

# Academy Forum

*Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #45- November 2017

## Just a Thought

*Working with victims of crime who are immigrants presents some unique challenges, including language barriers and distrust/fear of the legal system. But such barriers can be overcome. Learn how from an attorney with the Esperanza Center*  
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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 during the next few months!*  
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## Alumni Showcase

*Read Terry Lewis' essay about her experiences working as a Domestic Violence Court Advocate in Baltimore County Department of Social Services' Family Violence Unit and how she has used the knowledge and skills she gained from the Academy in her job.*  
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## Certification News

*Want to learn how to become a certified victim service professional in the state of Maryland? This section explains each level of certification, and what are the specific requirements for each.*  
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## News From the Field

*It's always important to try to stay abreast of what legislation is working its way through Annapolis. Read about two bills that are were recently passed.*  
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## Just a thought...

### Assisting victims who live in the shadows

#### Helping Maryland's immigrant population

I have been working with immigrants who are victims of crime for about two years and over this time I have learned a lot about this population, and the unique needs that they have. I assume I am not alone when I say that after I hear a victim's story, my mind is drawn to consider the perpetrator's motivation - questions such as: "How could someone [enter your go-to story of heinous violence or abuse here]?" I have come to the conclusion that most criminals look for opportunities where they can minimize risks. For too many immigrants that rationale puts them squarely in the cross-hairs of these opportunistic criminals. Think about it - if you were looking for some cash, who do

you think would be carrying it? Who do you think would be afraid to contact law enforcement? Would they even be able to communicate with police if they did choose to contact them? Unfortunately, I think many perpetrators are capable of completing such an analysis, and from what I have seen with my clients, it is evident that they are targets for many crimes simply because of their non-native status.

However, I don't believe that criminals have profiled their victims to the extent that they understand some of the deeper complexities of culture and custom that interfere with a victim's relationship with law enforcement. For victim advocates, it can be helpful to understand these challenges so that you are better able to understand and to assist their needs. Too frequently, the justice system in the immigrant's native country is corrupt. One young man whose mother I worked with shared his experience with law enforcement in his country. One day



he was riding his bike home from school when police officers inexplicably stopped him and made him get off his bike. They beat him, then took his clothes and his bike. That is just one of the petty examples of corruption that have been shared in my office. Sadly, I have been told repeatedly of incidents of domestic abusers and attempted murderers bribing their way out of jail, or how soldiers get away with gang-rape because the police are on a crime boss' payroll.

There is hope though. By and large, I have found the immigrant population to be optimistic. They are looking for a better world, and they make inordinate sacrifices to create that world. Many of my clients have been pleasantly surprised by their interactions with local law enforcement in Maryland. That same young man whose bike was stolen told me that on one occasion, he saw a Baltimore City police officer knocking on his neighbor's door. When the neighbor did not answer, the officer turned to my client and asked if he had heard the neighbors fighting,

**(Continued on page 5)**

**EDITOR'S CORNER**

Hello Alums!

Wow, it sure has been a busy start to the fall season! It has been a very exciting time for all of us here at RVAAM as we have been able to accomplish some things we had dreamed of doing for so long - Certification, Regional Trainings. I hope many of you had the opportunity to attend one of the V-Step Regional Trauma Trainings that were offered over the past five months. The feedback we received from the participants was outstanding! While this first wave of trainings has wrapped up, we have high hopes that we will be able to offer another set of Regional Trainings sometime during the upcoming fiscal year. There is definitely a demand for such trainings, so keep your fingers crossed! We'll be sure to keep you posted on any developments.

As we get start to get ready for the next Academy class, we hope that you will help to promote the Academy to your colleagues by sharing with them your own experiences, and encourage them to apply. The application and flyer are now available on our website at [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us) So please, be sure to show them where it is.

Please keep your eyes open for announcements about future trainings, and be sure to check out the Save the Date section right here for trainings that are currently scheduled. There are a lot of great opportunities for professional development, and most of them are free! So take advantage and help further expand your knowledge and skills. You never have too much education or too many resources - especially in this field!

