

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #29- January 2013

Just a Thought

As we prepare to welcome another class to the Roper Academy, one alum reflects on the professional and personal benefits she has experienced from being a part of the Victim Services Professional Network

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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 fall!

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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

One part of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy mission is to promote best practices in the field of victim services. This includes how the Academy itself and its curriculum is structured. Learn more about how the Academy has embraced best practices.

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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...

Victim Services Professional Network [VSPN] - A Year in Review

The Victim Services Professional Network has had a busy and productive year. We've welcomed another class of RVAAM graduates into our organization and they have already become an integral part of the VSPN community! They have volunteered to serve on the Executive Board, attended VSPN events, and are already discussing how their class can contribute to the Academy's 10th Anniversary class. I am so happy that the Class of 2012 has continued to find ways to stay connected to their fellow classmates and have actively sought out op-

portunities to become actively involved with VSPN.

This illustrates the special nature of VSPN, just as the Academy has grown over the past ten years, its Alumni Association has also grown and today encompasses hundreds of individuals from across the state of Maryland. I hear repeated stories throughout the year from my peers on how they have sought the advice and assistance from their peers to find a specific resource for a client. I also hear how much alums appreciate the opportunity to reconnect at various professional trainings held throughout the year. I saw so many of my VSPN peers this past year at various trainings held around the state. For example I saw VSPN members at the two-day Combating Human Trafficking conference sponsored by GOCCP in May, the advanced trainings on cyber victimization and empowering child victims at the Roper Academy in June, the Domestic Violence: In Plain Sight conference in September, and the Neurobiology of Trauma training in November.

But it's not just the professional support VSPN members provide that we have come to value, it's the personal friendships we have developed over the years that helps us continue to grow as professionals and individuals. This past year I got to have some fun with some of my fellow VSPN peers at some social events. For example, I saw a lot of VSPN members at the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office Victims 5k Fund Run in April and the Prince George's County 5k Victims Fund Run in October. When I signed up for these events, I

thought I would be running by myself, but when I got there I saw so many familiar faces and received so much encouragement from my peers throughout the race. I also loved socializing with my peers at the MCVRC's annual Chocolate Affair this fall.

VSPN is truly a community of support we can draw on personally and professionally. Although I don't always remember my fellow alums name every time I

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Happy New Year!

I always like the beginning of a new year because it brings a fresh start. It's almost like having a time of refreshment and beginning anew.

*This year is going to bring such exciting things to RVAAM and VSPN! For one, this is the **10th Anniversary of RVAAM!!** Can you believe it? This is such an incredible milestone, and not surprisingly, the Academy faculty and staff are planning some very special events to celebrate this marker. I sincerely hope you all will join in the festivities during the Academy this year and make it the best one yet!*

Just a reminder that the Academy will be taking place earlier this year, in April. The official dates are April 14th-19th, and it will again be hosted at Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville. Please spread the word to your friends and coworkers as this will be a very special Academy class to be a part of. The application can be obtained from the RVAAM website at www.rvaam.org

Now for some more exciting news! I know it's been a long time coming, but it's finally here! Starting January 1st, 2013, you can begin registering for Maryland Certification! Go to the RVAAM website and click on the Certification link to download your application. Please make sure to follow the directions closely or your application will be returned, which will hold up your certification.

So you can see 2013 is starting off to be a remarkable year for RVAAM and its Alumni. I look forward to seeing you at this year's Academy, and wish you all the best in 2013!

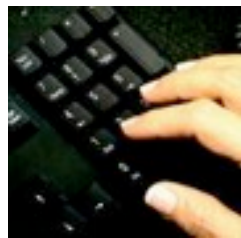
Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII

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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!

Thinking about referring a colleague to this year's Academy? Send them the link to the Academy's newly redesigned website! They can learn about the Academy's history and mission, and download an



application for this year's training! Alums can get information on what levels of certification are now available, and the steps for each certification process. Check us

out at: <http://rvaam.org>

Looking for a website to learn more about current laws and policies related to victims in the state of Maryland? Then be sure to check out the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center's website. They also provide a comprehensive list of services and resources that are available to crime victims across the state. Go to: <http://www.mdcrimevictims.org>

Want to find out the latest news on victims' rights, and policy decisions on a national level? Then spend some time on the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime website.

