

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #26 - April 2012

Just a Thought

It's been an incredible year for the Victim Services Professional Network, and we couldn't have done it without you. Look at what we accomplished!

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Web Links

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

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Save the Date!

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

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Alumni Updates

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



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Best Practices

Not sure how to recruit a colleague to attend this year's Academy - just share the stories of two of last years graduates that are presented in this quarter's newsletter.

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The 20/20

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

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Just a thought...

A Year in Review: The Victim Services Professional Network [VSPN]

June 4th, 2012, begins the annual five day training week for another Roper Victim Assistance Academy. Much planning and preparation takes place prior to recruitment, orientation, and workshop facilitation. On the first day, participants applications now match their faces, relationships begin to be forged, and memories that will last a lifetime start to be built. It is the charge of the Victim Services Professional Network (VSPN), the alumni association of RVAAM, to help make this week a success. This charge will be accomplished, however this year it will be bitter-sweet. As VSPN graciously welcomes a new Executive Board, it will also bid a fond farewell to a number of its board members.

The Roper Victim Assistance Academy alumni nominated Co-Chairpersons, Linda Wright Fair and William "Archie" Griffin, to serve a two-year term beginning in 2008. At the completion of their first term, the alumni reelected them to serve another two-year term. The experience and knowledge gained through this leadership opportunity was priceless.

These two individuals served the organization faithfully and tirelessly, and always focused on how they could "get the job done." Their efforts were matched by an amazing group of board members who supported and embraced Linda and Archie's vision, and together worked as a team to spearhead a number of successful campaigns.

One of the most significant accomplishments this group made was to create a new identity for the organization that would help to further distinguish its mission from the mission of the Academy. The alumni association was developed in response to the request of the inaugural graduating class from the 2004 RVAAM Academy. It was their desire to be advocates beyond the Academy experience by fostering relationships, building networks, and influencing policy to improve the field of victim services. Therefore to honor this mission, the board wanted to rebrand the RVAAM Alumni Association. To do this, the board developed a campaign and solicited ideas from RVAAM alumni to help create a new logo and name for its alumni association.

So many wonderful ideas were submitted, but the board settled on the Victim Services Professional Network [VSPN], and awarded the alum who submitted this name with a gift card to Giant Food. Archie then worked diligently to create a new logo for VSPN, which was premiered back in 2010. The board and

fellow alums have since spent the past two years promoting VSPN in the field, and for their efforts, we believe everyone now knows who we are and what we do.



VSPN has worked diligently to nurture alumni relationships by hosting annual summer and fall gatherings for alumni and their families. Some of these outings included a cookout, a holiday party, and a group sporting

event. VSPN also found ways to engage with the community and assist others in need. One of the highlights was the successful fundraiser VSPN held in December to help a local family with their Christmas wish list. Thanks to the planning and creativity of Archie Griffin, alumni went on a Mystery Train Ride that included dinner and a shopping trip out to western Maryland. It was a rousing success, and all those who attended had a wonderful time! But the real pleasure came when VSPN was able to present the designated family, a single mother of three children and guardian

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Spring Greetings Alumni!

How exciting, we are coming up on our 9th Academy! Wow! I just love Academy time, it is so exciting and I for one learn something new every year I attend. And I can certainly tell you that the Academy definitely gets better each and every year thanks to the dedication of its amazing staff!

We are back at Bon Secours Spiritual Center this year. This is such a wonderful atmosphere for our week of training, from the fantastic accommodations (yes, there are private rooms for each participant!) to the wonderful homemade food. It truly is a place that strives to nurture each guests' spirit while they are visiting. So I would encourage each and every one of you to set aside some time to come to this year's Academy, whether it's to help out, or to attend this year's advanced training, or to attend the awards banquet on Thursday evening (something new this year!).

All of us can help the Academy in another way though. I would like to challenge each and every one of you to recruit at least one person to attend the Academy this year. Who better to share the benefits of this training with others than those who experienced it first hand! And because we want to continue to professionalize the field of Victim Services, we want to encourage as many of our colleagues as possible to complete comprehensive trainings such as the Academy, so that we can ensure every victim we serve receives the absolute best care.

I look forward to seeing you all in Marriottsville this June at this year's Academy!