As the holiday season quickly approaches, and we feel even more pressed for time in our jobs and in our

*lives, don't forget to take a moment each day to pause and give your mind and body a chance to recharge. Remember, you can't give others 100% when you're riding on fumes. So take care of yourself.*

Until next time!

**Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII**

[bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org)

*Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later. ~ Og Mandino*

**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!



**Esperanza Center**

The Esperanza Center is a comprehensive immigrant resource center that offers essential services and referrals to people who are new to the United States. Resources include ESL education, healthcare, and low-cost immigration legal services. To learn more, go to: <https://www.catholiccharities-md.org/services/esperanza-center/>

**House of Ruth - Adelante Familia**

The House of Ruth provides prevention, intervention, legal aid and advocacy services for victims of domestic violence. The agency operates a shelter for women and children in immediate danger, individual and group counsel-

ing for victims/survivors, and drop-in crisis support groups.

The Adelante Familia is a bilingual program operating in the House of Ruth. It provides comprehensive, linguistically and culturally-specific services as they pertain to case management, individual and group counseling, education, and advocacy. For more information, go to: [www.hruth.org](http://www.hruth.org)

**Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)**

The mission of the ILRC is to work with and educate attorneys and legal advocates about how to best address the needs of immigrant populations. The Center's expertise focuses on family-based immigration, humanitarian relief, naturalization and citizenship, immigration enforcement, and removal defense. To learn more, go to: <https://www.ilrc.org>

**Immigration Advocates Network - National Immigration Legal Services Directory**

IAN's National Immigration Legals Services Directory allows individuals to search for immigration legal service providers by state, county, or detention facility. Only nonprofit organizations that provide free or low-cost legal services are included in the directory. To search for service providers in Maryland, go to: <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

**Intercultural Counseling Connection**

Intercultural Counseling Connection is a referral network of mental health professionals committed to providing culturally responsive counseling and therapeutic services for refugees in the greater Baltimore area. All services are free or will be reimbursed through Medicaid. To learn more, go to: <http://www.iccounseling.com>

[www.interculturalcounseling.org/community-resources](http://www.interculturalcounseling.org/community-resources)

### Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA)

MORA works through a network of public and private service providers throughout Maryland to coordinate transitional services aimed at helping refugees attain self-sufficiency. Partner groups provide resettlement support and services to federally-recognized refugees and asylees, including medical and health screenings, employment assistance, language instruction, social services, and youth programs. To learn more, go to: <http://dhr.maryland.gov/maryland-office-for-refugees-and-asylees/>

### Women’s Law Center of Maryland/Multi-Ethnic Domestic Violence Project

This Center provides pro bono legal services to foreign-born victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual assault. To learn more, go to: [www.wlcmd.org](http://www.wlcmd.org)

### World Relief Baltimore Immigration Legal Clinic

This clinic partners with the University of Maryland School of Law to provide assistance to immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their family members. Pro bono consultations for deportation proceedings are held bi-weekly. For more information, go to: <http://worldrelief.org/Page.aspx?pid=2896>

### Have other questions about immigration? Please call:

**Miguel Rodriguez - Hispanic liaison at the Baltimore City Police Department;** (410) 396-2039 (office), or (443) 986-8627 (cell)

**Catalina Rodriguez - Baltimore City Mayor’s Office- Chair of the Hispanic Community for Public Safety;** (410) 396-8056 (office)

**Evelyn Vargas - Victim Advocate - Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office;** (443) 984-6109 (office)



### SAVE THE DATE!

### Victim Services Professional Network (VSPN) General Meeting

**Saturday, November 18th, 2017, 10:00am-12:00pm, University of Baltimore, Law School, 6th Floor - Room 608**

Please join the leadership of VSPN for its annual planning meeting. We’ll be discussing upcoming events and soliciting input on what additional activities you’d like to see us offer in 2018. We also will be electing new members to the Board, and

