

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #22 - April 2011

Just a Thought

Recruitment for this year's Academy is underway - there is no better endorsement than to hear what a recent graduate of the Academy took away personally and professionally from her experience.

Page 1

Web Links

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

Page 2



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 summer and fall!

Page 3

Alumni Updates

Always find yourself thinking, "I wonder what happened to..." Check out what your fellow Alumni are up to!



Page 3

Best Practices

Thinking about attending the Academy this year? Wonder whether this training will really be worth the time invested? Hear what one of your fellow colleagues has to say about her experience at the Academy

Page 4

The 20/20

Each newsletter get an inside look at one of the RVAAM peers - 20 questions, 20 unique answers

Page 5



Just a thought...

Bonding at the Roper Victims Assistance Academy of Maryland

Eva Marie Kenealy

The word used to describe the class of 2010 by the Academy faculty was **bonding**. I think this word accurately describes my experience with RVAAM. My first bonding experience was with my roommate, who I met briefly at orientation when we were given room assignments. We emailed a few times between orientation and the Academy to start to get to know one another, but once we arrived at the Academy the real bonding experience took place. We stayed up late talking almost every night during the Academy and have been in regular contact ever since. We've helped each other out professionally and developed a unique

friendship since the Academy. I also bonded with Centennial, my Academy team, while working in the small group activities, debating different schools of thought, completing team building exercises, and presenting group resolutions to the class. I also bonded with some of the RVAAM alumni and my classmates during the social activities that were held every evening. After a long day of learning about trauma and treatment, it was great to see Mr. and Mrs. Griff's smiling faces challenging us to have fun and relax. Dr. P, the RVAAM 'den mother,' was often watching and chatting with us as we danced, bowled, and those of who had great voices sang. I even got to bond with a few of my classmates who like martial arts or self-defense like I do. So we got together for some boxing, martial arts, and self-defense practice.

At every turn during the week, I got to bond with more RVAAM alumni and of course more classmates while learning valuable information and skills that I could take back to my job working with

at-risk youth. For example, I learned a lot about myself, as well as my fellow classmates, during art therapy. Although I was initially resistant to this activity, after getting past my elementary art skills I found it to be a fun and excellent medium that I



have subsequently incorporated into my own job when working with the youth. Another favorite memory was bonding with my classmates at the campfire eating s'mores and chatting, and afterwards coming into a circle to share what we were grateful for. It got a little emotional at times but we were there for each

other.

It was amazing to see the level of camaraderie that developed among a group of people who had only just met a few days prior. In fact, that is what I am most proud of about being a part of the class of 2010 - our willingness and desire to support one another. Every time I saw a classmate leave the room, one of us was not far behind to offer comfort and support. We were all told that there were

(Continued on page 4)

EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings Alumni!

Academy time is such an exciting time of year! This year's Academy is a month earlier than usual (May 16-20th, 2011) so make sure you are letting all of your co-workers know they need to get their applications in right away! They can go to the website for more information and to download a copy of the application (<http://www.rvaam.org>). Another change is that the Academy will be held at Bon Secour Spiritual Center in Marriottsville, MD this year - it is absolutely beautiful and again provides a venue where participants will be able to escape from the busyness of their professional and personal lives and to immerse themselves into training. An added bonus for this year's participants is that each person will have his or her own room and bathroom!

There are many new things at the Academy this year so make sure to check it out as well, including a couple new advanced trainings, so be sure to check out the website and register early! And once again there will be an opportunity for alums to interact with the new class, so if you are interested in assisting in this year's Academy contact Rev. Brian Murray at (410) 925-9561.

As always the newsletter staff has done such an amazing job bringing the newsletter together and I would like to thank each of them for all their hard work. Personally I think we have one of the best newsletters out there! If you ever have any ideas or some thoughts of what you would like to see in upcoming newsletters please let me know - your input is always welcome!

I look forward to seeing many of you in May at the Academy!

Debbie Bradley, C.A., Editor

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Save the Date

The Baltimore City Office of the State's Attorney's 11th Annual Victims' Fund Run & Walk

April 16th, 2011, Patterson Park, 2601 E. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland

The Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City is sponsoring its 11th Annual 5k Victims' Fund Run/Walk or one mile walk on Saturday, April 16th, 2011. The race coincides with National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 10-16, 2011.

Proceeds from this year's event will continue to assist victims of crime who do not have the financial resources to cover expenses resulting from criminal victimization, and who meet the established criteria. Registration is \$20.00 if submitted by April 15th, and \$25.00 on the day of the race. To qualify for a group discount all the participants must be registered at the same time. For additional information or for a registration form, call (410) 396-1897 or email fundrun@stattorney.org. Individuals can also register online at www.charmcityrun.com. Mail in registrations must be postmarked by April 15th.

