

# Academy Forum

*Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy*

**A Quarterly Newsletter**

**Issue #14 - April 2009**

**Just a Thought**

*Reflecting on her own experiences at the Academy, Rosemary Raiman explains the importance of RVAAM to the professionalization of the field of victim services and the benefits participants will gain from attending the Academy*

**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**



**Best Practices**

*Learn more about just a few of the scheduled presenters at this year's Academy - we hope you will share this impressive information with your colleagues.*

**Page 3**

**A Window to the Soul**

*Our newest addition to the newsletter - a section to better help us meet the spiritual needs of ourselves, as well as of those we help. This edition read about one Alum's perception of the role of RVAAM in the faith-based community*

**Page 3**

**Alumni Updates**

*Always find yourself thinking "I wonder what happened to..."*



*Check out what our Alumni are up to these days.*

**Page 4**

**The 20/20**

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

**Page 7**



## Just a thought...

*The Roper Victim Assistance Academy - Reflections of an Alum ...*

**Rosemary A. Raiman, C.A.**

RVAAM is a dream come true for all those who have worked and advocated for years to create a standardized training that would bring to light the importance, recognition and credibility for the work/advocacy that is being offered to crime victims, survivors, and their families in the state of Maryland.

The RVAAM, which is modeled on the National Victim Assistance Academy, held its first academic (40 hour) training at the University of Baltimore, under the direction of Dr. Debra Stanley, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, and Elaine Witman in 2004.

This group of 38 participants from across the state came from a variety of service providers and legal agencies, they came bringing with them a wealth of skills and an eagerness to

learn. We all shared experiences and expertise and gained knowledge to improve our services to victims. And that is just what took place during that week at RVAAM. There was personal growth, studying, active listening, sharing, trust, networking, support system building, and the benefits of exceptional presentations outside those occupations we were already trained in and employed with.

RVAAM training started at the beginning with history - back when there were no victims rights, no advocates, and no academy. The staff covered local, state, and national history of victims' services and an array of topics that included child victimization, sexual assault, homicide, domestic violence, mental health, trauma, substance abuse, and more. The Academy gave us a clearer look into the judicial system, parole and probation, the juvenile process, restorative justice practices, additional victim services such as VINE, as well as an overview of resources and funding that are available within the state for victim services. Overall, the Academy opened a window of knowledge for its participants and provided them with an invaluable opportunity to network with others in the field and build friendships that have kept many of us connected years later.

Over the past five years, RVAAM has expanded and attendees now include paid staff,

advocates, volunteers, community and faith-based group members, as well as law enforcement and corrections officers. This Academy is such a unique learning opportunity and as a graduate, you leave with valuable knowledge and a renewed sense of professionalism and validation.



For me personally, I knew the importance of professionalizing our advocacy work and had eagerly awaited an opportunity to participate in an academic program. I did so in 1997 at a national level, but when RVAAM was finally created, it was for me a dream come true and was one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I learned so much, and in particu-

lar the "Illuminations: Sexual Abuse Through the Eyes of a Child" training presented by Father Ray Chase was life-altering. I felt as if those young victims were giving us, the participants, a way to look into and through their eyes into their very souls. Their gift to us was we had the opportunity to learn from their experience on how to better assist victims and their families with the best resources, empathy and services we have.

**(Continued on page 3)**

EDITOR'S CORNER

*Greetings Alumni!*

*It is time once again for another RVAAM class. Every year RVAAM just keeps getting better, and this year is no exception. This issue of the Academy Forum is geared toward the Academy and is chock full of information. So remember the "Power of One to One" and start recruiting people and encourage them to send in their application as soon as possible as this year's enrollment will be limited to ensure that each participant experiences the full benefits of the Academy. So use this newsletter as a recruiting tool! Remember to think outside of the box when recruiting new attendees - think of anyone who is serving victims of crime but may not have as much knowledge about victims' rights, needs, and the resources that are available that could help them do their job even better.*

*We are excited to announce that this year's Academy has been moved to a new location - the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown Maryland. It looks absolutely amazing, and we can not wait to spend the week out there! So get everyone to send in their applications right away so they don't miss out!*

