

Historical Overview

What is the Brides March?



The Bride's March Against Domestic Violence, also known as the Gladys Ricart and Victims of Domestic Violence Memorial Walk, is an annual event which was started in New York City in 2001 to remember Ms. Ricart, a Dominican woman, who was murdered in New Jersey on September 26, 1999, by a former abusive boyfriend on the day she was to wed someone else.

Subsequent Marches have also memorialized the countless other women who have been killed or injured in domestic violence incidents in the nation.

This first Brides March took place on September 26, 2001, the second anniversary of Gladys' murder. The idea for the March was originated by Josie Ashton, a young Dominican woman from Florida, who was very moved by the murder and outrage at the media and community's insensitive response. Josie resigned from her job and

sacrificed more than two months of her life away from her family to walk in a wedding gown, down the East Coast, from New Jersey to Miami, in an attempt to draw attention to the horrors of domestic violence.

Several organizations in New York City, including the Dominican Women's Development Center, the Violence Intervention Program (VIP), the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, the Dominican Women's Caucus and the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (ALIANZA) helped Josie organize the first Brides March, which served as a send off for her. They organized supporters in the New York metropolitan area to join Josie on the first leg of a three-month, 1,600 mile journey. It took her through several states and ended in her home state of Florida.

From a small group of some two dozen marchers, the first year, the Brides March now attracts hundreds of individuals including government officials, business and community leaders, grass roots activists, clergy, renowned artists, law enforcement officers, and youth.

Each year, the Brides March receives the attention of local and national media, helping to spread the word widely about an issue that still continues to be kept quiet.

Gladys Ricart was a Dominican immigrant who worked her way off public assistance, was the first in her family to graduate from college and became an accounts manager at tourism company in Manhattan.

She was a dedicated single mother to a 21 year old son. While they were dating, Garcia and Ricart were regulars at social and political gatherings in Washington Heights.

No one knew the abusive relationship that took place behind closed doors.