Go to: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>

Want to learn more about various training programs that are being offered this year for victim service professionals? Or are you looking for some publications related to victims rights and services? Then be

sure to check out the National Center for Victims of Crime website. It also is a wonderful tool to help connect victims of crime to a myriad of resources. Go to: <http://www.victimsofcrime.org/>

Save the Date

2013 RVAAM Academy

April 14th - 19th, 2013, Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, MD

Help us celebrate our 10th anniversary by recruiting for this year's Academy! We will be marking the occasion with some special events for alumni and new students during the week of the Academy, so be sure to hold these dates on your calendar!

The application is now posted on the RVAAM website <http://www.rvaam.org> so please share this information with your colleagues! You can also email Dr. Debra Stanley with any questions you may have at dstanley@ubalt.edu - just please help us spread the word and recruit for this year's class!!!

The 39th Annual NOVA Conference

September 15th - 18th, 2013, Hyatt Regency Columbus, Columbus, OH



This year's conference theme is "Implementing the Tools of our Trade to Build a Comforting Justice" and will offer over 100 workshops and

plenary events. Registration is now open. For more information, visit NOVA's conference website at

<http://www.trynova.org/39novaconference/overview/>



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!

Angela Fizer (Class of 2008) - Angela is now one of the new Case Managers for TurnAround's Anti-Trafficking Program. Congratulations Angela on your new position, we know you are going to do remarkable job!

Stephanie Lansey (Class of 2012) - Stephanie recently got married, and a few of her 2012 RVAAM buddies were there to celebrate her big day. Kimberly Gunishaw, Tamara Hatcher, Michelle Epps, and Leslie Connolly sent in a beautiful picture they took with the blushing bride. Congratulations Stephanie, we wish you and your husband all the very best!

Adrienne Whitney (Class of 2010) - Adrienne also celebrated a wedding recently! On 12-12-12 (love it!), Adrienne became Mrs. Adrienne Fletcher. Congratulations Adrienne, we wish you and your husband many happy years!



Best Practices

RVAAM's Use of Best Practices

According to the Office of Justice, a "best practice" is a technique or methodology that has been demonstrated through experience and research to be proven reliable in leading to a desired result. In other words, these practices include a specific set of processes and activities that have been shown to be the most effective. A commitment to using best practices requires an agency to therefore use all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal. The term is frequently used in the fields of health care, public administration, law enforcement, social services, mental health, education, and technology.

Every year, the Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland offers a diverse and comprehensive training curriculum that focuses on best practices in the field of victim services. The Academy's Executive Director, Dr. Debra Stanley and her team of faculty and staff, strategically map out every aspect of the learning process. As a recent graduate of the Academy, I can attest to the value of the training my peers and I received and believe its success is attributed to the following:

- Provides an overview and analysis of relevant data as it relates to victimization trends, an overview of victim's rights in the state of Maryland, and a critical analysis of victim advocacy throughout the criminal justice system.
- Presents a curriculum with a clear set of learning objectives, which results in graduates leaving the Academy with a baseline of knowledge and a general appreciation of the field of victim services as a whole.
- Offers easy to understand presentations and practical experience from subject matter experts. Instructors use a student-centered approach which allows for the free flow of expressions, opinions, and ideas.

- The coursework and training exercises are designed in a manner that highlight the need for collaborative and cooperative processes that enable participants to move beyond systemic flaws and in turn provide the greatest level of assistance to victims and survivors.

- The Academy staff recruit and select a set of culturally, professionally, and geographically diverse participants to maximize students' learning experiences and foster networking opportunities.

- The Academy is held at a training facility that allows students to be removed from the hustle and bustle of their professional and personal lives, thereby promoting an optimal learning experience.

- Shortly after graduation, the Academy staff conducts surveys with that year's participants to solicit their feedback on what they felt worked well and what they would like to see amended or added to future trainings, thereby always striving to keep the curriculum relevant.

- Graduates are immediately recognized as an alumni of the Academy and invited to be a part of the Victim Services Professional Network [VSPN], RVAAM's alumni organization that supports the needs of the Academy and provides professional and social networking opportunities for all of its members.

- VSPN has also promoted the use of best practices in the field of victim services by promoting advanced trainings open to alumni and other professionals; producing and distributing a quarterly newsletter, the Academy Forum, to keep alumni abreast of pressing issues in the field of victim services and sharing resources and best practices that can assist with those matters; and managing the certification process for all victim service professionals in the state of Maryland.

In sum, the Academy has consistently utilized best practices as its framework so

it can ensure all graduates not only leave the Academy well informed, but well connected with other victim service professionals in the field. VSPN then complements those efforts by providing alumni with opportunities to network with their peers and continue their professional development through additional trainings and opportunities for multiple levels of certification.