*April is such a big month for victim service providers, with it being Sexual Assault Awareness month, Child Abuse Awareness month, and Crime Victims' Rights Week. Be sure to check out the "Save the Date" section for locations and times of all the memorial services and special events throughout Maryland, and be sure to notify all of the victims you know so they can attend these events as well.*

*If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see featured in the upcoming Academy Forum Newsletters, please do not hesitate to contact me.*

*Wishing you all the best!*

*Debbie Bradley, Editor*

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

Web Links

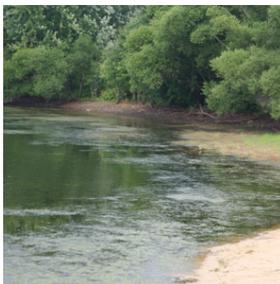


*Although we have a virtual library at our fingertips every time we turn on the computer, we often lose sight of the forest through the trees just trying to navigate the world-wide web. Here are a few sites that relate to this issue's "Just a Thought" ... happy surfing!*

**The Roper Victims Assistance Academy of Maryland** - Information about the Academy, as well as a copy of this year's application can be downloaded from RVAAM's official website at <http://www.rvaam.org>

**RVAAM Facebook Page** - Take a moment and visit RVAAM's new Facebook page - it's a great place to catch up with your Alumni friends!  
<http://www.facebook.com/p.php?i=1150397562&k=441545SZSY4M5DDEWCY4X4>

**The Pearlstone Conference Center** - take a moment and check out the beautiful location for this year's Academy.



<http://www.pearlstonecenter.org>

The President's Corner

It is officially spring and with that, it is time again to prepare for the upcoming Academy. As many of you have heard by now, we will be at a new location this year - the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown, MD. I immediately was struck by its beauty and sense of serenity, and couldn't think of a better place to spend the week.

This year's Academy is scheduled June 1st - 5th. Once again, Dr. Stanley and the Academy faculty will be asking Alumni to help out during the day, as well as during some evenings.

Please consider volunteering if either Brian Murray or Debra Snow, the co-chairs of the Operations Committee, contact you.

I know with the current economic climate, many of us have had to face program and job cuts. But it is more important than ever to make sure individuals who work in the field of victims' services are well trained. The Academy can assist in this mission by educating participants not only on desired skill sets, but also about what resources are available in their community and throughout the state that they can use to better serve victims.

Since so much attention these past few months was directed at finding a new location for this year's Academy, recruitment efforts have only just started. Now that a location is secure, we, as Alumni need to assist this effort by participating in the "Power of One to One" campaign. The campaign asks each Alumnus to tell one person about the Academy, and if needed, assist them in completing an application. Last year we had almost more attendees than we could accommodate, so this year Dr. Stanley is going to limit the number of participants - so please do not delay in your recruitment efforts!

As you know, we held our elections last month and we are happy to welcome two new officers to the Alumni Association. Linda Fair was voted in as the new Vice President, and Diana Abramowski was elected to Treasurer. If you have a minute, send them an email to congratulate them. A word of thanks should also be sent to our outgoing officers, Debbie Bradley and Cheri Peay. Debbie and Cherie have held a position on the Board from the beginning of this Association. Without their dedication and countless hours, the Alumni Association would not be where it is today. Fortunately, both plan on staying involved - we do not want to lose either of them as they are part of the foundation of all that is to come.

Another exciting venture the Alumni Association has recently begun is the creation of our own Facebook page! Kia Hackney created our page and I hope you will take a moment to check it out. Thanks to Kia, we are definitely keeping up with the technology of the 21st century! Finally, Linda Fair, in conjunction with Dr. Heather Pfeifer, has developed a brief telephone survey she will be administering over the next few weeks to learn more about the needs of the Alumni and how the Association can better meet those needs. I hope you will give her a moment of your time when she calls. We are genuinely interested in hearing your opinions on how we can make the Association better.

**(Continued on page 5)**

## Just a thought...

(continued from pg. 3)

Because my advocacy work is pretty limited to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, I wanted to renew my knowledge in all areas of victimization, so I applied to return and attend the Academy for a second time. It was even more incredible the second time around and I learned new and updated information, as well as new techniques I could use to assist victims of crime. Equally valuable to me was the sense of trust that is built among the attendees during the week of the Academy. Through the sharing of personal stories and life experiences, the laughter and tears, and hours of talking we came together as a unit of strength. I think this is one of the reasons we have such a strong Alumni Association. We take ownership and pride in the work we do and the people we are, and in our hope for RVAAM to continue.

