

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #36- October 2014

Just a Thought

Self-care is one of the most important things victim service providers can do to insulate themselves from burnout and enhance their ability to care for their clients. Yet it is one of the hardest things to do faithfully. Read this edition's essay to learn how you can help strengthen your own resilience.

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Web Links

You never know what resources await you on the world-wide web ...come see what our latest surfing expedition uncovered.

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Save the Date!

Find out what trainings and events are just around the corner. It looks like there are lots of ways to keep you busy this fall!

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Alumni Showcase

Read Dr. Dorothy Adamson-Holley's essay on "The Call of the Drum" to learn more about how she has used this ancient practice as a tool for self-care and incorporated her life-long passion for African drumming into her practice.

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News from the Field

Know what's been going on in Annapolis recently? Catch up on the most recent bills debated, passed, and enacted.

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Certification News

Want to learn more about how you can become a certified victim service professional? Whether you are brand new to the field of victim services, or have been doing the job for a long time, getting your certification is a great way to set yourself apart.

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Just a thought...

Self-Care Strategies for Victim Service Providers

First heal yourself, and then go out and heal others. - Maya Angelou

The field of crime victim services recognizes the potential impact of exposure to trauma. Whether performed in justice system-based agencies or in community-based programs, victim assistance makes huge demands on staff and volunteers. Victim service providers come in contact with graphic descriptions of violence, victimization, and detailed



reenactments of traumatic events. They can become vulnerable to personal negative consequences, but they also can experience many positive rewards. Not all victim service providers are diminished by their work. In fact, many are strengthened and energized by it. As advocates help victims strive, adjust, and move through trauma, they are also challenged to develop personal and workplace strategies to integrate, cope, and manage traumatic material themselves.

Efforts to identify the troubling aspects of traumatic encounters among service providers have resulted in numerous labels including secondary stress, cumulative stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious traumatization. Statements like, "I'm not supposed to feel this way" and "I need to hide my feelings so I can be strong for others" illustrate syndromes that can disrupt a provider's sense of life meaning, connections to others, personal and professional identity, and assumptions or views of how the world works. While acknowledging the hazards of trauma work, advocates and agencies can em-

phasize a strength-based action approach that looks to develop and strengthen their resilience and to reduce the negative impact of stress and trauma exposure through the use of adaptive coping responses and self-care strategies.

Resilience generally refers to one's ability to return to healthy functioning after being in a stressful situation. Being resilient does not mean that individuals are problem-free or unaffected by difficulties. It does mean drawing on personal beliefs, behaviors, skills, and attitudes to move through stress, trauma, and tragedy rather than succumb to them. It means emerging from stressful situations feeling normal and perhaps even stronger than before. Just as resilience traits can be developed within individuals, they can also be acquired by organizations. Fostering organizational resilience is crucial because when organizations strengthen victim service providers' resilience, they also notice a consequent positive effect in the services their providers deliver.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Hello Alumni!

Can you believe summer is already a thing of the past! It was such a cool summer, it kind of felt like we were dealing with fall already. But I do so love the fall colors, opening up my windows and smelling the autumn air.

Speaking of something fresh, you will notice we have eliminated the 20/20 section of the newsletter and replaced it with the Alumni Showcase. We plan to showcase an alumnus each newsletter so you all have the opportunity to get to know him/her a bit better. This edition's alumnus profile is very exciting and is a perfect fit for our newsletter's theme of self-care. Be sure to read it and share it with your colleagues!

My hope this quarter for you all is that you take away some really great things on self-care. Self-care is so important in our line of work yet we tend to forget about ourselves because we are always doing for others. One of the simplest ways you can take care of yourself on a daily basis is to find something to make you laugh. Laughing is such a great stress reliever and you can do it anytime, anywhere. So go ahead and find something to laugh about today!

Wishing you a wonderful Autumn. Until next time...

Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII

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"At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities." - Jean Houston

Web Links

Although we have a virtual library at our fingertips every time we turn on the computer, we often lose sight of the forest through the trees just trying to navigate the world-wide web. Here are a few sites that relate to this issue's "Just a Thought" ... happy surfing!