I can think of no better avenue to continue the professionalization of our field, and I hope you will encourage your colleagues to join the RVAAM and VSPN family by attending this year's Academy!

** Essay contributed by Keith Gethers, Class of 2011*



News From the Field

Everyone knows that the field of victim 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 successfully passed in 2012:

*** Senate Bill 175/House Bill 8 - Crimes - Electronic Communication - Harrassment** - This bill prohibits the use of electronic communication to maliciously engage in conduct that alarms another and clarifies the term "electronic mail" to "electronic communication" and alters the definition. The bill was signed

by the Governor on April 10, 2012 and went into effect on October 1, 2012.

*** Senate Bill 291 - Unemployment Insurance - Coverage - Victims of Domestic Violence** - This bill prohibits the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation from charging unspecified unemployment insurance benefits against the earned rating record of an employing unit and authorizes the Secretary to find a cause of voluntarily leaving employment is good cause if it is directly attributable to the individual or the individual's spouse, minor child, or parent being a victim of domestic violence. The bill was signed by the Governor on April 10, 2012 and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

*** Senate Bill 352/House Bill 607 - National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Information - Sign Posting Requirements** - This bill requires the business owner of a privately owned bus station or truck stop located in the state to post in restrooms a sign that provides information on National Human Trafficking Resource Center. This bill was signed by the Governor on May 22, 2012 and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

*** House Bill 766 - State Government - Commemorative Days - Crime Victims and Advocates** - This bill requires the Governor annually to proclaim April 3rd as Crime Victim and Advocate Commemorative Day. This bill was signed by the Governor on May 22nd, 2012, and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

*** Senate Bill 640/House Bill 209 - Public Safety - Possession of Firearms - Crimes Committed in Other States** - This bill prohibits a person from possessing a regulated firearm, rifle, or shotgun if the person was previously

convicted of an offense under the laws of another state or the United States that would constitute a crime of violence or a violation of specified provisions of law if committed in Maryland. This bill was signed by the Governor on May 2, 2012 and went into effect on October 1, 2012.

*** Senate Bill 647/House Bill 1146- Domestically Related Crimes - Reporting** - This bill requires the court to determine, at the request of the State's Attorney, whether a crime for which a defendant is convicted or receives a probation before judgement disposition is a domestically related crime, and to enter that finding into the court record to become a part of a defendant's criminal record. This bill was signed by the Governor on May 22, 2012, and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

*** House Bill 618- Task Force to Study Access to Individuals with Mental Illness to Regulated Firearms** - This bill establishes a Task Force to Study Access of Individuals with Mental Illness to Regulated Firearms, which will be staffed by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. The Task Force will be required to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2012, on whether existing law adequately protects the public, as well as the civil rights of individuals with mental illness, and make recommendations as appropriate. This bill was signed by the Governor on April 10, 2012, and went into effect on June 1st, 2012.



* **Senate Bill 899/House Bill 349- Criminal Law - Misdemeanor Possession of Child Pornography - Statute of Limitations** - This bill increases from 1 to 2 years, the period of time within which a prosecution for misdemeanor possession of child pornography must be instituted after the offense was committed. This bill was signed by the Governor on May 2, 2012, and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

* **Senate Bill 1082/House Bill 860- Children in Need of Assistance and Child Abuse and Neglect - Sexual Abuse - Definition** - This bill alters the definition of "sexual abuse" for provisions of law relating to children in need of assistance, child abuse, and child neglect to include specified actions relating to human trafficking, obscene material, pornography, and prostitution. This bill was signed by the Governor on May 2, 2012, and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

* **House Bill 1160- Family Law - Interim and Temporary Peace and Protective Orders - Duration** - This bill extends the duration of a temporary peace order or a temporary protective order under specified circumstances, such as when the court is unexpectedly closed. This bill was signed by the Governor on April 10, 2012, and went into effect on October 1st, 2012.

Here's an overview of the legislative agenda for 2013:

* **Asset Forfeiture** - This bill implements a procedure by which a trafficker's assets would be seized, while providing safeguards on behalf of an innocent joint owner. With the proceeds of the sales, GOCCP will administer the "Anti-Human Trafficking Fund." Human trafficking victims have a unique set of needs and very few Maryland agencies are adequately funded to address those needs. Creating this fund would help victim services and law enforcement agencies increase their capacity to serve

this population of victims and address this growing problem.