It has been an honor to be asked to write this article about the experience of RVAAM. I can't express enough gratitude for those who make RVAAM possible, especially to Roberta Roper, who has been in the forefront of victims' rights, and has served as an inspiration to many of us in the field. I believe every one in victim services could benefit from attending RVAAM and I truly wish every employer across the state would make attending RVAAM a reality for their staff

**Rosemary A. Raiman, C.A. (Alumni, Class of 2005 and 2008)**

## Best Practices

**For this special edition of the Academy Forum, we are providing a few highlights of the training sessions that will be offered at this year's Academy - we hope you will share this with your colleagues and encourage them to apply.**

***"The Impact of Maltreatment on the Developing Spirituality in Children"* - Father Ray Chase, St. Vincent's Center, Baltimore, MD**

Father Ray Chase, a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, was the Director of Spiritual Development at St. Vincent's Church for 28 years. His interest and work has focused on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the developing spirituality of children. In 1994, Fr. Ray, in cooperation with Justin and Matt

Wilke, victims of child sexual abuse, developed the Illuminations Exhibit to serve as a tool for exploring the experience and effects of child sexual victimization in the life of the victim, his/her family, and the perpetrator. Since 1994 Fr. Ray has presented the now critically acclaimed Illumination's Exhibit to a wide audience, including law enforcement agencies, mental health professions, educators and students, physicians, clergy, and even as an adjunct training tool to sex offender treatment programs. With 28 years of experience working with child victims of abuse and neglect, Fr. Chase continues to provide workshops to local and national audiences.

***"Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Training"* - David R. Thomas, Academic Program Coordinator, School of Professional Studies & Business Education, Johns Hopkins University**

Dave retired from the Montgomery County Police Department in December of 2000 on full disability after 15 years of service. He received his Bachelor's degree from Towson University in 1983, and his Master's degree from the University of Maryland. His final assignment with the Montgomery County Police Department was on the Domestic Violence Unit, which he helped found. In addition to helping create the Unit, he was responsible for the Department's curriculum development in domestic violence training, as well as policy development on domestic violence related issues. At the time of his retirement, he was honored as the 2nd highest decorated officer in the Department's history, receiving numerous awards including the silver and bronze medals of valor, "Policeman of the Year," and recipient of the Women's Alliance of MD Domestic Violence Advocacy Award. Most recently he was awarded the 21st Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award by the Johns Hopkins University in January 2004.

Upon retirement, Dave served as a Senior Advisor to the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Victim Services Unit as a Domestic Violence Specialist. In January 2002 he signed on with the Johns Hopkins University's Division of Public Safety Leadership, where he now serves as the Assistant Director of the Domestic Violence Education Program. Dave teaches domestic violence related courses in the Division's Police Executive Leadership Program and coordinates and leads domestic violence trainings to cross-discipline audiences throughout the Mid-Atlantic. He has also traveled to Russia and the Ukraine on behalf of the U.S. State Department to provide domestic violence train-

ing to law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges. He regularly testifies before the MD State Legislature on domestic-related legislation and has published numerous papers on the issue of domestic violence.

***"Communication and Active Listening Skills; Collaboration and Team Building"* - Sgt. Dave Betz, Harford County Office of the Sheriff**

Sgt. Dave Betz, a 19-year veteran of the Harford County Sheriff's Office, has been involved in the investigation of child abuse cases since 1998. For six of the past seven years, he has served as Program Manager for the Harford County Child Advocacy Center, managing resources and personnel from the State's Attorney's Office, local law enforcement, the Departments of Social Services and Family and Children's Services, and a private mental agency. Under Sgt. Betz's leadership, the CAC became the Family Justice Center in May 2006. At this time, resources were consolidated physically into one office, and the Domestic Violence Unit from the Harford County Sheriff's Office and the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (the domestic violence intervention and treatment program in the county) were added to the service continuum.

