

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #3 - July 2006

Just a Thought

The first of a two-part series, David Wolinski provides an overview of Maryland's Sex Offender Registry Program and how victim service professionals can use the database to best help their clients.

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



News From the Field

Read about some of the most recent legislative changes affecting victim services

Page 2

Hot Topics



Learn about the steps the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention has taken to improve Maryland's Sex Offender Registry

Page 3

Alumni Updates

Always find yourself thinking "I wonder what happened to..." Check out what our alums are up to these days - from birthdays to graduations to job promotions.

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...

Maryland's Sex Offender Registry - What is it?

David Wolinski

It has been ten years since Maryland started registering convicted sex offenders. During that time, over 5,000 individuals have submitted registration statements to state officials, and on any given day, the names and photographs of more than 4,300 of those offenders appear on the Internet as active registrations. Registered offenders live in every county and city across the state. A task that once started out as a part-time effort has grown into full-time work for dozens of criminal justice professionals throughout Maryland.

What is Sex Offender Registration?

As a result of federal legislation passed in 1996, commonly referred to as Megan's Law, citizens now have the right to know where convicted sex offenders live. The most common way for individuals to learn about regis-

tered sex offenders is through Internet websites hosted by government agencies. A number of private organizations and companies have also developed their own websites, repackaging the information available from free sites and marketing the data with special search routines and mapping capabilities. Many of these non-governmental websites charge a fee for the information that is usually available for free from a government operated site. In Maryland, printed copies of the registries can also be obtained and many local law enforcement agencies have policies that allow for other means of community notification.



Maryland's Sex Offender Registry

The state of Maryland maintains an extensive website devoted to managing sexual offender

registration. By visiting www.socem.info individuals can search for known offenders by name or zip code, learn about Maryland registration law, identify the local law enforcement agencies responsible for registration within each county, and learn how to register for a free notification service. The notification service, called the Maryland Sex Offender Alert Line, provides timely notification in conjunction with a personal safety plan individuals can implement to greatly reduce their risk of sexual assault.

The key to effective use of sexual offender registration data is to keep a balanced view of the information. Do not panic or overreact when you learn that a registered sex offender lives in your area. Remember that sex offenders have always lived in our communities, but now you have the right to know who they are and where they live. You should also keep in mind that the absence of any registered sex offenders in your area should not create a false sense of security. Sex offender registry information should be used with the knowledge that most sex offenders victimized someone that they knew prior to the offense and that many have not been convicted and do not appear on any registry.

When developing a personal safety plan, you should assume that it is your own responsibility to prevent sexual assault and not someone else's. Start by knowing the issues and

(Continued on page 3)

EDITOR'S CORNER

I would like to welcome all the new alumni members from the recent 2006 Roper Academy. What an amazing week! Between the ice-cream social Sunday evening, the Alumni dinner Wednesday night, and all the networking opportunities, the alumni once again demonstrated their dedication and passion for the Academy. Great job to all involved! And a special thank you to Jessica Dickerson and Kathy Coursey for organizing all the events throughout the week!

The week culminated with an unforgettable graduation ceremony Friday afternoon, with our keynote speaker, Robin Woolford, trying to squeeze in his speech while his wife was waiting at the hospital, in labor, ready to give birth to their third child. As usual, Robin gave an inspirational address that none of the members of the 2006 graduating class, nor any of their guests, will ever forget. And let me take this opportunity to send our heartfelt congratulations to Robin and his wife on their newest edition to the Woolford clan, a baby girl, who weighed 6 lbs. 2 oz. Everyone is doing fine!

With such an amazing turnout for this year's Academy (48 participants in all from all over the state of Maryland and even a few from D.C.), there were plenty of networking opportunities to be had. This is always such an important part of the Academy because we all need allies throughout the state. Not only to better serve victims of crime, but also to provide support and encouragement to one another in the trenches! So, I strongly encourage you to use your alumni directory and make every effort to stay connected.

