

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #20 - October 2010

Just a Thought

Sometimes we forget that victims of crime not only incur physical, emotional, and psychological injuries - but many undergo a crisis of faith as well. Read how leaders in the faith community can comfort victims and help restore their faith in themselves, and God.

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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 summer and 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

Helping victims restore their faith is a difficult task, but an important one. Learn about the wonderful resources and services the Center for True Justice and Healing provides all victims to assist them in their journey to spiritual healing

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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...

Spiritual Guidance in the Midst of Trauma

Kati Kluckman-Ault

In the midst of serving in a variety of ministry settings, many professionals have heard stories of trauma - assault, sudden loss, abuse, violence - and the list could go on (and on and on...). Many persons who serve in professional ministry feel that they are not adequately prepared to help those seeking their assistance in dealing with the prolonged effects of such experiences. Those seeking spiritual guidance after traumatic experiences are surprised to find that such a "physical" experience can also bring so much hurt and spiritual crisis. Many who experience such traumatic events may immediately begin to ask themselves - "Where was God when ____ happened?" or "Why

did God abandon me in the worst moment of my life?" or "Why is God punishing me?"

Given these feelings that God has either been absent or is somehow punishing them, many people are reluctant to turn to their pastor/priest/rabbi/imam for help with these feelings. In the midst of what may be one, if not the, most difficult crisis in their lives, too many individuals will retreat and isolate themselves from a significant and willing source of support and healing.

When a spiritual leader is called upon in the midst of a traumatic experience, perhaps the most significant role they can play is to simply provide a "ministry of presence." If the experience of trauma has made the individual feel unloved or abandoned by God, then the presence of the "representative" of God, those ministry professionals, can begin to act out God's healing love for that person. While there is little language that might be needed, the simple act of listening can begin to aid in the individual's healing.

For many trauma victims, particularly sexual assault/abuse victims, there may be a lot of feelings of shame that they are grappling with and may mistakenly believe they are 'unworthy' in God's eyes. Again, hearing the words of God's love and presence can be an important tool to help them move away from feelings of shame and embarrassment to one of healing. In such situations, it is important for female victims to have the opportunity to speak with a female minister (and vice versa for male victims) so they may feel more comfortable in relay-



ing their story and their feelings. Finding an appropriate ministry partner can bring an experience of grace to the process of helping these individuals understand and work through their feelings.

In working with those who have experienced trauma, the most significant intervention that a ministry professional can do is to listen and to offer the vision of God's persistent and faithful presence in the midst of such difficult circumstances.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Hello Alumni!

Another summer has come and gone and what a hot one it was! Fall is a welcome relief this year, that's for sure. Maybe we will get a much needed reprieve from crime as well. We can only hope. It seems things are getting worse because of the economy and we are certainly seeing the effects in our careers. That's why I think this quarter's newsletter is so wonderful! I don't know how people get through life without faith. This quarter's newsletter will show you how the faith-based community is a wonderful complement and asset to the victims service field. I hope you find it as informative as I did as I read through the various essays.

There are so many exciting things going on with the Alumni Association. Did you know that we have a new name? It is "Victim Services Professional Network (VSPN)" - this is very exciting because even though we support the Academy, we are also separate from them in many ways and we want to be able to differentiate between the two organizations to alleviate some confusion. Once you become a member of the Victim Services Professional Network you have a host of resources available to you, such as networking, training, mentoring, etc. Make sure you check out the website, www.roaam.org, often to find out what is going on throughout the year. We also have a Facebook page, so look us up there as well! We want to stay in contact with all of you and welcome your comments and suggestions!

Wishing you all the best!

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!

"Faith Based Responses to Domestic Violence" - This article by Chantel Lasco discusses how clergy and other organizations are taught about the dynamics of domestic violence, and how different faiths view the issue. The author offers suggestions on how the faith-based community can reach out to these victims and can provide services to those who encounter this type of abuse. To read the article, go to http://www.saiv.net/SourceBook/Storage/documents/doc_lasco.pdf

"Engaging Religious, Spiritual, and Faith-Based Groups and Organizations" - This chapter highlights the importance of providing a spiritual dimension in victim services. The author provides a number of suggestions on what various religious communities can do to reach out and help those who have been traumatized by violence. To download the chapter, go to <http://saiv.net/SourceBook/Storage/documents/Toolkit/fullchapter12.pdf>

The Soul Sanctuary - The Soul Sanctuary is a faith-based organization whose mission is to promote healthy relationships and violence-free families. The organization hosts trainings for clergy and lay leaders in the faith community to help them better understand the dynamics of domestic violence and how they can bet-

ter connect with those who are living in abusive relationships. For more information, go to