An outstanding advocate for children and families, Sgt. Betz played an integral role in the CAC becoming nationally accredited. He has proven instrumental in organizing two Cherish the Children Symposiums, held in Harford County in April 2005 and 2006, during Child Abuse and Prevention Month. As a past President, Vice President, and current Treasurer for the Maryland Children's Alliance, Sgt. Betz assumes a pivotal role in the Mid-Atlantic Conference on Child Abuse each October in Ocean City, Maryland. His knowledge of the field of child abuse and his extensive network of colleagues enables Sgt. Betz to obtain nationally recognized speakers and coordinate a workshop agenda that continually brings best practice models of intervention to child abuse professionals in the county, the State of Maryland, and the Mid-Atlantic region. Sgt. Betz is currently assigned to the Harford County Sheriff's Office Public Information Office.

***"Understanding and Working with Traumatized Victims; Trauma and Addictions; Vicarious Traumatization and Resiliency Skills"* - Lisa Ferentz, LSCSW-C, DAPA,**

(Continued on page 5)



## 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 almost passed us by. Here's just a snapshot of some of the special events and milestones our alums have experienced since we last met...*

**Maria Garcia (2007)** - Maria celebrated her birthday on March 22nd. We send you lots of happy wishes and hope you had a wonderful day!

**Tina Shankle (2005)** - Tina is expecting a grandson in late June! We send you a big congratulations and wish you and your family all the best and a happy new edition to your crew.

**Katie Thornton (2008)** - Katie and her husband, Paul, are expecting their first child in the beginning of October. We are so excited for the both of you and send you a hearty congratulations!

## A Window to the Soul - Addressing the Spiritual Well-being of Ourselves and Those We Assist

*"The Benefits of RVAAM for Faith Leaders" by Reverend Cathy Oatman*

As a clergy person who had served for 18 months as a trauma chaplain, I was already coming to the RVAAM from the perspective of the spiritual side of victimization. What the training at the Academy brought to my ministry was the practical tools of helping victims. Because of the Academy, I now have a greater awareness of victim services and a deeper understanding of the piece I bring to the healing puzzle for victims.

Most agencies in victim services have processes and procedures to follow when dealing

with a victim situation. In ministry, we have no procedures. My seminary Ethics class tried to prepare us students for this reality by splitting us up into small groups and presenting us with real-life situations which pastors had faced. My group was asked "What would you do if a parishioner told you that he had been sexually abusing children?" Since 'run out of the room screaming' didn't seem like a dignified response for a pastor, we discussed instead the practicalities that needed to be addressed in terms of safety for the children, safety for the church, the legalities involved, as well as the pastoral response to the offender who is sitting in your office making a confession - a cry for spiritual healing. This generated discussion on mandatory reporting and clergy / congregant confidentiality issues. Because of the varied ministries represented in that room, the class ended as murky as it began, with no clear-cut answers or ways to address such a situation.

Thankfully I have never had a parishioner come and tell me that but I have had more than one woman share her experience of childhood sexual abuse. And while I have always known that my role, besides being a pastoral presence, was to somehow connect with them with the counseling resources which I cannot personally provide, going about that task was always a question of "How?" Because of



the training with Lisa Ferentz offered at RVAAM, I feel more confident with the "How?" in approaching these situations.

Lisa laid out a simple four step process: 1) tell her it is not her fault; 2) thank her for her courage and trust in sharing her story; 3) tell her she deserves support; and 4) refer her to a therapist. This is one of my practical tools that I took away from the Academy and brought to my ministry. I continue to use this four-fold approach as I slowly and gently encourage these women to move toward deeper healing.

I recognized the Academy's training coming into play again this past holiday season. In December it seemed like almost everyday there was a story on the news of a woman being stabbed or shot to death in her home. I was able to hear the subtext under what was being said, and recognized that these murders were most likely the result of domestic violence. I'm not sure I would have made that connection if I had not attended the Academy because it was not presented as a domestic violence incident by the media. Recognizing this escalation of violence in the larger com-

munity has raised my awareness for emotional distress among my parishioners. And one Sunday before our prayer time I pointed out the connection between the killings and domestic violence to the congregation, in order to raise their awareness and concern, as together we raised our prayers. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about "equipping the saints for the work of ministry."

After returning home from the Academy in 2007, I felt a sense of relief. It has been an intense week of listening to the horrors that we inflict upon each other. I also felt a sense of deep gratitude for all of you who work in the field of victim services and who work closer than I to the real blood that is spilt. I am spiritually uplifted knowing that as I do my part in helping people find healing, I am surrounded by such well-equipped saints who are also doing the work of the ministry of healing.