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Debbie Bradley (email link below) by no later than November 12th so we can bring enough parking passes for everyone. We hope to see you there!! [bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org)

### Maryland Child Trafficking Conference: Moving from Awareness to Response

**December 4th, 2017, 8:00am - 4:30pm, Towson University, West Village Commons, 424 Emerson Drive, Towson, MD.**

The University of Maryland School of Social Work in collaboration with the

Governor’s Office of Crime Control & Prevention and the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force are sponsoring a statewide public awareness conference to mobilize communities and individuals in response to human trafficking. This event is free to attend and open to all members of the community. To register for this conference, go to:

[https://umaryland.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3ggd1UbXYjImoVb](https://umaryland.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3ggd1UbXYjImoVb)

### 2017 RVAAM Academy

**June 5th-9th, 2017, Bon Secours Spiritual Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD**

Mark your calendars! The 14th annual RVAAM Academy is scheduled for the first week of June at the beautiful and peaceful Bon Secours. To register, go to [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us) and download an application.



### 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...



- **Rosemary Raiman (Class of 2004)** - Be sure to give Rosemary a big congratulatory hug the next time you see her. This past spring, she was the featured Credentialed Advocate (CA) for the National Advocate Credentialing Program (NACP)! You can read about all of her accomplishments at <https://www.thenacp.org/featured-ca-of-the-month> Way to go Rosemary!!
- **Miesha Rice (Class of 2017)** - Miesha recently passed the LCSW-C exam and is now a Clinical Social Worker for the State of Maryland, and as such, can practice independently. Way to go Miesha! We know big things are in store for you.

## ALUMNI SHOWCASE

### *Advocating for Victims in Court*

As a Domestic Violence Court Advocate for the Baltimore County Department of Social Services/Family Violence Unit, I attend criminal court proceedings and Final Protective Order hearings with victims of domestic violence. Specifically, I'm there to help the victim understand his or her rights, provide emotional support, assist with safety planning, provide referrals to community resources, and help explain the often complex court proceedings in the simplest terms.

The most satisfying part of my work is when I help victims create their own personal safety plan. Not everyone is ready to leave, and not everyone knows how to stay safe. While I can't make them leave, I can provide them with some tools that they can use to protect themselves. I'm not going to lie, it's frustrating sometimes when victims won't leave dangerous relationships, but I understand how difficult such a decision is. Ending any

relationship can be challenging; walking away from an abusive relationship is equally, if not, more challenging. So, I focus on educating victims about what resources he or she can utilize once they are ready to leave.

Prior to working as a domestic violence advocate, I was a volunteer on Baltimore County's Domestic Violence Hotline. This is where I began to learn about victim services. It was through my work at the Hotline that I heard about Roper Academy, and decided to apply. What an amazing and invaluable experience that was for me! Not only did I learn about the other types of victim services, I also was introduced to Trauma-Informed services. This was very similar to Person-Centered services, which I was familiar with through my prior work as an advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness. All of the knowledge and skills I gained during my week at the Academy really boosted my confidence as a victim's advocate. The Academy even helped me get the job I am currently working at! One of my fellow volunteer and Academy alum, Marzana Hasan, mentioned there was an opening within the Family Violence Unit, where she was working as a Court Advocate. I decided to apply, and was hired this past January. Now I am able to use what I learned at the Academy every day.

I have learned so much along my journey as a victim advocate. Even though I have worked with many domestic violence victims, I understand that each individual is unique, and there are no simple answers. The most important thing I can do to help them is to let them know that they are not alone, and there are resources available to them if, and when, they choose to leave. No matter what, the most important thing I can offer them is to

let them know I am always here for them.