Debbie Bradley, C.A., Editor

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 Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland [RVAAM] - The

Academy offers a rare opportunity to live, work, study, and interact with victim service providers from all areas of advocacy, from all over the state. While it is assumed that participants will have had previous training in their area of specialization, the Academy provides a fundamental overview of the entire field of advocacy, including: victimology, victim rights, and victim assistance for residents in Maryland. Sessions are led by recognized leaders and practitioners in the field of victimology, criminal justice, and victim rights, and focuses on skill-building and best practices. Throughout the week, participants are provided with a variety of resource materials they can take back to their agency, including a comprehensive RVAAM curriculum text that covers more than thirty subject areas.

For more information about the Academy, or to download an application, go to <http://www.rvaam.org>

Victim Services Professional Network

- The alumni organization affiliated with the Roper Victim Assistance Academy, VSPN advocates for the professionalization of the field of victim services. In addition to supporting and collaborating with RVAAM, VSPN strives to foster opportunities for its members to network with their fellow victim service profes-

sionals from various specializations across the state of Maryland through both professional and social events hosted throughout the year.

Check out their Facebook page at **VSPN Roper** or subscribe to their Twitter account @ **VSPN 2011**.

Maryland Victim Assistance Resource Directory - For a comprehensive direc-

tory of victim services available across the state of Maryland, go to http://www.mdcs.org/avjsc/Victim_Services_11_2008.dir.pdf

Maryland State Board of Victim

Services - The Maryland State Board of Victim Services was created in 1991 by the Maryland General Assembly, and under the authority of the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, to provide funding support for victim services. The Board's purpose is to ensure all crime victims in Maryland are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion during all phases of the criminal justice process. To learn more, please go to:

<http://www.goccp.maryland.gov/victim/victim-service-board.php>

Save the Date

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center presents "Retrospective Exhibit of the Art of Stephanie Roper"

April 21st - 28th, 2012. Opening Reception, Monday April 21st. University of Maryland - University College, College Park, Maryland

In observance of its 30th Anniversary, the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center is presenting this special exhibit of artwork created by Stephanie Roper. This exhibit will provide an opportunity to celebrate Stephanie's legacy, the individuals who have benefitted from

MCVRC services, and create greater public awareness of the rights of crime victims in Maryland.

Office of the Baltimore City State's Attorney 12th Annual Victims 5k Fund Run and 1 Mile Walk

Saturday, April 21st, 2012 at 9:00am (Rain or shine). Patterson Park, 2601 E. Baltimore Street.

For more information, please call (410) 396-1897 or email fundrun@stattorney.org



"Something Beautiful Remains" - GOCCP's 23rd Annual Maryland Statewide Memorial Service for Crime Victims and their Families

Sunday, April 22nd, 2012

Northern Region: Long Reach High School, 6101 Old Dobbin Lane, Columbia, MD; 3:00-5:00pm

Southern Region: Great Waldorf Jaycee Community Center, Waldorf, MD; 1:00-3:00pm

Eastern Region: Caroline County Public Library, 100 Market Street, Denton, MD; 2:00-4:00pm

Western Region: Seventh-Day Adventist, 11507 Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown, MD; 2:00-4:00pm

For more information, please contact GOCCP at (877) 687-9004 or go to www.goccp.maryland.gov

Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention Victim Assistance Awards Luncheon

Friday, May 4th, 2012

Nominations are currently being accepted to honor individuals who have provided exceptional services to victims in our community. Awardees will be honored at this year's luncheon on May 4th. If you know of someone or a group that is worthy of this honor, please contact GOCCP at (877) 687-9004 or go to www.goccp.maryland.gov

Pennsylvania Pathways to Victim Services Conference

May 9th - 11th, 2012, Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster PA

This three-day conference will provide an opportunity for more than 300 victim service providers and allied professionals to enhance their skills, network, and rejuvenate. The conference will focus on promising practices and programs throughout Pennsylvania and the nation. Some of the workshops offered include: Hot Topics in Serving Older Victims; Serving Adult Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse; Safeguarding Communications Using Virtual Numbers; Traumatic Brain Injury and Domestic Violence; The Impact of "Sexting" and Sexual Violence on Youth; Creating Collaborative Cultures, etc.

Advanced registration is required. Registration fee is \$300 for Non-Pennsylvania Residents. The fee covers all instruction, program materials, and refreshment breaks; lunch on Wednesday and Thursday; breakfast on Thursday and Friday. Registrants are responsible for all other meals, lodging and transportation.

