violence. Anybody.

Even if you have a college education, even if you have a high income and live in fabulous places, nothing inures you to becoming a victim. There is no protected section of society.

What are you working on right now?

I have a syndicated magazine show called "A Better Life." ... It's basically a show that shows you different ways of overhauling your life.

Do you keep in touch with your television family from "Family Ties"?

You know, I don't. It's been 16 years since we went off the air. Michael Gross (who played Michael Keaton on the sitcom) and I have done a couple shows together and socialized a few times because we're peers. Michael J. Fox and I have e-mailed a few times and I've done some work for (the Michael J. Fox Foundation), but beyond that we've all gone our separate ways.

What do you do in your free time, assuming you have free time?

Well, you know, I really don't because I've been taking art classes. I used to draw about 35 years ago, but I stopped when I started having kids. As soon as the (five) kids got out of the house, I started drawing classes and watercolor.

You ballroom dance. Any chance we would see you on something like "Dancing With the Stars"?

So unlike me, Angie! (Laughs) Don't hold your breath.

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*MARY BYRON FOUNDATION
GALA*

*When: Wednesday. Cocktail
reception and silent auction
begin at 6 p.m., dinner at 7.*

*Where: Seelbach Hilton, 500
Fourth St.*

Cost: \$125.

*Information: (502) 815-5618
or*

www.marybyronfoundation.org.