Cash awards will be given to the top three men and women in the Open Division Awards and t-shirts to the first 400 who register. A great post-race party with entertainment, refreshments, and random door prizes will be held - don't miss it!

The 8th Annual Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland

May 16-20, 2011, Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, Maryland

This year's Academy will be hosted at the beautiful and peaceful retreat operated by Bon Secours. Recruitment for this year's class is currently underway, so if you know anyone who would benefit from this training, please be sure to share this information with them and go to the Academy's website

(<http://www.rvaam.org>) to download a copy of this year's application. Advanced training opportunities will be provided for Alumni once again during the week of the Academy.

If you have any further questions, please email Dr. Debra Stanley at dstanley@ubalt.edu.



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!

Roper Victim Assistance Academy - Want to learn more about the Academy or learn about the new trainings that will be offered throughout the year? Then check out the RVAAM website at <http://www.rvaam.org>. Remember to give out the website address to your colleagues who are interested in attending this year's Academy so they can learn more about what to expect.

RVAAM is on Facebook! Join our facebook group on www.facebook.com and tell your friends about it. This is a great tool to help get the word out about the Academy and how it can help profes-

sionals working in the field of victim services.

Bon Secours Spiritual Center - Want to learn about the new location for this year's Academy? Check out Bon Secours' website at <http://www.bonsecoursspiritualcenter.org> Its beautiful and peaceful grounds will create the perfect environment for students, faculty, staff, and trainers to immerse themselves in the Academy and come away with a positive learning experience.



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!

Stacey Bolin (Class of 2008) - Stacey has been busy this past year working on a new book titled, "Through the Barracks Window - A Seabee's Memoir." The novel chronicles the life and struggles of a character based on Stacey's own life. Bitten by the writing bug, Stacey now has three other books pending publication - a children's crime prevention book, and two books on domestic violence. We are so excited Stacey you have found another way to use your voice to bring the issues of victims to the forefront.

Diane Champe (Class of 2010) - On May 6th, 2011, Diane's auto-biography, "Conquering Incest: My Life as a Trauma Survivor" will go on sale. To read a preview

of her book and learn more about issues affecting adult survivors of child abuse and neglect you can go to Diane's website at www.wearesurvivors.org Thank you Diane for bringing attention to such an important issue.

Heather Courtney Falcomeni (Class of 2006) - Heather and her husband recently welcomed another new addition to their family, baby Emily Courtney Falcomeni. Emily was born on February 18th, weighing 8 lbs. Mom, Dad, and big brother Blake are all doing great and thrilled to have little Emily with them. Congratulations Falcomeni family, we can't wait to see the newest family picture!

Jennifer Goode (Class of 2005) - Jen and her husband are excited to announce that they are expecting their third child this summer! The new little bundle is due August 11th - we wish you all the best Jen and can't wait to hear of the baby's arrival!

Eartha Harris (Class of 2007) - Eartha was recently promoted to Director of Court & Advocacy Programs at Life Crisis Center, and as such will now be overseeing the Legal Service Program, the Victim Advocate Program, the Lethality Assessment Program, and the Lower Shore Family Center. Congratulations Eartha, we know you are going to do an amazing job and the victims your agency serves will be forever grateful.

Dana James (Class of 2010) - Dana recently gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Amanda Nicole, on February 6th, 2011. Mom and baby Amanda are doing great - congratulations Dana, Amanda is a very lucky little girl to have you as her mom.

Bonnita Spike (Class of 2010) - Bonnita, who works at the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, recently partnered with MDCASE and Prince George's County NAACP to host a victims' town hall meeting. Great job Bonnita for finding ways to reach out to the community and find ways to better meet the needs of victims.

Jessica Winpigler (Class of 2009) - Jessica graduated with her Masters degree from the University of Baltimore this past January. She earned a high-pass on her comprehensive exams in victimology - way to go Jess!!



News From the Field

Everyone knows that the field of victims services is always evolving. The challenge is to find a way to keep on top of all the changes ...

we're here to help! Here's an overview of just some of the most recent legislative changes:

Below is a summary of the Governor's Family Violence Council's proposed 2011 legislative agenda:

Strangulation

Revision of Code to facilitate the prosecution of strangulation as a crime by revising the first degree assault statute so that strangulation is a felony. The change was suggested by Steve Roscher, ASA for Baltimore County. A significant amount of information is available on the connection between strangulation and domestic violence from the National Family Justice Center in San Diego, California.

Opponents may argue that inclusion of strangulation on the "list" of prohibitions in the first degree assault statute may limit the ability to prosecute behaviors that may fall under the category of common law assault, but are not specifically listed in the first degree assault statute.