For more information or to register for this event, please go to www.pathways2012.org

Governor's Conference on Combating Human Sex Trafficking in Maryland

May 21st & 22nd, 2012, 8:30am - 5:00pm; The Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus - 800 South Rolling Road, Baltimore, MD

The Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP) and the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF) will host a two day conference to communicate a total statewide approach to combating human trafficking and serving survivors. Maryland experts will present specialized topics for law enforcement, prosecutors, State personnel, victim service providers, and community-based advocates.

This conference is a partnership of GOCCP, MHTTF, U.S. Attorney's Office – District of Maryland, TurnAround, Inc., Maryland Association of Resources for Families & Youth, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and the Samaritan Women.

There is no cost (tuition/ fees) associated with attending the conference and a boxed lunch will be provided both days.

A networking reception will be held following the workshop sessions on Monday, May 21st from 4:30PM – 5:30PM

Registration opens on April 1st and closes on May 7th. To register, go to www.goccp.maryland.gov

2012 RVAAM Academy

June 4th - 8th, 2012 at Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, Maryland

Applications are now being accepted for the 2012 Roper Victim Assistance Academy! To download an application, please go to the RVAAM website at <http://www.rvaam.org> ; or you can email Dr. Debra Stanley with any questions you may have about this year's training at dstanley@ubalt.edu .



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!

Debbie Bradley (Class of 2005) - Debbie will be celebrating her 50th birthday on May 28th! To celebrate, her husband has planned to take her on a cruise - what a lucky gal! We hope you have a wonderful time Debbie and we'll be thinking of you on your birthday!

Diane Champe (Class of 2010) - Diane will be filmed this spring for a documentary about adult survivors of child abuse and the judicial system. For her part, Diane will be discussing such issues as how to prepare survivors of child abuse for trial, obstacles in getting survivor issues addressed by the court, and needed reforms. Thank you Diane for continuing to bring victims needs to the forefront!

Keith Gethers (Class of 2011) - Keith recently joined the Editorial Board of the Academy Forum and will be researching programs to highlight in the newsletter's "Best Practices" section each quarter. Welcome aboard Keith!

Bridgette Harwood (Class of 2009) - The Editorial Board of the Academy Forum Newsletter would like to extend a very special thank you to Bridgette for serving as an assistant editor with the newsletter for the past three years. Bridgette put together the "Best Practices" article each quarter and always found such amazing programs to highlight. Bridgette is leav-

ing the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center and is moving to another position in victim services in the DC area. As a result, she will no longer be able to continue her editorial duties with the Academy Forum. You will be greatly missed Bridgette - we wish you all the best in your new endeavors!

Sarah Rickter (Class of 2004) - After over ten years of service as the Domestic Violence Victim/Witness Coordinator in Carroll County's State's Attorney's Office, Sarah will be leaving to start a new job as an investigator with the Department of Defense. Congratulations Sarah on your new career, and we wish you all the best!

Diane Wilkins-Charles (Class of 2007) - Diane's new husband, Laurent Charles, finally arrived in the U.S. and the newlyweds are enjoying their time together. We wish the two of you many years of happiness!



Best Practices

Why the Academy is for me: Two criminal justice professionals share how the Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland helped guide them on their paths of victim advocacy

Tips for healthy victim advocacy I learned at the Academy - by Kim Truitt

I received my certification from the Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland (RVAAM) in May 2011. For me, the Academy was more than just a training, it was a once in a lifetime experience. When I attended, I was working at the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center as a victim advocate, and I currently am a law student at the University of Baltimore. The knowledge and skills I gained during my week at the Academy not only have helped me as a victim advocate, but also as a law student.

My classmates at the Academy were comprised of other victim advocates, social workers, law enforcement officers, faith leaders, and students - all of whom came together to discuss how we can better help crime victims. By having such a diverse set of individuals with varying degrees of experience and different perspectives, we were able to work together as a group to generate ideas and solutions that many of us have struggled with when dealing with victims of crime.

One of the most important lessons I took with me from the Academy was the importance of self-care. Every day we take on other people's problems, and internalize a lot of what we have hear or see without really realizing it. I had no idea how much trauma I have encountered and taken on vicariously through my work as a victim advocate. The Academy provided us with helpful techniques on how to help ourselves while helping others, and thereby reduce our chance of burnout. Throughout the week we practiced many of these techniques, and I found myself able to "let go" and relax. More importantly, I still use many of these techniques today when I get stressed with law school or upset from cases I am assigned at work.

Another benefit of being a part of the Academy is the networking opportunities you have with your fellow peers and the trainers. Since the Academy, I have reached out to a number of my classmates to help me with some of my cases. By obtaining the help and advice of my

peers, I have been able to provide much better care for my clients.