God's Peace

*Rev. Cathy Oatman*

## 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:*

The United States Supreme Court ruled this past month in *Vermont v. Brillon* (08-88). In a 7-2 opinion authored by Justice Ginsburg, the Court held that delays caused by public defenders could not be counted against the state in a defendant's claim that his 6th Amendment right to a speedy trial has been violated. The Court also held that under the analysis in *Barker v. Wingo*, 407 U.S. 514 (1972), courts must take into account the defendant's disruptive and aggressive behavior in the overall balance. The Court found particularly troubling that the defendant, a habitual domestic offender, had fired three lawyers, tried to get them to engage in unethical discovery, and had threatened one of his attorneys. The Court said that this rule acknowledges that defendants may have incentive to employ delay as a 'defense tactic,' and that, by delay, witnesses may become unavailable. Furthermore, this rule treats delays caused by private counsel and state-paid counsel the same. The Court did leave open the possibility that delays caused by a systemic breakdown of the public defender system could be charged against the state if supported by the record.

(Continued on page 6)



## Save the Date

### 9th Annual Victims' Fund Run - Sponsored by the Baltimore City State's Attorneys Office

Saturday, April 18th, Patterson Park. For more information, please call (410) 396-1897.

### 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week

For information on the events in your region, contact the State's Attorney's Office in your region:

NORTHERN - Baltimore SAO, the Honorable Patricia C. Jessamy. Contact Pam Widgeon, Division Chief at (410) 396-1897 or at [pwidgeon@sattorney.org](mailto:pwidgeon@sattorney.org)

SOUTHERN - Prince George's County SAO, the Honorable Glenn F. Ivey. Contact Theresa Middleton, Chief Victim Witness Unit at (301) 952-4010 or at [temiddleton@co.pg.md.us](mailto:temiddleton@co.pg.md.us)

EASTERN - Cecil County SAO, the Honorable Christopher Eastridge. Contact Valda Rotolo, Victim/Witness Coordinator at (410) 996-5342 or at [vrotolo@ccgov.org](mailto:vrotolo@ccgov.org)

WESTERN - Frederick County SAO, the Honorable J. Charles Smith, III. Contact Carmen Figueroa, Chief, Victim Witness Unit at (301) 600-1515 or at [cfigueroa@fredco-md.net](mailto:cfigueroa@fredco-md.net)

### Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service's Kick Off for Victims' Rights Week

Monday, April 27th, Maryland Police and Correctional Training Academy, 6852 4th St. Sykesville, MD. Events begin at 9:30am.

### Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service's Prison Tour

Friday, May 1st, Maryland House of Correction, 7800 House of Correction Road, Jessup, MD. Tour begins at 9:00am.

### 2009 Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland

June 1 - 5, 2009, the Pearlstone Conference Center, 5425 Mt. Gilead Road, Reisterstown, MD.

## Best Practices (continued from pg. 3)

### The Institute for Advanced Psychotherapy Training and Education, Inc.

Lisa has an undergraduate degree in Theatre and Psychology, a Masters degree in Clinical Social Work and is a Diplomat of the American Psychotherapy Association. She has been in private practice for almost 24 years, working with adolescents, adults, couples, and families. She specializes in issues including: working with survivors of trauma and abuse; addictions; depression and anxiety; eating disorders; self-injurious behavior; stress management; parenting; self-esteem; and professional burn-out.

In addition she has created the Institute for Advanced Psychotherapy Training and Education, Inc. which provides state-of-the-art Continuing Education classes for Social Workers. She also created and leads a Certificate Program in Advanced Trauma Treatment which was offered through the University of Maryland's School of Social Welfare, and is now offered through the Institute. Lisa was an Adjunct Faculty member at the School of Social Work for many years, and will become an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland, Department of Family Medicine, where she will help train residents. She provides consultation for many clinicians in private practice, as well as mental health agencies. She is a local and national trainer, keynote speaker, and workshop presenter. She has written several articles on self-injury and has appeared in several educational videos on eating disorders and trauma.