Office for Victims of Crime - Compassion Fatigue and Self Care

This website provides a great resource for victim advocates to understand the impact of fatigue and importance of self-care. The tools and resources provided on this website will help advocates to identify actions and behaviors that are vital to self care and allow for the development of a personalized self care plan to prevent fatigue and burnout. To learn more, go to <https://www.ovcttac.gov/saact/module7.cfm>

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims - Burnout, vicarious traumatization and its prevention

This article addresses the challenges inherent to working with trauma victims. Using case studies of torture victims, the author addresses the risk of burnout and vicarious traumatization and provides suggestions on how to minimize the risk of both through therapeutic self-awareness, regular self-examination, limiting case-load, and continuing professional education. To read the article, go to http://www.irc-t.org/Files/Filer/TortureJournal/16-1-2006/page_1-9.pdf

Self-Care for Trauma Psychotherapists and Caregivers

This handout addresses how to increase self-awareness of possible vicarious traumatization; engage in self-care skills and self-soothing activities; engage in social supports; mobilize organizational supports to prevent and address vicarious traumatization; and where indicated, access personal therapy. To read the complete handout, go to http://www.melissainstitute.org/documents/Meichenbaum_Self-Care_11thconf.pdf

Liana Lowenstein, MSW, RSW, CPT-S - Original Therapeutic Resources for Mental Health Professionals and Families

This article addresses therapists, counselors, or victim advocates who deal directly with victims of crime and how to manage vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. The author discusses what caring is and how counselors and advocates can help their victims heal, and discusses the signs and symptoms that counselors and advocates should pay attention to in order to monitor their own emotional, physical, and psychological well-being. To download a copy of the article, go to http://www.lianalowenstein.com/article_helm.pdf



Save the Date

E. Diane Champe Institute's Halloween Costume Party

Saturday, November 1st, 2014, 5:00-10:00pm, Fort Meade, MD

Join in the festivities of the second annual fundraiser hosted by the E. Diane Champe Institute - there will be plenty of food, games, dancing, and even a raffle! Cash prizes will be awarded for the best costumes so put on your cre-

ative hat to come up with a good idea! All attendees must have a ticket (no door sales). Single admission = \$22; group admission (2 or more persons) = \$20 per. For more information, contact Diane Champe at edchampe@msn.com or call (443) 536-6925.

2015 RVAAM Academy

June 1st - 5th, 2015, Bon Secours Spiritual Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD

Mark your calendars! The 12th annual RVAAM Academy is scheduled for the first week of June at the lovely Bon Secours. Check the RVAAM website (www.rvaam.org) in a few weeks to download a copy of this year's application to pass along to your colleagues!

Alumni Updates

It seems like only yesterday when we were all together at the Academy. But in a blink of an eye another year has passed us by. Here's just a snapshot of some of the special events and milestones our alums have experienced since we last met...



Look at Our Movers & Shakers!

Suzan Boisclair (Class of 2012) - After volunteering at the Frederick Police Department as a victim advocate for the past three years, Suzan was recently hired as a full time advocate! She is thoroughly enjoying her new job and finding it the perfect way to use her educational training in Psychology, Counseling, and Human Development. Congratulations Suzan!

Dee Gardner (Class of 2006) - Please extend a heartfelt congratulations to Dee on her new position as the Survivor Programs Manager for the House of Ruth. We wish you all the best Dee on your new endeavors!

Elaine Jenkins (Class of 2014) - Elaine recently received a "Serving Communities Award" from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid for the volunteer work that she does at Roberta's House working with the Homicide Transformation Project. Way to go Elaine - you ROCK!

Debbie Tall (Class of 2004) - Debbie just celebrated 37 years in the criminal justice system - wow, what an accomplishment! If that weren't enough, Debbie and her husband also just celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. Debbie continues to play a significant role in serving victims of crime in Maryland - she continues to serve on the Maryland State Board of Victim Services, the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, and the Maryland Association of Victim Service Professionals, and is actively working on bringing the Maryland Electronic Court System (MDEC) to Anne Arundel County. Thank you for all of your years of service Debbie!