*\* Essay contributed by Theresa "Terrie" Lewis (Class of 2015)*



## 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.us](http://www.rvaam.us) 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 are available online at [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us) (click on the Certification tab at the top of the page). Keep an eye out for upcoming prep classes, as well as classes on

ethics for renewals. For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Debbie Bradley at [bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org) or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

## CONGRATULATIONS! Check out the newest certified Victim Assistance Specialists for the State of Maryland:

### Level I Victim Assistance Specialist

Claudia Ahwiring

Heather Bosley

Kara Sue Harriott

Tony Helbig

Andrea Hollern

Dr. Iris Jackson

Therese Lewis

Dana Mason

Kathy McKnight

Kitty Nelson

Timmeka Perkins

Amanda Richardson

Elizabeth Ringler-Jayanthan

Misty SanJulian

Jessica Savage

John Sherbin

Christina Simmons

Delores L. Smith

Ashley Stuck

Mamie Wilson

### Level II Victim Assistance Specialist

Suzan Boisclair

Siobhan Copeland

Camden Heath

Carmen Holloway

Jennifer Manzione

Miesha Rice

Georgie Soloman

Dina Ward

### Level III Victim Assistance Specialist

Karen Greene

Barbara Elliott-Harvard

Deborah Howard

Deirdre Gardner

Keith Gethers

Tya M. Johnson

Gwendolyn Long

Shelly McMath

Cherly Olorogun-Peguese

Brynez Roane

Jessica Roman

Valda Rotolo

Delaine Smith-Clark

Naomi Taffet

Arneisha Woods

## Just a Thought (Cont.)

because they were there to respond to a domestic disturbance. Because of the concern they expressed for the safety of these individuals, the young man said he felt he could now trust the police.

The good-will engendered in the immigrant community by seeing first hand how law enforcement may interact with citizens is difficult to replicate at the prosecutorial level. A courthouse can be an intimidating place of authority. It is one thing to report a crime to the police, when you are in familiar surroundings - it is another matter entirely to have to face your perpetrator in a courtroom, in front of many other persons. Many of my clients have expressed fear that such action will bring about retribution on themselves, as well as their families. So it is critical for attorneys and victim advocates to familiarize themselves with what legal protections are available to witnesses, and to then inform victims of what

steps you will take to ensure their safety. Moreover, for particular types of crimes, their participation in prosecuting a case may make them eligible for additional types of immigration relief, such as U Visas. For undocumented immigrants, this could be a life-changing opportunity.

I encourage every victim advocate to take some time to learn more about the different immigrant populations that reside in your community. What are their customs? What barriers have they faced when trying to assimilate? What are the kind of experiences have they had with the legal system in their native country? How might those experiences affect their attitudes towards our justice system, and their willingness to reach out for help when needed? Only when we begin to take the time and try to walk in these individuals shoes, will we begin to understand their needs and position ourselves to help bring them out of the shadows.

*Essay contributed by K. Louise Moss, Staff Attorney, Esperanza Center*

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD

*It's important we all keep abreast of changes to laws and/or policies that have a direct affect on victims of crime. If you hear of new law or policy being proposed at the local, state, or federal level, be sure to share it with us!*



**SB 219: Criminal Procedure-Pre-trial Release-Victim Protection -**  
On January 19, 2017, this bill was in-

troduced and read to the Senate Committee. The purpose of the bill is to require that a supplemental report, provide a victim or their representative with a request for protection and registration with appropriate parties, be added to an application for a Statement of Charges and/or probable cause. The bill has not yet been approved.

**FYI! The Victim Information & Notification Everyday (VINE) and VINE Protective Order programs has been transferred from the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to the Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services -** For inquires regarding either program, or to request brochures, please contact Stanley Lofton at DPSCS.

## Thoughts, Ideas, Suggestions?

Are you looking for more information 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 can assist our Alums both personally and professionally. Please send any suggestions you might have for a future topic to Debbie Bradley at [bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org). And remember, we are also happy to share any information you have about job openings and professional trainings you might think your fellow Alums would benefit from!

## NEW RVAAM WEBSITE!!

If you have not yet seen RVAAM's new website, be sure to take a moment and do so! If we don't say so ourselves, we think it's top notch! Check it out at: [www.rvaam.us](http://www.rvaam.us)



## Alumni Directory

The 2016 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](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org) or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

## Editorial Board

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**Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in January 2018**