Peace Order Amendments

Amending the peace order statute to allow for an extension of said order when

good cause is shown so individuals who are only currently eligible for a peace order (e.g., in a dating relationship) can obtain additional protection if needed because of ongoing violence. A second amendment to the statute would include graduated penalties for a first offense and then a second or subsequent offense that matches the language in the protective order statute.

Protective Order Amendment

Amending the definition of abuse so that abuse under the protective order includes the same elements of abuse under the peace order statute. The acts of abuse that are presently included under the peace order statute but not included in the protective order statute are harassment (under Section 3-803 of the Criminal Law Article), trespass (under Title 6, Subtitle 4 of the Criminal Law Article), and malicious destruction of property (under Section 6-301 of the Criminal Law Article).

Enhance Penalties for Childs’ Witnessing of Domestic Violence

Adding an enhanced penalty to the first and second degree assault statutes so that any assault committed in the presence of a child may permit the Court to impose additional jail time than is currently available.

ing throughout the criminal and juvenile justice processes. The mission of RVAAM is “to provide a broad spectrum of basic advocacy training that will standardize the training of crime victim service providers in Maryland, thereby expanding and enhancing the level of professionalism within the victim services field.”

The Academy not only offers a rare chance to study best practices in victim services but it also affords participants the opportunity to network with other service providers and experts in the field of Victimology. Through the Academy’s Alumni program, attendees are also able to stay connected with those in the field that share similar goals and professional challenges.

To date, RVAAM has hosted seven Academies, which have been attended by over 300 victim service professionals and advocates from all across the state of Maryland. Former attendees include those from the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Victim/Witness Coordinators and attorneys from State’s Attorney’s Offices around the state, law enforcement officers, service providers and several other professional in the field.

Sessions are led by recognized leaders and practitioners in the field of Victimology, criminal justice, victim rights, and skill-building and best practices. Some of the topics to be covered at the 2011 Academy include: Victims Rights & Laws, Restitution, Ethics, Family Violence, Workplace Violence, Collaboration & Network Building, Vicarious Trauma and Self-Help Strategies.

Everyone who graduates from the Academy automatically become a member of the RVAAM Alumni Association (now know as the Victim Services Professional Network [VSPN]), which provides addi-

tional professional and social opportunities to network with former classmates, participate in free advanced trainings, and to take an active role in supporting the Academy. The purpose of VSPN is to provide a vehicle by which Alumni may assist in the attainment of the goals set forth by the Academy, which include, but are not limited to: building a network for victim service providers, establishing a mentoring program for Association members, assisting with identification of training needs at both the basic and advanced levels, and expanding and enhancing the level of professionalism within the victim services field.

I attended the Academy as a victim advocate at the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center. Now as a practicing victim rights attorney, I cannot say enough about how attending RVAAM prepared me for the many challenges that I would face as a victim service provider. The skills, knowledge, and professional relationships I gained at the Academy have been invaluable and have helped me become a better victim advocate and more compassionate and effective communicator.

Essay submitted by Bridgette Harwood, Class of 2009, MCVRC

Just a Thought (Cont.)

others available if anyone needed to take a minute, but we as a class unconsciously took it upon ourselves to take care of our own. We found ways of helping each other remember why we do what we do. For example, during some of the presentations when emotions were running high, I saw my classmates reaching out for one another and I found myself doing the same thing. Sometimes it would just be passing a note asking if the other was okay, or in my case, writing a little joke on the piece of paper in hopes it would bring a smile to my classmate’s face.

What I loved about my class was that we were all professionals, and were there because we wanted to learn, to network, and to experience. Each instructor

Best Practices

Why Attend a Victim Assistance Academy?

The Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland (RVAAM) was created in 2003 as an academically-based education and training program that covers a broad array of topics in Victimology, victims’ rights and services, and victim advocacy issues aris-



brought an amazing array of experience, resources, knowledge, energy, and creativity to the Academy. The myriad of topics during the week was remarkable because regardless of the diversity of our job titles there were components of each presentation that were applicable to each of our jobs. Consequently, by the end of the Academy we evolved as individuals, and as professionals, and left the Academy a more inventive, collaborative, and inspired group of individuals.

The Academy provided an experience I will never forget, linked me to a network of people I will always be able to reach out to, and provided practical lessons that have changed the way I do my job today. I'm grateful for how much I've grown and learned from this experience, and am grateful to those who are dedicated to providing this extraordinary opportunity to professionals in the victim service profession.

Eva Marie Kenealy, Class of 2010, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Associate, John L. Gildner - Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents

Advanced Training Schedule at 2011 RVAAM Academy

Once again RVAAM will be providing **free** advanced trainings during the week of the Academy for Alumni. This year, two advanced training sessions will be offered on Wednesday, May 18th.