Alumni Showcase

The Call of the Drum

The drumbeat of my mother's womb was the first drum I ever heard. For those who haven't heard the call of the drum, I know this sounds absurd; but I connected to its seductive call before I could utter a word. (Excerpt from "Why I Drum" - my original poem)

On an unconscious level, my passion for drumming began when I was being nurtured in my mother's womb, for her heartbeat is the first drumbeat and rhythm that I ever heard. Having thus

heard the call in utero, it was very familiar to me when I heard the conscious call as an adult; I have been responding to that call ever since!



In retrospect, drumming has always been an integral part of my existence. I can still remember tapping out rhythms on my desk in elementary school, and being made to sit on my hands when I was unable to resist the compulsion to drum. I would then softly tap rhythms with my feet until this, too, was discovered and forbidden. From there, I created and responded to rhythms in my head, and when I entered that universe, no teacher could ever stop me from playing!

The eighth of eleven children who grew up in a three-bedroom row house with thirteen people (my father, mother, 6 sisters, 4 brothers, and myself) in West Baltimore, I often felt invisible. At an early age I learned to stuff my feelings and took on the role of pleasing others. Through drumming, I found my unique, authentic voice and learned to give that voice full expression.

When I am drumming, I feel oneness with everything that is. There are no divisions, no separations, and no false dichotomies. The schism between my head and my heart, my mind and my body, my intellect and my emotions, myself and others is suddenly healed. There is nowhere to be and nothing to do except to open myself to Spirit and to allow God's love and grace to flow through me. It is a time of self-tran-

scendence; I am in timeless, thoughtless, weightless space, a space where the fragments of my shattered psyche coalesce to form a united whole. For me, this is the essence of freedom!

African drumming offered a perfect balance to my tendency to intellectualize, to analyze, to plan, and to control. As a woman whose intellectual life was overdeveloped, subordinating and denying my emotional side, African drumming took me out of my head, into my body, and into my feelings, inviting me to release pent-up emotions and helping to restore much-needed balance. When experiencing emotional pain or when emotional release is needed, I need only play certain rhythmic patterns, and I am invariably transported beyond the boundaries of my limited ego to psychological spaces conscious awareness or manipulation.

Drumming connects us to our heartbeat, to our soul's longings and desires, and to the Great Spirit, that divinity lies within us all! Grounded and connected to our inner selves we fearlessly connect with others, and thereby reduce loneliness, social isolate, and alienation. When we tap into the power of this ancient, sacred practice, we feel a sense of empowerment that gives rise to creative expression. Drumming also puts us in the present moment, calling us into our bodies and out of the endless chatter of the mind. Drumming compels us to movement. It is very difficult to resist the lure of those deep, pulsating, grounding, energizing sounds that emanate from African drums. The seductive call of these ancient instruments stimulates our chakras and opens us to parts of ourselves that we never knew existed. Even when we are not drumming, we respond to the call of the drum through toe-tapping, clapping, dancing, moving, and singing. The drum's call and power are truly irresistible.

For me, drumming is a gift, but it is not one that is uniquely offered to me. I firmly believe that latent in all of us is this gift of drumming, just waiting to be awakened, just waiting for us to respond to the call. I see "drummer" as an archetype that each of us carries inside of us, and it takes grace and courage to allow ourselves to push past the doubts, fears, negative self-talk, and conditioning that can lead us to believe that we cannot, should not, must not. What I have experienced is that once I allowed myself to respond to the call of the drum, responding to the deepest longings of my soul and honoring the Truths of my deepest self became much easier.