* **Akin's Law** - Current law allows rapists who cause a child to be conceived the same rights as other biological parents. Additionally, if a rapist-parent cannot be located the victim's name must be published in the newspaper. This legislation would create a legal process for rape victims to terminate the parental rights of rapists when a child is conceived as result of rape.

* **Committing a Crime in the Presence of a Minor** - This bill enhances the penalty for persons who commit a crime of violence when such persons know or should reasonably have known that a minor is within sight or hearing of the crime. The enhanced penalty affects only those defendants who have been convicted of a crime of violence with these additional circumstances.

* **Crime Victims and Witnesses Funds - Court Costs** - This legislation is intended to increase the amount of funding that goes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) and the Maryland Crime Victims Fund (MVOC). It will increase court costs imposed on defendants from \$45 to \$60 in Circuit Court, from \$35 to \$50 in District Court, and increase a District Court traffic court fee from \$3 to \$5.

* **Strangulation** - Despite the intensely personal violence that occurs when a victim experiences strangulation, an episode of strangulation may not always result in "serious physical injury" as required by the legal qualifiers of first degree assault. Unfortunately this creates a perception that strangulation is not life-threatening, and prosecutors are unable to adequately address this act with the level of seriousness it warrants. Because strangulation often delays or leaves no visible injury, abusers are often charged with second-degree assaults or incur no charges at all. Expressly categorizing strangulation as a felony first degree

assault gives State's Attorneys and law enforcement the tools to appropriately prosecute this act.

* **Protective Orders - Expansion to Include Sexual Assault and Dating Violence** - The current law only affords relief available by issuance of a protective order to individuals who are married, have been married, live together, have lived together, or have a child in common. The only recourse for individuals in a dating relationship with an abuser is to obtain a peace order, which is shorter in duration and affords less relief for the victim. This legislation proposes that individuals involved in a dating relationship or a consensual or nonconsensual sexual relationship should be eligible for relief under a protective order.

Just a Thought (Cont.)

run into them in the community or at trainings, I always end up recognizing them and in no time we're chatting and catching up with one another's lives. We end up sitting together during trainings or exchanging ideas over lunch. We all appreciate this invisible bond that binds us together as victim service professionals. It is this recognition within each of us for another that truly embodies the original mission of VSPN that is alive and thriving through the VSPN community.

Essay contributed by Eva Marie Kenealy, Class of 2010.



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 Diane Champe, a graduate of the 2010 Academy

My favorite TV show is ...
The Good Wife

My favorite piece of clothing to wear is ...
My lavender jacket

My favorite author is..
James Michener

The last movie I saw at the theater was ...
"Buck" - the inspiration for the Horse Whisperer. I would highly recommend it!

If I had to pick an animal that best represents my personality, it would be a ...

Mother chimpanzee - intelligent, protective, and adventurous

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is ... Understand that everyone has different thoughts and opinions

Something I think I do well is ... Utilize my organizational skills in research and writing

The thing I like the most about my current job is ... The fact that I'm building an organization that brings hope to people

My most memorable birthday in recent years was ...
When I turned 55; it was the first birthday I got to celebrate with my partner

My furry children include...
Two loving cats - one that is 19 years old, the other is 5 years old. Funny, its the 5 year old who always needs attention

My favorite thing to do to help unwind from a rough day is ...
Watch old movies

The technological device I would love to get rid of is ...
My TV remote control - I would want to replace it with something easier to use

The most challenging thing about my job is ...
The lengthy process to lay a strong business foundation

The quality I appreciate most in others is...
Compassion

The quality I dislike the most in other is ...
Narcissism

The three adjectives that best describe my personality are...
Analytical, compassionate, and funny

An occupation I wouldn't mind working in would be ...
A consultant for television on child abuse

An occupation I'm really glad I'm not working in is ...
Working with the deceased

My favorite professional sports team is...
The Ravens!!!

One of my goals for 2012 is to ...
Pace myself better

What do you want to hear? Have any news to share?

Are you itching to learn more about a particular issue in the field of victim services? The Editorial Board is always looking for new topics to profile in the newsletter that would be beneficial for our Alums both personally and professionally. Please send any suggestions you might have about a topic to profile in one of our upcoming newsletters to Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org ... We also are happy to share any information you have about job openings and professional trainings you might think your fellow Alums would benefit from!

Editorial Board

Debbie Bradley — Editor
Jessica Winpigler — Assistant Editor
Dianna Abramowski — Assistant Editor
Keith Getters — Assistant Editor
Ashley Fundack — Assistant Editor
Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor

Alumni Directory

The 2012 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.

Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in May 2013