And most important of all, I would like to send out a heartfelt thanks to Dr. Debra Stanley, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, Dave Thomas, and Elaine Witman for all their hard work in making this third Academy another success! All of your time and energy is very much appreciated!!

Here's looking forward to the 2007 Academy!

Debbie Creswell, Editor

creswell@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. So, here are some sites we thought you might find useful ... happy surfing!

www.antistalking.com - This website is for anyone interested in the crime of stalking. It can serve as a resource not only for stalking victims, but for law enforcement, mental health professionals, legislators and policy-makers as well.

www.jfcadvocacy.org - Justice for Children is a national non-profit organization that focuses on protecting children's rights and protecting them from abuse.

www.elderabusecenter.org - The National Center on Elder Abuse is funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging and provides a gateway to resources on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

www.nvcap.org - The National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Passage is an organization supporting the adoption of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution recognizing the fundamental rights of crime victims to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect by the criminal justice system.

www.womenslaw.org - WomenLaw.org is an organization designed to use the power of the Internet to assist disadvantaged people, particularly for survivors of domestic violence. Their mission is to provide easy-to-understand legal information to women living with or escaping from domestic violence.

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:

SB 115 - Passed unanimously in the Senate, and is now pending a House decision. This bill alters a specified time limit for filing a claim with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

SB 306/ HB 1258 - Defeated in the Senate (24 v. 25). This bill would have required the Motor Vehicle Administration [MVA] to develop and make available a specially designed registration plate promoting awareness and support for victims of crimes and requiring MVA to consult with the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center.

Senate Committee Hearings have been held, however no further action has been taken on the following bills:



SB162/ HB632 and SB232/ HB323 - Court Electronic Records and Public Records. Preventing the remote access to identifying information

of a victim or witness in a criminal case and preventing electronic (Internet) copying of identifying information of a victim or witness in a criminal case that is not available by remote access at public computer terminals.

SB222/ HB320 - Victim Witness Intimidation. Expanding the categories of crimes for which a specified type of evidence is admissible at trial under specified circumstances, and expanding the list of crimes applicable to specified provisions that provide a greater penalty if committed against specified persons.

Save the Date

Despite the rising temperatures of the summer months, there is no slowing down in the number of activities and trainings available for victim service providers. Here is just a sampling of these events that are going on in your communities during the next few months!

Roper Victim Assistance Academy Training & Events:

1st Annual RVAAM Alumni Family Picnic

Saturday, August 12, 2006; 12:30-5:00pm; Hammond Park - 10700 Glen Hannah Drive, Laurel, Maryland

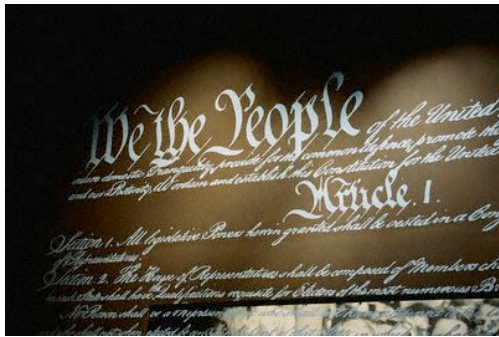
Please R.S.V.P. to Debbie Creswell by no later than July 12th (creswell@harfordsheriff.org)

Upcoming State Trainings:

2006 Annual Mid-Atlantic Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect

October 3-6, 2006; Princess Royale Hotel, Ocean City, MD. Registration required (\$175 on or before September 1; \$200 afterward). Social work CEU's available.

For more information, visit the MDCHA website (www.mdcha.org) or contact Laurie Meyers at (410) 336-1893 or via email at conference@mdcha.org



Just a thought...

(continued from page 1)

understanding the statistics. Increase your knowledge about risk reduction measures that you can take to protect yourself and your family. By understanding sexual assault and abuse, you can avoid potentially dangerous situations and take preventative actions before an incident of victimization occurs. Finally, be aware of the media's ability to sensationalize shocking or horrendous events. While stories of abduction and serious injury or death inflicted by strangers are real and terrifying, they are not the norm. By using the sex offender registry as part of your safety plan you can reduce the risk of sexual assault.

