

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #8 - Oct 2007

Just a Thought

Learn about the importance of addressing the spiritual needs of crime victims and some faith based services that are available in our community.

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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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Learn about an innovative victim services program created by the Univ of MD, R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center!

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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...

Faith Based Involvement in Victim Services

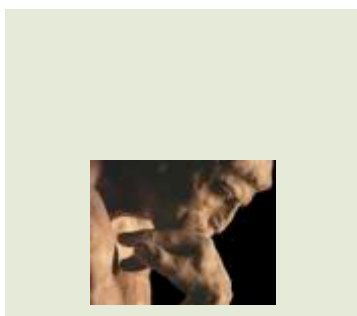
Rev. Wayne Price

A *Referral Network* is an essential element of victim services. Traumatized victims undergo damage in every aspect of their lives: physical, mental, emotional, social, financial and spiritual. Their needs are extraordinarily complex and often require support from more than one person or a single group or organization.

Creating a Referral Network

It is important for service providers to understand the vital necessity of a 'referral network' within their organization. Victims often undergo a very stressful recovery because service providers have failed to develop or take advantage of a proficient referral network. Referral networks can include both internal referrals and external referrals. The former refers to services that are provided by different

programs in your agency, while the latter are services provided to your clients by other agencies. A service provider should continually seek to learn more about services and programs their own organizations provide for victims. However, they also need to obtain information on services and programs offered by other organizations, and to inform their clients about these services. Making a list of the services that are available and maintaining positive working relationships with other service providers will provide victims with a greater perspective of the help that is available to them.



The Impact of Victimization on Faith

Faith based involvement is a very critical and effective component of any network providing victims with services. Victims suffer spiritual distress and often feel rejected or abandoned by God. Loss of faith, sin, feeling unsafe and/or betrayed by God, feelings of guilt, shame, and confusion about issues of forgiveness are

just a few of the many complex problems victims face. Carolyn Yoder describes the effect of traumatic events as shattering our world and our core identify, leaving us feeling out of control and "unspiritual" - - impeding our ability to deal with the grief and the pain and the overwhelming questions.

The Role of Faith Based Organizations in Victim Services

Faith based organizations play a major role in addressing spiritual damage in the victim's life. They nurture the victim's spiritual development, providing strong, supportive faith based ideas that are essential for healthy healing. They strengthen the trauma victim's ability to reconnect with the spiritual self, "God within them." Dr. Judith Herman describes the core experience of crime victimization in terms of disempowerment and disconnection. Howard Zehr defines Restorative Justice as "Shalom Justice" - a justice that allows us to reconnect and live in right relationship to one's self, to one another, and to one's God. This involves "real forgiveness" - the kind that is an act of empowerment and healing, allowing one to move from victim to survivor. Healthy healing from the trauma of victimization therefore requires a path to empowerment, reconnection, and a new perspective

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings Alumni!

Can you believe the summer is gone already?! With each passing year, the summers tend to go faster and faster. I know everyone has been extremely busy, as there is certainly been no shortage of crime, and unfortunately with that, victims. I hope that everyone had a time of refreshment during the summer months. We all need a chance to 'recharge' and experience the sunnier side of life.

It was so disappointing that we had to cancel the RVAAM Alumni Family picnic. I was so looking forward to meeting all of your family members, reconnecting with friends, and having some fun with everyone. I would like to thank Bonnie Robertson and Heather Courtney for all their hard work on the picnic this year - you guys did a great job. Hopefully we'll be more successful next year!

So now that fall is here, it is time to refocus and get down to business. It is so important for all of us to take advantage of the contacts we have from RVAAM. They can be so beneficial to the victims we serve. When you need referrals or information from another county, remember those contacts from RVAAM. There are a vast array of services throughout the state, and we should all be taking advantage of them in order to serve victims better. Keep your Alumni Directory accessible and please let us know of any new resources, legislative or policy changes, career opportunities or other important issues. We would also just love to hear from you - drop us a line and let us know what is going on!

I hope you all have a joyful and safe fall, and I look forward to catching up with you again in the near future.

Wishing you all the best~

Debbie (Creswell) Bradley, 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. So, here are some sites we thought you might find useful ... happy surfing!