I am so grateful for my time at the Academy and all of the valuable information I learned. It was an amazing week and is an experience I will never forget.

The Power of the Academy - by Keith Gethers

Twenty-three years ago, I joined the Prince George’s County Police Department for the same reason many young men and women do: to make a difference. On one assignment after another, however, I found myself in some of the busiest and most dangerous areas of the county that was plagued by many of the common ills of urban life. For example, I would routinely go to the scene of a routine domestic disturbance and restore peace by convincing one party to leave, only to be called back to the same residence repeatedly. During that first year on the job, I learned that making a difference was truly a relative idea.

So I grew accustomed to enjoying small successes, and it wasn’t long before I got the hang of it - lending a helping hand, listening a little longer, taking detours to check on the young and the old. These were all things that conceivably could be linked to making a difference, one person at a time. I realized that helping others was my primary reason for showing up to work. But then suddenly, it was all over. I thought my opportunity to help was gone with my unexpected retirement.

In 2011, however, I was hired by the Maryland Crime Victim Resource Center and was given the opportunity to attend the Roper Victim Assistance Academy. I anticipated that during the five day training I would learn a number of things, such as advocacy and how to provide direct assistance to victims. Well, day one of the Academy was the only day that met my original expectations.

The compelling nature of days two through five of the Academy was abso-

lutely life changing for me. First, through classroom activities I discovered I was part of an extremely diverse group of peers (male, female, young, old, Black, White, Hispanic, Christian, Jewish, Atheist) brought together by our common interest in assisting others. Second, the cadre of supportive staffers and volunteers demonstrated through both word and deed what it is to truly be a service provider: interjecting their perspectives where appropriate, providing guidance during and after class, rendering much-needed assistance during the numerous times when students were emotionally overwhelmed by the subject matter. And finally, the expert level of instruction we received revealed the many harsh realities that crime victims are forced to face, and the challenges providers deal with while rendering assistance to them.

Almost every block of instruction drew me further into a web of interest that has now become a passion. By the end of the week, I had a new group of friends, a new outlook on life, and renewed sense of excitement. Thanks to my Academy experience, I hope to embark on a new career path as a therapist. Once again, I know I can make a difference - one person at a time.

** Essay contributed by Bridgette Harwood*



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 the Bills currently in session:

- * **House Bill 391** - Criminal Procedure - Seizure and Forfeiture - Property Used in Human Trafficking
- * **House Bill 766** - State Government - Commemorative Days - Crime Victims and Advocates
- * **House Bill 769** - Unemployment Insurance - Coverage - Victims of Domestic Violence
- * **House Bill 883** - Family Law - Protective Orders - Additional Relief
- * **Senate Bill 122** - Courts and Judicial Proceedings - Crime Victims and Witnesses Fund - Court Costs
- * **Senate Bill 168** - Criminal Procedure - Victims Compensation - Temporary Lodging for Domestic Violence Victims
- * **Senate Bill 352** - National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Information - Sign Posting Requirements
- * **Senate Bill 359** - Domestic Violence - Persons Eligible for Relief and Orders to Vacate Home
- * **Senate Bill 411** - Criminal Procedure - Maryland Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) Services - Contact Information
- * **Senate Bill 626** - Child Abuse - Failure to Report - Civil Penalty and Child Abuse Prevention Fund
- * **Senate Bill 863** - Public Schools - Dating Violence - Kristin Marie Mitchell Law

Just a Thought (Cont.)

to her three nephews, with their holiday gifts at the VSPN Holiday Party.

Members of VSPN also attended Maryland State Legislative hearings, various conferences and trainings on victim issues, including events sponsored by the Baltimore Child Abuse Center and Rape Aggression Defense system; and participated in Baltimore City's State's Attorney's annual Fund Run.

At this time of year, VSPN is directing its focus on assisting the RVAAM staff in preparing for this year's Academy. As such, we are encouraging all of our members to participate in our annual "Power of One" campaign, which strives to have every alumni recruit at least one colleague to attend this year's Academy. Please share a copy of this newsletter with your colleagues and direct them to the RVAAM website where they can download an application.

In addition to the advanced training the RVAAM staff have arranged for alumni, the Executive Board of VSPN have also worked with Academy staff to provide numerous opportunities for alumni to engage with this year's students, including a mentoring lunch, help facilitate small group activities during various training sessions, and to help lead some of the recreational activities. We hope you will join us at the Academy, whether it is for just a few hours, or for all of the alumni events.