<http://www.thesoulsanctuary.org>

"Victim Rights and Services: A Modern Saga" - This article written by Marlene Young, Ph.D., J.D., the Executive Director for the National Organization for Victim Assistance, discusses how victim services has changed over time. It includes a wonderful section on how faith can play a part in the victim's healing process. To download a copy of the article, go to <http://www.trynova.org/victiminfo/readings/VictimRightsandServices.pdf>



National Criminal Justice Reference Services - Clergy - The National Criminal Justice Reference Services is a wonderful website that provides access to thousands of articles and reports on a litany of criminal justice related topics. The following link is to a manual written by Revs. David and Anne Delaplane, who founded an organization called The Spiritual Dimension in Victim Services, that assists clergy and congregants on issues related to child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, robbery, sexual assault, and violent death. To download a copy, go to http://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/reports/clergy/welcome.html



Save the Date

Mid-Atlantic Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

October 27-29, 2010, Clarion Resort Hotel & Conference Center, Ocean City, Maryland

This year's conference will host over 50 workshops and include over 38 guest speakers from both the public and private sectors. Professionals from the fields of medicine, social work, law enforcement, child advocacy, mental health, and family and children's services from all over the Mid-Atlantic and the United States will be in attendance.

For a copy of the conference brochure, click here -

http://www.mdcha.org/2010_conference.html>

or call (410) 877-5376 for more information.

Community Gang Awareness, Training of Trainers

November 3-4, 2010, 8:00am - 4:0pm; Public Safety and Educational Training Center, Sykesville, MD

This free training is designed for those tasked with training others in their department, community, and/or place of employment. It will provide students with the knowledge and training needed to instruct the Community Gang Awareness Course. The program is geared toward those whose jobs or day-to-day activities may potentially bring them into contact with gang members.

Class size is limited to 40; closing date for registration is October 25th. The program has been approved for 12.5 police in-service hours. For more information, please call (410) 875-3425.



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!

Dianna Abramowski (Class of 2007) - Diana has just recently completed her Masters Degree from the University of Baltimore, and will be graduating this upcoming January. Congratulations Dianna, what an accomplishment!

Emesha James (Class of 2007) - Emesha is in the process of starting a new mentoring program for adolescents, as well as trying to open an independent living program for youth. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in being a mentor in Anne Arundel County, or working with at-risk youth in the District of Columbia, please contact Emesha at emesha1@verizon.net Best wishes in your new endeavor Emesha!

Sophia Kosh (Class of 2007) - Sophia is the co-author of a book entitled "Selecting and Surviving a Doctoral Program in Counseling," published by University Readers and is now available online at www.universityreaders.com. Sophia co-authored the book with Dr. J. Fidel Turner. Awesome job Sophia!

Vernell Shaheed (Class of 2009) - After 30 years of service with the Baltimore City Police Department, Vernell just recently retired. Vernell hopes to continue to work with domestic violence victims. Congratulations on an outstanding career Vernell, we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!

Teri Williams (Class of 2010) - Teri just recently celebrated a birthday on October 12th - we sure hope your special day was filled with love and laughter, and wish you many, many more birthdays to come!

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:

New Moves Underway to Expand Law Enforcement Training to Focus on the Special Needs of Child Victims

Effective October 1st, 2010, the Police Training Commission must expand the minimum curriculum and courses of study for police training to include special training on and attention to the exploitation of children, the contact with and treatment of victims of crime and delinquent acts, notices, services, support, and rights available to specified victims and their representatives, and the notification of the rights of identity fraud victims under federal law.

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2010 Legislative Overview Passed Under the O'Malley- Brown Administration

- * Lifetime supervision of Maryland's most violent sex offenders
- * Alignment of Maryland's sex offender laws with federal notification and registration standards
- * Signed Jessica's Law to remove violent sex offenders from the community
- * Increased protection of the state's children by mandating specialized agents to monitor and supervise sex offenders, and require agents to use clinical polygraph examinations, computer monitoring, and GPS tracking to hold offenders accountable. In addition, rap sheets now flag sex offenders so first responders and State's Attorneys can know immediately what the risks are associated with the individual and thereby take the appropriate precautions to protect the community.

Best Practices

The Center for True Justice and Healing: Connecting for Healthy Healing

The Center for True Justice and Healing (CTJH) is a non-profit corporation located in Landover, Maryland, that serves crime victims throughout the entire state. Founded in 2003 by Executive Director, Rev. Wayne S. Price, Sr., CTJH assists crime victims of all backgrounds and types, however the majority of victims are homicide survivors and victims of domestic violence.

