

Women & Girls Empowerment Resource Fair & Free Self-Defense Clinic held in North Royalton

NORTH ROYALTON – On October 23, 2021 at the Inspire Martial Arts Studio & Royalton Road Plaza in North Royalton, Cleveland Abduction Survivor Gina DeJesus helped officially kick of the first ever Women & Girls Empowerment Resource Fair & Free Self-Defense Clinic. Gina disappeared at age 14 and was kidnapped while walking home from school. She was imprisoned with two other young women, Michelle Knight and Amanda Berry, by former school bus driver Ariel Castro. After a nearly 10-year period of captivity, which included alleged beatings and starvation, DeJesus and her fellow captors were rescued by neighbors in 2013. This has been known as the “Cleveland Abduction”. Gina is nationally known for her work in helping help finding missing Children and Adults with her nonprofit Cleveland Family Center for Missing Children & Adults.

Over fifty women and girls attended the event which was organized by sponsors Inspire Martial Arts, Dawn Carbone-McDonald, and Dan Langshaw to coincide with the month of October being nationally known as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In addition increasing



Submitted photo

Pictured above is (from left to right) Cleveland Abduction Survivor Gina DeJesus, Dawn Carbone-McDonald and Dan Langshaw.

deaths of women in North Royalton involving domestic violence like the mur-

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der of Cari Smith over this summer. Media reports showed that Cari tried to get help from local officials before she was murdered. However, not in enough time to save her life from her abuser.

In order to raise awareness of these important issue the Women & Girls Empowerment Resource Fair & Free Self-Defense Clinic's goal was to empower women, teenage girls, and young girls in the North Royalton and surrounding communities to seek their full potential in school, sports, activities, and business. This fair will connect them with the resources from various community partners such as Gina DeJesus & Sylvia Colon with Cleveland Family Center for Missing Children & Adults, Infinity Counseling & Consulting Services LLC, Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, Ohio Army National Guard, Krazy Fit, International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, and the North Royalton Girl Scouts that can assist or inspire them to accomplish that.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1 in 4 women in the United States experience some sort of physical violence in their lifetime. So the event also featured a Free Self-Defense Clinic for attendees to learn from certified martial arts instructor Chris Gehring owner of Inspire Martial Arts, a variety of safety tips and practical self-defense techniques in a Free (30 minute class) that gave tools for participants to stay safe in everyday situations in the future.

Event sponsors hope to possibly make this an annual event for the area after receiving such a positive response from the community.