The Family Violence Prevention Fund has a series of resources geared toward men to help them help the boys in their lives to better understand issues about control and violence. "Coaching Boys into Men" features a general brochure and poster geared toward the African-American community, and an excellent guidebook that can be downloaded at <http://endabuse.org/programs/display.php3?DocID=9916> or ordered from the FVPF. These are remarkable resources and with youth going back to school and fall sports, the timing couldn't be better.

The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center has a new online download center for sexual assault advocate and counselor training. It features a comprehensive curriculum, training modules, and a "Presenter's Toolbox." Please share these resources with others who work with victims of sexual assault. They can be accessed at: <http://www.ovcttac.org/saact/index.cfm>

Register now for OVC's Fall/Winter 2007 Training Schedule for Victim Service Providers. This fall, OVC is pleased to offer a series of familiar workshop titles, including *Providing Culturally Competent Services to Victims of Crime* and *Professional Development Institute*, as well as some new workshops such as *Compassion Fatigue/Vicarious Trauma* and *Responding to School Violence*. To view the full training schedule or to register, please visit <http://www.ovcttac.org/trainingcenter/training.cfm>

"Children, Families, and the Criminal Justice System" just released by the University of Illinois at Chicago presents the findings from a key national study that interviewed youth whose parents have been incarcerated or had interactions with the criminal justice system. To read the report, go to <http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/research/What%20we%20know%20now.pdf>

A new study from the Crimes Against Children Research Center found that four percent of youths who surf the Internet are asked to submit a sexual picture of themselves. The disturbing results of this important study, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, also addresses an increase in online bullying and harassment. You can access the study at <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/CV155..pdf>

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers valuable resources to combat online sexual exploitation of children. These include "Think Before You Post" and "Don't Believe the Type" for teens, and "Help Delete Online Predators" for parents. This is important information that can be included in all public awareness resources, or through links from your website to NCMEC's website. You can download these guides at <http://www.ncmec.org/>

The Mary Bryon Foundation is accepting nominations for its 2008 Celebrating Solutions Awards program, a \$10,000 cash prize to institutions that demonstrate an innovative approach to confronting and solving domestic violence. The awards are open to non-profit or government-based programs that have been operating for a minimum of three years and specifically address the issue of domestic violence. Nomination materials are available on the foundation's website at http://www.marybyronfoundation.org/work_solutions.html

News From the Field

On May 26, 2005 the following victim/witness intimidation bill (Maryland Senate Bill 188) was signed into law (Chapter 466) by Governor Ehrlich. As a result, the maximum penalty for witness intimidation increased from 5 to 20 years, and reclassified it as a felony. Prohibiting solicitation of another person to harm another, threaten to harm another, or damage or destroy property with the intent to induce a victim or witness to not report the existence of facts relating to a crime.



This law now provides prosecutors a mechanism to enter critical "hearsay" testimony, such as the taped statement of a witness who is no longer available to testify because the witness has been threatened or intimidated. This essential "hearsay exception provision" is currently allowed in federal criminal cases.



Just a thought...

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for their life. The *True Justice System* (www.ctjh.org) defines this path as “the pursuit of True Justice,” in which the individual experiences a spiritual development that empowers them to become a survivor and a balm to society - a person who knows how to help others live in right relationship to one another and to their God. The pursuit of True Justice provides the hope, healing, and transformation that allow survivors to reconstruct a meaningful life in spite of the wound that will always be with them.

Helping victims to connect with the services and programs they need, in this case one that offer support in developing their spirituality, can be available because of referral networking. By remaining focused on **all** the many needs of each victim, victim service organizations avoid the natural desire to become the “one answer” to the victim’s problems. Victims become progressively more connected, more empowered, and more aware of how strong they really are versus how strong they thought they were. For healthy healing to take place victims must achieve renewed hope, transformation, and a new perspective for their life. This can only happen when victim service providers develop an effective referral network as an essential component of victim services. This is the essence of True Justice.

Reverend Wayne Price is the Executive Director of The Center for True Justice and Healing. If you would like to contact him, you can reach him via email at revprice@ctjh.org or by phone at (301) 219-3421 or (301) 386-4367

Hot Topics

As criminal justice professionals, many victim advocates not only respond to victims of criminal acts, but also work to prevent crime and future victimization within the communities they serve. There is an innovative program at the University of Maryland R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, which was created by a trauma surgeon who became frustrated after treating the same victims of violence repeatedly, and with the level of injuries increasing each time they were admitted for care.

