

# peggy lipton: the mom squad



*A force of one, Peggy Lipton uses straight talk and motherly advice to teach teens to break the cycle of domestic violence*

The students who were gathered at Southern California's Santa Monica High School to hear Peggy Lipton speak looked no older than the actress was when she landed her breakout role as Julie Barnes, a teen runaway turned undercover agent on the 1968-1973 hit TV series *The Mod Squad*. In fact, most probably knew her only from her role as Kelly Foster on the WB's *Popular*. Still, they listened with rapt attention as she shared with them a painful story from her own teenage years. "I don't know you, but I do know what you're going through if you're involved with someone who is violent," she said to them. "It's scary and confusing."



rage and a friend called the police to intervene. "When I was your age, I had no one to talk to about what was happening to me. But I can promise you that no matter what you're going through, there's help out there for you," she said. "You are not alone."

At least not as long as there is **Break the Cycle**, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization devoted to educating 12- to 22-year-olds about domestic violence. Lipton, 55, joined the group last year, and she has been a tireless supporter of it ever since. "When I heard that there were these teenage girls who were getting restraining orders against abusive partners, I was troubled," Lipton says of her motivation for joining the organization.

As a youth advocacy group, **Break the Cycle** offers not only education but also early crisis intervention and free legal counsel and representation to young victims in need. "It isn't uncommon for young people to lack the knowledge that domestic violence isn't just a bad thing to do, but that it is also

"As a mother of two daughters, I know how important it is to educate our children," says Lipton, who spends time spreading awareness among teens (above).

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Lipton discusses domestic violence with BTC founder Meredith Blake and students.

illegal and that crimes have consequences,” says Meredith Blake, an attorney who founded the organization in 1995. “We need to be talking to kids about this issue before they get involved in unhealthy relationships. There’s incredible hope when you intervene at this early age, instead of waiting until these girls become abused women.”

Despite a hectic schedule (her projects include the upcoming films *Skipped Parts*, with Drew Barrymore, and *The Intern*, with Gwyneth Paltrow), Lipton is committed to doing what she can to help educate teens about abuse before it starts and raise money for the cause. Indeed, she says, “I’m ready to go to Washington [to lobby], if it would make a difference in legislation or funding for programs [such as **Break the Cycle**].”

Lipton has always felt passionately about alerting young people to the dan-

gers of domestic violence. She recalls discussing domestic abuse with her two daughters, by ex-husband Quincy Jones, back when the girls were high school students. (Kidada, 27, and Rashida, 25, are now both actresses; Rashida co-stars on Fox’s *Boston Public*.) “One of my daughters recently told me that our conversation about domestic abuse helped her because she knew that I was there for her and that I would not judge her, no matter what happened to her,” Lipton says. “That’s what it means to ‘break the cycle.’ It all starts with self-respect that every parent is capable of instilling in their child.” —**Monica Corcoran**

To find out more about Break the Cycle, visit [www.break-the-cycle.org](http://www.break-the-cycle.org) or call 888-988-8336. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to: Break the Cycle, P.O. Box 64996, Los Angeles, CA 90064.