MORNING SESSION:

The morning session, which will be led by Dr. Yehuda Bergman, Ph.D., is scheduled for 9:00am-12:00pm, is entitled "Be-

yond the barrier: Alternative interventions utilizing psychodrama and playback theatre techniques in non-clinical settings."

Dr. Bergman is an expressive therapist, supervisor, and senior lecturer and has had extensive training and experience in working with post-trauma veterans, as well as survivors of domestic and sexual trauma. In addition to managing his own private practice, Dr. Bergman also serves on the faculty of Lisa Ferentz's Institute for Advanced Psychotherapy Training and Education.

During this training participants will explore new, creative and innovative approaches and options for interventions with victims through the exploration of real cases and stories from participants' experiences with victims.

By the end of the training participants will understand the use of creative role play techniques to reflect on intervention options; will learn about alternative options for intervention; and will learn how to utilize the experiences from the workshop into their actual practice.

For more information about Dr. Yehuda Bergman, please go to his website at www.yehudabergman.com

AFTERNOON SESSION:

The afternoon session, which will be led by Johnny Lee, is scheduled for 1:00-4:00pm and will focus on Employment Rights of Victims. Mr. Lee is the Executive Director of Peace@Work, a non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of violence and crisis response in the workplace. He served as the Training Director for PREVENT, a CDC funded violence prevention program run through the University of North Carolina Chapel

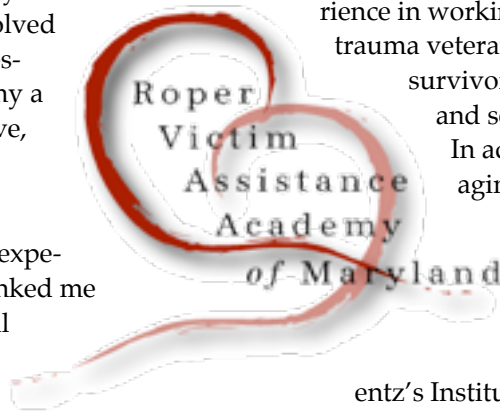
Hill's Injury Prevention Research Center, and previously served as the Workplace Violence Specialist for the Office of State Personnel in Raleigh, NC.

During this training participants will have the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills to support victims in their workplace. As such, the workshop will review employment rights and the corresponding employment law. Participants will also learn about the requirements to maintain a safe workplace and review compensation benefits and options for victims who are injured at work or lose their job. Finally participants will learn how to raise awareness and conduct outreach with business community.

For more information about Johnny Lee, please go to his website at www.peaceatwork.org

REGISTRATION:

To register for one or both of these free trainings please contact Dr. Debra Stanley by email at dstanley@ubalt.edu by no later than May 1st, 2011.



The 20 / 20

Each newsletter we pose twenty questions to one of our members to get an inside look at who they are ... this month get to know Dianna Abromowski-Liberto, a graduate of the 2007 Academy

The last movie I saw in the theaters was ... "Inception"
- Absolutely would recommend it!

My childhood nickname was ... Lady Di

If I could go anywhere in the world for vacation it would have to be ...
Besides Ireland ... French Polynesia

My favorite professional sports team is ... the Ravens!!

My two most favorite colors are ... blue, like the ocean, and green, like Ireland

The animal I think best represents my personality is ...
a dolphin - smart, playful, and able to scare away sharks

The best piece of advice I've ever been given was ...
It's always greener on the other side until you get over there and realize it's dirt brown. Thanks Grandmom :)

My favorite thing to do to help unwind after a long day is ... sit on the couch and watch TV

The thing I think I do well is ... coach Field Hockey

My favorite season of the year is ... summer

The thing I like best about my job is; and the most challenging thing is ... being in court and helping people; all the awful things I have heard people have done

The occupation, other than the one I'm in now, I would most like to have is ... ballet dancer

The occupation I am SO happy I don't have is ... an accountant - I dislike math

The quality I like or appreciate most in others is ... humility

The quality I like least in others is ... someone who is self-centered

The last thing I did to treat myself was ... got a new haircut

When I was a child, I wanted to be ... a lawyer, and that might actually come true!

The three adjectives that best describe my personality are ... easygoing, friendly, loyal

My favorite book is ... Harry Potter series

One of my goals for 2011 is ... be healthier

Volunteers Needed!

Calling all Alumni! Once again we need Alumni to help with the operations of the Academy - from onsite registration on Sunday night, to helping host the opening night ice-cream social, to helping coordinate the Alumni sponsored dinner. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Rev. Brian Murray either by email at bmurray@iflp.org or by phone at (410) 925-9561.

Alumni Directory

The 2010 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, will soon be 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 July 2011