### "Homicide" - Roberta Roper, Founder and Chair of the Board of Directors, Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.; Chairperson, Maryland State Board of Victim Services

Roberta is a veteran crime victim advocate who together with her husband, Vince, founded and directed the Stephanie Roper

Committee and Foundation, Inc. in 1982 in tribute to their slain daughter, Stephanie. In November 2002, the missions of this state-wide, non-profit victim advocacy and service organization were merged into the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC). The Center has been instrumental in the passage of over 70 pieces of legislation in the State of Maryland. Today the MCVRC continues the missions that have distinguished it as one of the nation's most effective service providers and voices from crime victims and survivors. For the past twenty-four years, Roberta has actively participated in a wide variety of victims' services, assistance and advocacy programs and initiatives. Among these current activities and awards are: Chairperson, Maryland State Board of Victim Services; Co-Chairperson of the National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Project, Force 100; Member of the Advisory Board, National Institute of Victim Studies; Member of the National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium; National Victim Assistance Coordinator for a Faith Collaborative Grant awarded from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice; Consultant for the Office for Victims of Crime, Training & Technical Assistance Unit; and Member, Maryland Committee on Public Trust & Confidence in the Courts.

Roberta successfully led the Maryland Coalition for a Constitutional Amendment for Crime Victims' Rights from 1988 until the Amendment's passage in 1994. She is a contributing member of the National Organization for Victim Assistance and the National Center for Victims of Crime, and has received their awards for leadership and advocacy for victims' rights and services.

Roberta Roper received a lifetime achievement award (2006) from Governor Ehrlich for her many years of service as a victim advocate. She has been recognized by Presidents Reagan (1988) and Clinton (1994), and received their awards for outstanding service to victims of crime.

## President ... (continued from pg. 3).

I hope to see you at this year's Academy, whether it is at one of the planned Advance Trainings, or as a volunteer. I know with all of our help, we can once again, help to ensure a very successful Academy.

All the best to you and your family ~

**Valda Rotolo; Alumni President**

# 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 Heather Courtney, a graduate of the 2006 Academy*

**My childhood nickname ...**  
Hurricane Heather

**I can't stand ...** unthankful people

**The occupation I would most certainly not like to have is ...** a fitness instructor

**My fondest memory is ...** marrying my best friend

**My favorite movie is ...** Forrest Gump

**My favorite retreat is ...** in the kitchen cooking

**If I could invite any three people (alive or deceased) to dinner, it would be ...**

**My motto or favorite saying is ...**

**My wildest dream is ...** to win the lottery, pay off debts, and travel the world with family

**My inspiration is ...** my father

**My favorite indulgence is ...** a spa massage

Princess Diana, Barack Obama, and Uncle Mike

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel (Maya Angelo)

**The biggest challenge for me is ...** asking for help

**What I love about my job is ...** helping people move forward

**If I had to choose an animal that symbolizes my personality, it would be a ...** Lion, because the lion is good at making decisions and is very goal-oriented.

**The occupation, other than the one I am currently in, I would want is ...** a Real Estate Agent

**If I could go anywhere in the world, it would be to ...** Italy

**The three words that best describe my life are ...** demanding, busy, fulfilling

**What I hate about my job is ...** seeing people at their worst

**My proudest moment is...** the day I became a mother

**One of my goals for 2008 is...** to get organized!

## 2009 RVAAM Dates Confirmed!

We are pleased to announce that the 6th Annual Roper Victim Assistance Academy will be held June 1-5, 2009, at the Pearlstone Conference Center, 5425 Mt. Gilead Road, Reisterstown MD. We hope you will help spread the word and recruit members for the upcoming class. Applications are now available to be downloaded from the Academy's website at <http://www.rvaam.org>

## Editorial Board

**Debbie Bradley — Editor**  
**Heather Courtney — Assistant Editor**  
**Alicia Johnson-Davis - Assistant Editor**  
**Diana Abramowski - Assistant Editor**  
**Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor**

**Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in July 2009**

## News From the Field (continued from pg. 4)



This is an important ruling for victims of domestic and sexual violence as it removes incentive for a defendant and his counsel to manipulate the court system with the hope that the case will ultimately be dismissed for lack of a speedy trial. At the same time, it ensures that state legislatures have adequate incentive to provide counsel to indigent defendants.

The opinion can be found at <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/08pdf/08-88.pdf>