David Wolinski is the Assistant Director of Criminal Justice Information Systems in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. He is a retired police lieutenant from Baltimore County and has been working with the registration and management of sex offenders for eleven years.

Hot Topics

In the past year, Governor Ehrlich has charged his office with the initiative to improve and upgrade the Maryland Sex Offender Registry. National attention to the problems of sex offenders heightened awareness of the need for Maryland to assess their current situation and to use the results of those assessment questions to focus on achieving four of Governor Ehrlich's goals: 1.) Better protection of communities; 2.) Better service to victims; 3.) Better monitoring of offenders; and 4.) Better technology.

As a result of the Governor's initiatives, this past year has yielded considerable successes:

1. Sex Offender Registry Improvement/ Upgrade - a) \$300,000 for web-based registration; b) computer and digital cameras distributed statewide; c) email directly from the Sex Offender Registry to provide tips on the location of non-compliant offenders; d) offender mapping; e) SOCEM registry contains only wanted and non-compliant offenders

(www.socem.info); f) low-tech email to law enforcement; and g) community notification through automated systems.

2. Enhanced Amber Alert - Governor Ehrlich was the first Governor in the U.S. to require that all State cell phones be able to receive Amber Alerts. Any cell phone user can register to receive free and immediate Amber Alert text message by registering at www.wirelessamberalerts.org

3. Stepped Up Community Protection - a) Governor Ehrlich's budget included \$850,000 for sex offender registration and enforcement through partnerships with local police chiefs and sheriffs; b) MVA ID cards for sex offenders re-entering the community from state correctional facilities; c) 100% audit of existing caseloads by the Division of Parole and Probation to ensure correct classification and location of sex offenders; d) Maryland law enforcement officers are now alerted during traffic stops that the vehicle's owner is a sex offender and if that person is compliant; and e) Maryland State Police coordination in apprehension of wanted persons, Internet investigations and sexual predators.

4. Commitment to Victim and Family Assistance - a) \$2 million distributed through the network of Child Advocacy Centers for services to child victims of sexual abuse and their families; b) additional counselors funded; and c) training and intervention

The tremendous work done by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention has had many focused criminal justice personnel involved to account for the successes thus far. Mr. Herman Ingram, Chief of the Victim's Division, and Mr. John Tewey, Chief of the C-SAFE Division, recently presented the information contained herein at this year's Academy. We had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Ingram after the presentation to get a more personal view on his opinion of the impact the Governor's initiatives will have on the future of safeguarding children in Maryland from these sexual offenders.

(Continued on page 4)

Save the Date (Continued)

2006 Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Conference [MCASA] - "Changing Culture, Involving Men, Engaging Communities"

November 3, 2006; 8:00am-4:30pm; Marriott Baltimore/Washington International Airport Hotel; Registration required (\$105 on or before October 6; \$145 per person afterward; one-day registration available for \$85). Social work CEU's available.

National Trainings & Events:

The World Society of Victimology's 12th International Symposium on Victimology - "Enhancing the Mission"

August 20-25, 2006; Rosen Plaza Hotel, Orlando, FL

For more information, contact Marlene Young at (503) 554-1552 or via email at marlene@iovahelp.org

The 32nd Annual North American Victim Assistance Conference

August 20-25; Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL

For more information, contact NOVA @ www.trynova.org or call (703) 535-6682.

All of the following trainings are being sponsored by the U. S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. For more information about any of the specific events or to register for a training please go to www.ovcttac.org/calendar/training.cfm

"Providing Culturally Competent Services to Victims of Crime"

September 12-14, 2006; Chicago, IL.

"Sexual Assault Advocate/Counselor Training"

September 27-28, 2006; Lincoln, NE

(Continued on page 4)

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...