Founded in 1998 by Carnell Cooper, M.D. in recognition of violence being a public health problem, the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Violence Intervention Program was implemented to reach out to individuals from the most volatile and impoverished Baltimore neighborhoods. In these communities, residents are under continual stress to survive which contributes to a pattern of impaired judgment, risk-taking behavior and interpersonal violence. The program engages these individuals during a moment of personal crisis and in addition to providing them with medical treatment participants also receive counseling, peer support groups, family support, and other services.

Researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and found participants were less likely to engage in criminal activity and significantly less likely to be readmitted to the hospital for serious injury due to criminal violence. The findings of the study are published in the *Journal of Trauma and Shock* and can also be found at <http://www.umm.edu/shocktrauma/vip>

In addition to the Violence Intervention Program, the Trauma Center has also created another program that is both hospital and community based, called Promoting Healthy Alternatives for Teens [PHAT], to reach out to at-risk youth in Baltimore City. The program focuses on promoting skills such as healthy

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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...

Adriana Coste (2006) - Adriana has served as the bilingual victim advocate at the Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office for quite some time, primarily serving the Latino victims at both the circuit and district level. She has recently made the decision to pursue her law degree so she can better serve the Latino community. Please send her your well-wishes as she begins such an important and challenging endeavor. We know you can do it Adriana!

Ebony Fagan (2007) - Ebony is starting a new job with the Maryland Bar Association. Congratulations Ebony, we wish you all the best!

Jennifer (Weber) Goode (2005) - Jen and her husband Jason welcomed the birth of their first child, a baby boy named Andrew Michael Goode, on September 9th! Congratulations Jen and Jason, best wishes to the three of you!

Brian Murray (2006) - Rev. Murray provided valuable insights and personal experiences on how to handle the grief journey for survivors of homicide victims during a panel dialogue on Grief and Spirituality hosted by the Family Bereavement Center Support Group, where fellow RVAAM alumni **Kim Holmes** and **Dee Gardner** work. Kudos to the three of you for showing the value of networking and collaboration in order to provide better support for victims!

Valda Rotolo (2004) - Valda has been appointed as the new Victim Witness Coordinator for the Cecil County State's Attorney's Office. Congratulations Valda, we know you will do a fantastic job!

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Hot Topics

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coping mechanisms, conflict resolution, and violence and crime prevention. It also introduces participants to careers with the goal of promoting educational and employment opportunities.

For more information about these and other programs at R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma, please contact Carnell Cooper, M.D., Team Leader, at (410) 328-1168 or by email at ccooper@umm.edu; or Dawn Eslinger, M.S., Program Director at (410) 706-0550 or by email at deslinge@epi.umaryland.edu

Alumni Updates

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Birthdays! Another year older, another year wiser ...

Shelly McMath - October 5th

Ebony Fagan - October 26th

Shay Brooks - October 28th

Nicole Quinn - November 9th

Idalia Lopez - November 19th

Jessica Dickerson - December 11th

Tina Shankle - December 16th

Save the Date

With autumn here, the days may start to become shorter but our time helping victims only seems to grow longer. Even with our busy schedule, here are a couple important events we thought you would like to jot down on your calendar:

MCRVRC 4th Annual Chocolate Affair Fundraiser

November 9th, 2007; 6:30-9:30pm

Florian Hall, Bowie MD

NOVA Basic Crisis Response Training

April 28 - May 2, 2008; La Plata Health Department, La Plata, MD

For more information, contact NOVA at www.trynova.org

Highlights of the September Advanced Training

On September 19th, RVAAM in conjunction with the Office for Victims of Crime, hosted a one-day advanced training at the University of Baltimore on interviewing techniques with child sexual victims. The highlight of the training was the introduction of an innovative program that was developed by the King County (Seattle, WA) Prosecutor's Office called Courthouse Canine Companions, which incorporates the use of highly trained service dogs to assist child victims throughout the forensic and prosecutorial process. The program, started in 2003, has won widespread support from judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, victim advocates, and victims for its ability to lend comfort and support to these young victims and their families throughout the entire justice process. As a result, it has been replicated in Snohomish County, WA and has drawn national interest.