We look forward to seeing you!

The VSPN Executive Board.

A Special Note of Thanks

On behalf of Archie and myself, we want to thank the RVAAM faculty and staff - Dr. Debra Stanley, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, Mr. Dave Thomas, and Ms. Elaine Whitman - for their direction and guidance they provided us during our tenure as Co-Chairs of VSPN. These past four years have been some of the most rewarding experiences in our careers and we are truly blessed to have been a part of such a wonderful endeavor.

We would also like to thank all of our board members for their time, dedication, and commitment to VSPN. We could not have gotten here without you. We treasure the friendships we developed with each of you - Alicia Johnson-Davis (Secretary), Debbie Bradley (Academy Forum Editor; Chair of Certification Committee), Diana Abramowski (Treasurer), Brian Murray, David Johnson, Ruby Nelson, Faye Evans, and Laurie Dulle. Although our tenure as Co-Chairs has come to an end, we know the relationships we have developed with each of you will last a lifetime.

We are excited to see the next group of leaders elected to the Executive Board take the baton and continue to build VSPN's standing in the community. We wish you all the best, and we'll be here to support you in all your efforts!

Sincerely,

Linda Wright Fair and William "Archie" Griffin

It has been a privilege to have served on the Executive Board of VSPN for these past five years. I graduated from the 2007 Academy class, and I had such a wonderful experience that I decided to run for a position on the board and was elected to serve as its Secretary. Serving on the board has been such a rewarding and fun experience. I served with such a great team of people who were all committed to the Academy and supporting victim service professionals.

During my tenure as Secretary, I was responsible to getting information out to you. I understand the importance of "information sharing" in this field, and the need for victim service professionals to stay connected, thus I always strove to get the information to you in a timely manner. Although I am resigning from my position as Secretary, I will continue to be a part of this wonderful organiza-

tion, and help in any way that I can. In fact, I encourage everyone to be involved and stay connected because it really does make a difference with helping and serving the needs of victims of crime.

It has been a pleasure serving as Secretary and I look forward to seeing all of you at upcoming VSPN events!

Sincerely,

Alicia Johnson Davis



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 Anthony Robinson, a graduate of the 2010 Academy

The last movie I saw in the theaters was ... "21 Jump Street" - Hilarious! Go see it!

New Orleans Saints

The strangest thing I ever ate was ... monkey meat

My favorite smell is ... cookies baking

My favorite season of the year is .. Summer

Something I think I do well at is ... listen

The three adjectives that best describe my personality are funny, upbeat, very

"military" (I guess that means disciplined)

If I had to pick an animal that best represents my personality, I'd have to say I'm ... a lion because its very competitive and demands attention

The thing I like best about my job ... it allows me my independence, and I'm in a position to help create policies for the program

The best piece of advice I've been given is ... "Never quit a job without having another"

If I could see anyone in concert, it would be ... Jennifer Hudson

When I was a child, what I wanted to be when I grew up was ... a lawyer

If I could pick any occupation to be in (other than what I'm doing now), I would want to ... be an Ambassador for Central America

The last thing I did to pamper myself was ... got a massage - ahhhh!

The most challenging thing about my job is ... looking for resources to help my clients who are struggling

One of my goals for 2012 is ... to move to Honduras and live off my retirement.

My favorite TV show is ... Mad Men

The quality I like or appreciate the most in others is ... Honesty

The quality I dislike the most in others is ... Deceit

My childhood nickname was ... Blue

My favorite professional sports team is ...

Let's Give a Big Welcome!

On January 12th, the Victim Services Professional Network [VSPN], the alumni organization of RVAAM, welcomed in its newest slate of officers. Please extend a welcome and congratulations to each of these individuals - we are looking forward to working with them in the upcoming year:

- * **Dashawn Cabbagestalk (Co-Chair)**
- * **Anthony Williams (Co-Chair)**
- * **Naomi Taffet (Secretary)**
- * **Antoinette Saunders (Treasurer)**
- * **Michelle Lee (Media Relations Specialist)**
- * **Karlice Moss-Teams (Historian)**

And a huge thank you to Linda Fair, William "Archie" Griffin, and Alicia Johnson-Davis for their exceptional service and dedication to the Academy and its alumni.

Alumni Directory

The 2011 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, is 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.

Editorial Board

Debbie Bradley — Editor
Jessica Winpiger - Assistant Editor
Bridgette Harwood - Assistant Editor
Dianna Abramowski - Assistant Editor
Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor

Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in July 2012