I leave you with the invitational close of my poem, *"Why I Drum" - Why do I drum? Why do I love it so? Those drums just be callin' my name. No, I don't drum for fortune, competition, prestige; no, I don't drum for fame. I drum to access my highest Self, to honor the source from which I came. Just allow yourself to respond to the call, and you will never be the same...*



** Essay contributed by Dorothy Adamson Holley (Class of 2013). "Dot" is a Developmental Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and an African drummer and dancer who integrates mental health and the arts to promote healing. As a private practitioner, she specialized in working with clients who have not responded well to traditional treatment. Dot facilitates clinical/healing workshops that promote personal growth and professional development and has shared her clinical expertise with practitioners across many settings. Her passion for African culture and its continu-*

ity in the United States led to an enthusiastic study of African dance and drum, and she has studied and performed locally, nationally, and internationally. She is the co-founder of Nyame Nti Cultural Healing Arts Therapy, Inc. (N-CHAT), a 501c3 nonprofit organization that promotes healing through the arts.



News From the Field

Everyone knows that the field of victim services is always evolving. The challenge is to find a way to keep on top of all the changes ... we're here to help!

*** Senate Bill 272/Chapter 151 - Statement by Victim or Victim's Representative:** On April 14, 2014, Senate Bill 272, also known as "Alex's Law" was approved by Governor O'Malley and is scheduled to go into effect on October 1, 2014. The bill requires the court, in a sentencing or disposition hearing, to allow the victim, or a victim's representative, to address the court with a victim's statement prior to a sentence being imposed. The bill defines a victim's representative as an immediate member of the victim's family, or a personal representative or guardian, if the victim is deceased or physically, mentally, or legally disabled to make a statement to the court.

*** Senate Bill 940/Chapter 207 - Legal Representatives of Minors and Disabled and Elderly Persons:** On April 14, 2014, Senate Bill 940 was approved by Governor O'Malley and is scheduled to go into effect on October 1, 2014. The law provides the

court with the authority to appoint a representative for victims of crime who are unable to, or do not have anyone to, act on their behalf in certain legal matters. The victims (minors, the disabled, and the elderly) will receive legal representation on various matters, financial and non-financial, which will help to protect their interest.

(SASP). SASP directs grant dollars to support rape crisis centers that provide core services, direct intervention, and related assistance to victims of sexual assault. Funds provided through the program are designed to supplement other funding sources directed at addressing sexual assault on the State level.

will provide services for survivors of homicide in Prince George's County. Grant funds will be used to expand the program's long-term inclusive service solutions through advocacy, community support, extended care and education up to 3-4 years (up from 18-24 months).

Maryland Awards \$194,723 to Help Victims of Domestic Violence

GOCCP recently awarded 14 jurisdictions grant funding totaling nearly \$200k to help protect victims of domestic violence under the State's Domestic Violence Unit Program (DVUP). The funds will allow local sheriffs and police departments to create specialized units for service for ex part and protective orders, and update and maintain their domestic violence databases.

* **CASA** - CASA of Baltimore will provide trauma-informed care and advocacy training to the Department of Juvenile Services to support youth who have lost a loved one to homicide in Baltimore City. Grant funds will be used to add personnel to the program.

* **Maryland Crime Victim Resource Center** - MCVRC will utilize the grant funds to develop a Statewide Survivor Network (SSN) to assist family members of homicide victims. The SSN would provide a toll-free contact line and 24 hour online intake access for survivors, linking them to counseling, legal, mental health, and advocacy services.

* **House of Ruth Maryland** - The House of Ruth's Extending Services to Child Survivors of Intimate Partner Homicide Program facilities connection to services for child survivors and their caregivers in Baltimore City. The program provides referrals for companion services, provides technical assistance to neighboring jurisdictions to establish or enhance their service response to this vulnerable constituency and to close gaps in service regionally. Grant funds will be used to support personnel, operating supplies, local travel, and program evaluation.