Carolyn Breck (2004) - After 21 and a half years of service, Carolyn recently retired from the Greenbelt City Police Department. Carolyn started as a patrol officer. For five years she worked as a Detective, specializing in sex crimes, child abuse, and elder abuse, and was promoted to Corporal during this time. She taught in-service to new and experienced officers in investigating these types of crime and how to deal with the victims of those crimes. She finished her career supervising the communications department and working in the CLEA Accreditation Department. Throughout her tenure she was assigned by the Chief of Police to citizens and victims who needed extra attention or assistance from the department. She was the first member of her department to attend the Roper Victim Assistance Academy. Carolyn is planning to be a stay-at-home mom for the summer and then get back to training or victim services. Congratulations Carolyn on a job well done!

Beverly Brooks (2004) - On May 16th, Beverly welcomed the arrival of her third grandchild, and first granddaughter, Savannah Joy Rose. The happy parents are Beverly's daughter and son-in-law, Shymaine and Stephen Davis. In July, Beverly will also be moving to Phoenix, Arizona. She would love to have visitors, so don't hesitate to give her a call! Congratulations Beverly on all these big events, we wish you the best. You will be missed!

Kathy Coursey (2004) - At this year's Governor's Victim Assistance Award Luncheon, Kathy received one of only two Henry Gleim Memorial Awards in recognition for "outstanding service to crime victims and those who work to serve them." Congratulations Kathy!

Di'Tanya Madden (2005) - Di'Tanya has been very busy lately making sure the website is up and running for Operation Safe Witness, Inc. Operation Safe Witness is a non-profit organization whose mission is to elevate crime victims, witnesses, and communities from underneath the blanket of fear which often keeps them silent. For more information, check out the new website at www.oswitness.org Well done Di'Tanya!

Rosemary Raiman (2004) - Rosemary was honored with one of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault Achievement Awards on April 20th at their 2nd annual Hats-Off Gala. Congratulations Rosemary!

Valda Rotolo (2004) - On April 2, Valda was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, International Honor Society, the Alpha Theta Chapter. Valda was a stay-at-home mom for years and in 1995 went back to college to earn her degree. Valda, we applaud you! Keep up the good work!

Debbie Tall (2004) - On August 4th, Debbie and her husband will be celebrating their 27th wedding anniversary! In honor of this momentous occasion, the two of them will be going on a two-week trip to Alaska in mid-August. Congrats Debbie, you two deserve it!

Jennifer (Weber) Goode (2005) - On May 19th, Jen became Mrs. Jason Goode at a beautiful formal wedding ceremony held in Harford County. The happy couple then spent a glorious week in St. Lucia. Congratulations Jen and Jason!

*At this year's Governor's Victim Assistance Award Luncheon hosted by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, three of our alumni were recognized for their contributions to victims' services. Please congratulate **Debbie Creswell (2005)**, **Sarah Rickter (2004)**, and **Kelly Thompson (2004)**. Well done ladies!*

Happy Birthday!

Help us make sure we wish everyone who is celebrating a birthday, a very happy day ... if we have overlooked anyone, please shoot us an email and we'll add them to our birthday list!

Debbie Tall (2004) - May 8

Rosemary Raiman (2004) - May 15

Roberta Roper - May 17

Sharon Leasure (2005) - July 1

Denise Ransome (2004) - July 6

Jen (Weber) Goode (2005) - July 11

Save the Date (Cont.)

"Mental Health Response to Mass Violence and Terrorism"

October 3-5, 2006; Phoenix, AZ.

"Professional Development Institute"

October 10-12, 2006; Albany, NY.

"The Ultimate Trainer"

October 24-26, 2006; St. Louis, MS

"Program Evaluation"

November 7-8, 2006; Nashville, TN

"Identity Theft: Victims' Needs for Recovery of Their Good Name and Their Good Credit"

December 5-6, 2006; Austin, TX

REMEMBER! OVC Professional Development Scholarships are available! Scholarships provide up to \$1,000 for individuals and up to \$5,000 for multi-disciplinary teams of victim service professionals seeking continuing education opportunities. To determine whether you or your team is eligible for a scholarship, visit the OVC Training Calendar at

<http://www.ovctac.org/calendar/training.cfm>

Hot Topics (Cont.)