During the morning session, participants heard from Ellen O'Neill Stephens, a King County Senior Deputy Prosecutor and founder of the Courthouse Canine Companions program, how she came up with the idea for the program and the obstacles she faced in getting her ideas to become a reality. She then laid out the specific steps that are necessary for an agency to take if they would like to start a similar program in their own jurisdiction. One notable highlight of her presentation was she brought two of the service dogs, Stilson and Omni, to demonstrate to participants firsthand their temperament and how they interact with people on a day to day basis. The dogs even performed some of the 'tricks' they will perform for the children and then allowed the participants to interact one-on-one with the dogs. Her presentation concluded with the showing of a training DVD she, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, and the Seattle Police Department had collaborated on that included interviews conducted with judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, victim advocates, and victims who shared their opinions about the value of the Courthouse Canine Companion program.

The afternoon session, led by Ashley Wilske, forensic interviewer for Snohomish County Sheriff's Department; and Tuere Sala, Seattle City Prosecuting Attorney, introduced participants to the purpose of forensic interviews

with child victims. Ashley, who has conducted more than 2000 forensic interviews with child victims, provided participants the rationale behind the development of this approach to interviewing and then reviewed some of the basic techniques used to conduct a forensic interview. Tuere, a victim of child sexual abuse and now a prosecuting attorney, provided participants with a 'real life' perspective of what a child victim of sexual abuse thinks and feels, and how forensic interviews are better able to gather crucial information that can assist in the prosecution of these types of cases. In addition, Tuere spoke directly to the value of using a service dog during the forensic interview to provide comfort for the victim, and in turn help him or her get through this often scary and stressful experience.

At the conclusion of the training, participants were able to have a question-answer session with the three trainers, and were given valuable literature and a copy of the training DVD. The feedback we received from this training was incredibly positive, and many of the participants were eager to go back to their agency to share what they had learned and to begin to explore how they could start a similar program in their jurisdiction.

For more information about the Courthouse Canine Companions Program or forensic interviewing techniques, please contact Ellen O'Neill-Stephens at Ellen.OneillStephens@Seattle.gov or Ashley Wilske at Ashley.Wilske@co.snohomish.wa.us or Tuere Sala at Tuere.Sala@Seattle.gov

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 Valda Rotolo, graduate of the 2004 Academy

My favorite sound is ...
Water or waves crashing

The last book I read was...
"Odd Thomas"

If you could learn any language, it would be...
Italian

My motto or favorite saying is ...
"Pick your battle - how important is it?"

My greatest accomplishment (so far) has been...
My sons

The animal that best symbolizes my personality ...
A dog - loyal and loves unconditionally

I appreciate...
Caring people and positive attitudes

My favorite time of day is...
Dusk - right before the sun goes down

My favorite indulgence is ...
Reading a book in bed in the middle of the day

My favorite movie ...

It's a Wonderful Life

My three words that best describe my life are..
Searching for peacefulness

If I could invite any three people, alive or deceased, to dinner it would be ...
My grandmother (deceased) and my two sons. I would want her to see how wonderful they are - not perfect, just caring loving individuals

My least favorite thing to do...

Wash windows

The biggest challenge for me is ...
Watching my sons grow up and not telling them what to do

What I love about my job is...
Seeing families move on emotionally

The occupation, other than the one I am currently in, I would want is...
Play/theater director or a fundraiser

The occupation I would most certainly not like to have is...
Anything in the medical field

My inspiration is...
Being proud of myself and my sons being proud of me

My wildest dream...
To be a stage actress

One of my goals for 2007 is...
Complete my college courses

Occupational Outlook



The Academy Forum is looking for volunteers to serve as Assistant Editors. Responsibilities include contacting RVAAM alumni for information and updates, preparing the 20/20 section of the newsletter each quarter on a different member, and providing current, useful websites to the victim services field. If you are interested, please contact Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org

Editorial Board

Debbie (Creswell) Bradley — Editor

Bonnie Robertson — Assistant Editor

Heather Courtney - Assistant Editor

Heather Pfeifer — Art Director/Layout

Alumni Directory

Please help us keep the Alumni Directory up to date! If any of your personal and/or professional information has changed, please contact Debbie Bradley via email at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490. We will then publish those changes in the following newsletter.

Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in January 2008