* **Baltimore Child Abuse Center** - BCAC's Child Witness to Homicide Victim Services program provides child survivors of homicide victims with immediate resources to promote family stabilization and follow-up services to support them in obtaining justice and healing, and assists law enforcement in the collection of evidence. Grant funds will be used for

Maryland Awards \$500,000 to Help Homicide Survivors

Seven organizations across the state of Maryland were awarded half a million dollars to expand services to assist family members of homicide victims. These organizations are:

* **The Pro Bono Counseling Project, Inc.** - The Pro Bono Counseling Project's Homicide Victims: Surviving and Succeeding will link underserved, low-income crime victims and witnesses statewide to free therapy with licensed therapists in their community. Therapists will be recruited and trained for trauma care as well as victim services personnel. Grant funds will be used to support personnel salary, training, materials, equipment, and transportation.

* **Community Advocates for Family and Youth** - CAFY's Serving Survivors of Homicide Victims program



Maryland Crime Victim Grant Funded Projects: GOCCP Announcements

Throughout Maryland each year the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) awards, manages, and monitors state and local grant funded crime victim related projects. Federal and state funding cycles operate on different schedules. State grants start July 1st and end on June 30th, while federal grants start on October 1st and end on September 30th. GOCCP announces the awards through press releases that may be found at <http://www.goccp.maryland.gov/press/index.php> - Here is a summary of the grants GOCCP recently funded!

Maryland Awards \$287,702 to Help Victims of Sexual Assault

Organizations from Garrett County to Talbot County have been awarded over a quarter of a million dollars by GOCCP through the Sexual Assault Services Formula Grant Program

personnel support for BCAC’s forensic interview and family advocacy staff.

* **Roberta’s House** - Roberta’s House Multi-Site Homicide Survivor Transformation Project provides death notification to homicide survivors in Baltimore City and peer support groups in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Prince George’s County. The program provides survivor advocacy, group counseling, and referral services. Grant funds will be used for personnel, travel, and equipment.

Certification News

Do you want to be more recognized in the field of Victim Services? Do you want to show people that you are a cut above the rest? Then become a certified Victim Assistance Specialist in the State of Maryland!

Social Workers started here too and look how far they have come over the past 10



years! Victim Service Professionals need to unite and do the same thing - so take this important step for your career. Go to www.rvaam.org and to learn more about the certification process and download a copy of the application today!

There are three levels of certification in Maryland, each require a specific set of qualifications and are described in detail below:

* **Level I (VASI)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum of two years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 40 hours of training (RVAAM, NVAA, or other SVAA); d) multiple choice exam; e) \$50 application processing fee

* **Level II (VASII)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum of five years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 80 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 40 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) written essay / short answer exam; e) \$75 application processing fee.

* **Level III (VASIII)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum eleven years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 120 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 80 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) oral presentation on approved topic in Victim Assistance; e) \$100 application processing fee.

There is also a similarly tiered renewal process in place for those advocates who want to remain current with their certification:

* **Level I** - a) complete 40 hours of continuing education (completed within the past 3 years) which must include 3 hours of Victims’ Rights training and 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; and b) complete renewal application packet and pay the \$25 renewal fee.

* **Level II** - Without an upgrade - same as Level I. To upgrade from Level I to Level II - a) complete 40 hours of continuing education (completed within past 3 years) which must include 3 hours of Victims’ Rights training and 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; b) complete written exam; and c) submit renewal application packet and pay \$50 fee.

* **Level III** - Without an upgrade - same as Level I. To upgrade from Level II to Level III - a) complete 40

hours of continuing education (completed within past 3 years) which must include 3 hours of Victims’ Rights training and 3 hours of Victim Services Ethics training; b) complete oral presentation; and c) submit renewal application packet and pay \$75 fee.

All application materials and study guides for the written exams are available online at www.rvaam.org (click on the Certification tab at the top of the page). For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harford-sheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

Congratulations to the following Certified Advocates!

Debra Brewer (Class of 2014) - Level I

Ann Holtzman (Class of 2014) - Level I

Mary Taylor (Class of 2011) - Level I

Jessica Roman (Class of 2014) - Level II

Just a Thought (Cont.)