Academy Forum: Mr. Ingram, of all the components of Governor Ehrlich's initiatives, is there one aspect that you believe is the most significant to the safety of our children from sex offenders, and why?

Mr. Ingram: Governor Ehrlich said it best - he wanted immediate help for child victims of sex crimes and their families. He accomplished that with \$2 million of new money for services and staff. He wanted the sex offender registry to notify citizens when a sex offender moves into the community, and this is now in place through VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday)

AF: Can you explain what GOCCP will be doing in the next year to further the Governor's initiatives? Is there a specific area of the plan that will be concentrated on the most?

Mr. Ingram: Governor Ehrlich wants GOCCP to continue its support of community public safety and service initiatives, such as the Child Advocacy Centers, C-SAFE, SOCEM, as well as addressing sex offenders, gangs, and the emerging problem of methamphetamine labs.

AF: Can you summarize your feelings about the whole Governor's Sex Offender Registry initiative and its impact on child safety for us?

Mr. Ingram: The Governor recently visited Glen Burnie to congratulate the principal and staff of the Glendale Elementary School. A sex offender attempted to remove a child from the school. The school staff, using the sex offender registry, recognized the individual and called the police, and the man was arrested. This is an example of the State and local effort we need to keep our children safe from sexual predators.

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 Reverend Wayne Price, an alum of the 2005 Academy.

My inspiration is...
My family

My favorite word is...
True Justice

My favorite retreat...
Going to the mountain top

Best piece of advice I ever got was...
To keep on keeping on.

My fondest memory is...
Preaching my first sermon

My childhood nickname was...
P

If I could learn any language, it would be...
Japanese

I appreciate...
Good people

The occupation, other than the one I am currently in, I would want is...
A writer

The biggest challenge for me is...
To accept that I can not help everyone

The last book I read was...
"The Art of Helping" by Lauren Littauer Briggs

My greatest accomplishment (so far) has been...
Being the founder and director of the Center for True Justice and Healing, Inc.

My favorite indulgence is...
A nice dinner

The occupation I would most certainly not like to have is...
Driving a bus in the city

One of my goals for 2006 is...
To develop a Victim Impact Panel that will have an effective impact in shaping this society into becoming a better and safer place for people and animals to live

My least favorite thing to do is...
Cut the grass

If I could invite any three people (alive or deceased) to dinner, it would be...
Philip O'Brien Price, Wayne S. Price, Jr. and Philip Whittington.

The perfect day for me would be...
When all hurting people are hurting no more

My favorite time of day is...
Early in the morning

I can't stand...
Not helping someone that is hurting

Occupational Outlook



Hear about an upcoming job vacancy in your agency or somewhere else? Share it with the alums! You never know who may be interested in switching jobs or looking to relocate somewhere new ... you know the adage, "sometimes it's just being in the right place at the right time."

TRAUMA RESOURCE SPECIALIST - SIDRAN INSTITUTE

Description - Volunteer position providing a wonderfully rewarding opportunity to help those in need. Responsible for answering phones, responding to emails and correspondence with individuals interested in trauma information,

local treatment resources, and reading recommendations.

Requirements - One-on-one training will be provided for several weeks followed by ongoing supervision, day-to-day support, and monthly trainings.

For more information, please contact Debra Snow, Director of Trauma Resources, at (410) 825-8888 ext. 204

Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in October 2006

Editorial Board

Debbie Creswell — Editor
Jen (Weber) Goode — Assistant Editor
Sharon Leasure — Assistant Editor
Eileen Katrick — Assistant Editor
Heather Pfeifer — Art Director/Layout

Alumni Directory

If you have not responded to confirm your current information, please do so as soon as possible with Debbie Creswell via email at creswell@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490. As soon as we have everyone's response, we will be able to distribute the new directory!