Rev. Price has a B.S. in Criminal Justice, and just recently obtained a M.A. in management, with a concentration in criminal justice. With more than thirty years of experience as an ordained minister, Rev. Price founded CTJH in order to provide comprehensive caring and support services hurting people of all faiths and philosophies. In order to best match the spiritual needs of each person who comes

to CTJH, they complete an initial assessment and are then referred to the appropriate spiritual leader who can serve as their "navigational guide to healing."

Rev. Price understands that many victims are already connected with clergy, and would feel more comfortable sharing their story with someone who is not a stranger to them. He recognizes that trauma can disconnect people spiritually, and therefore helping individuals reconnect with their clergy can provide a way for victims to "connect for healthy healing." "Spiritual connection is the foundation of healing," Rev. Price says. "When a trauma victim is in search of true justice for those answers they don't have - answers that come from a power greater than themselves - clergy can guide these individuals through the healing process."



CTJH provides services through grief victim support ministry, where survivors of homicide come for help immediately following the traumatic event. Then, one of the nine volunteers at CTJH develops an individualized set of "navigational aids" that can help survivors along their journey, such as individual support sessions, ongoing case management, and spiritual and pastoral care.

Other services provided by CTJH include support and advocacy for victims as they navigate their way through the criminal justice system. In addition, the organization performs community outreach by making others in the community aware of issues surrounding victim rights and support services.

For more information on The Center for True Justice and Healing, check out their

website at www.ctjh.org or give them a call at (301) 219-3421.

** Essay contributed by Bridgette Harwood*

Just a Thought (Cont.)

Using the pieties of one's particular faith tradition can also bring important comfort - prayer beads, Bible passages, hymns or songs, stories of Saints' lives - each of these can bring comfort. It is important also not to offer platitudes that serve only to silence the pain, hurt, and even anger of someone moving towards healing.

Finally, as a ministry professional hears the stories of other people's traumas, it is important to find a way to protect oneself from secondary trauma. Just as those you serve need a spiritual leader to lean on, so do we. Thus it is important that we too have a spiritual companion and colleague who we can turn to to process our own thoughts and feelings. In many ways, the witness of God's healing of others is as important to the care provider as to the one who has been hurt. Living in God's healing presence, strengthens our own faith and enables us to be strong enough to be present for those experiencing such significant trauma and loss. In the end, what we all need to experience and live is that none of us is ever alone.

"In my alarm I said, 'I am cut off from your sight!' Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help" - Psalm 31:22

Kati Kluckman-Ault is a Deaconess and the Director for Evangelical Mission, and Assistant to the Bishop for the Delaware Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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 Carolyn Break, a graduate of the 2004 Academy

My favorite TV show is ...
“Glee”

My favorite book is ... It’s not one book, it’s Harlan Coben’s Myron Bolitar series

The last movie I saw was ...
“The Blind Side” - it’s a must see!

If I were a crayon, the color I would be is ... Fuschia

Something I do well is ... I can organize it, downsize it, recycle it, or reuse it

My favorite thing to do to help unwind after a rough day is ...
Listen to a book on CD

When I was a kid, I wanted to grow up and be ...
just like my Mom

The strangest thing I ever ate was ... squid

The quality I appreciate the most in another person is ...
compassion

The quality I dislike the most in another person is ... impatience

The thing I like best about my job is ... helping law enforcement officers understand the victim’s point of view

The occupation, other than the one I’m in now, I would most like to have is ... Ballroom dance teacher

The occupation I am SO happy I don’t have is ... a Sanitation Worker

If I could see anyone in concert, it would have to be ...
Billy Joel!

The best piece of advice I’ve ever been given is ... always be prepared, then when you need it, you have a plan!

If I could go anywhere in the world for vacation it would be ... Hawaii

My favorite season of the year ... it’s a toss up between Spring and Fall

The most challenging thing about my job is ... making my presentations informative, interesting, and memorable.

tive, interesting, and memorable.

My favorite professional sports team is ... The Washington Redskins!

My favorite candy or treat is ... I can’t pick just one! All treats are my favorite!

Guess what! The RVAAM Alumni Association has a new name!

Recently the RVAAM Alumni Association Executive Board solicited feedback from the entire alumni to come up with a new name for its organization ... thanks for all the feedback! The new name, courtesy of Jennifer Goode (Class of 2005), is “Victim Services Professional Network”

Alumni Directory

The 2010 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, will soon be 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

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Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in January 2011