The resilience core trait of self-knowledge and insight means knowing who you are. Having insight into why you were drawn to victim assistance works to help you accept its challenges and motivates your personal and professional growth. If you are able to recognize the things over which you have little or no control, you will become more resilient. The opportunity to ventilate frustration about things over which you have no control is important, but it is also important to move beyond that to positive planning about the things over which you do have control. For example, you do have some control over the interactions you have with a victim in your office or on the phone; you do not have control over their behavior when your contact ends. **(Continued on page 7)**

It is imperative that you learn not only to serve victims but also about trauma and its impact on you as a provider. Training will further develop your resilience as well as assist you in addressing emerging problems promptly and openly. A positive outlook is a trait strongly associated with resilience. If you operate out of a sense of hope, you recognize the difficulty of the experiences of the victims you serve, yet you maintain a positive view of the challenges of life. Operating with a sense of hope includes being optimistic and strengthening one's sense of humor and ability to have fun. Healthy coping, another key in fostering resilience, means moving beyond attitudes and feelings to deliberately putting skills and abilities in action to balance the negative aspects of your work with positive activities. It means paying attention to your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs and doing something about them.

You must learn to identify your own stress-related physiological and emotional symptoms (e.g., headaches, nausea, eating too much or too little, sleeplessness, intrusive imagery, emotional numbing). You must also acknowledge the interaction between pressures in your personal life and those in your work as a victim service provider. You must carefully balance your work with leisure activities, play, and other things you enjoy. Activities that distance you from trauma and reaffirm the goodness of life - whether other work or play - can restore energy. Identify the best techniques to help redirect your thoughts to non-victim related material, and then engage in them. Just be sure that whatever you engage in is strength-based and encouraging. As a victim service provider, it is crucial for you to feel that you are part of an extended network at home, at work, and in the community. Knowing the appropriate boundaries of your interactions with victims can help you relate appropriately to them, as well as

to your colleagues and to your family. Identifying what you can and cannot say about your work allows you to express your concerns in healthy ways without infringing on victim-provider confidentiality. Without clarity about this issue, you may not know how to discuss your reactions or worries about your work.

Victim service agencies can also help to facilitate self-care among its employees. Agencies can signal their commitment to this issue by making self-care a part of their mission statement, understanding that ultimately this issue does affect client care. As administrators, we can monitor our staff's vacation time and encourage those individuals with too much accrued time to take time off to recharge. Self-care issues can also be addressed in staff meetings as well as by providing opportunities for continuing education on the topic.

Being aware of how our work can impact us and achieving and maintaining a sense of balance and connection in our lives can prevent us from experiencing secondary trauma and/or mitigate its harmful effects. Being aware of what you need in order to take care of yourself in this work is an important step in responding to burnout, stress, and compassion fatigue. Most importantly, remember every day to try to live a balanced life. As Robert Fulghum wisely noted, "Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some."

Essay contributed by Trudy Gregorie - Ms. Gregorie has 25 years experience in the crime victim services and criminal justice fields. In 1979, she established a prosecutor-based victim services program in Charleston, South Carolina — only the second such program in the state — and served as its director for 13 years. In 1992, she was appointed the first South Carolina Governor's Office Crime Victim Ombudsman. From 1994-2001, Ms. Gregorie served as senior staff at the National Cen-

ter for Victims of Crime, first as Director of Victim Services and then Director of Training. Currently, she is a staff member with Justice Solutions, NPO, in Washington, D.C.

What do you want to hear? Have any news to share?

Are you itching to learn more about a particular issue in the field of victim services? The Editorial Board is always looking for new topics to profile in the newsletter that would be beneficial for our Alums both personally and professionally. Please send any suggestions you might have about a topic to profile in one of our upcoming newsletters to Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org ... We also are happy to share any information you have about job openings and professional trainings you might think your fellow Alums would benefit from!

Alumni Directory

The 2014 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members is now available for distribution. However, we still would like your help to keep the Alumni Directory up to date! If any of your personal and/or professional information changes, please contact Debbie Bradley via email at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

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Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in January 2015

