

# Academy Forum

*Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #15 - July 2009

## Just a Thought

One of the most underserved populations of crime victims are individuals who are not citizens of United States. Learn about the unique challenges they face, and some ways we can better serve these individuals in our communities

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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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## Best Practices

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## Congratulations RVAAM Class of 2009!

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## Alumni Updates

Always find yourself thinking "I wonder what happened to..."



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## The 20/20

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## Just a thought...

*Immigration issues - providing services for crime victims who are foreign nationals*

**Kathy J. Zehr**

Crime victims who are not United States citizens can have additional concerns and fears than victims who are citizens. A foreign student who is attacked might need to address his inability to continue studies for the semester. A foreign visitor who is injured by a drunk driver might need to request permission to remain in the United States for longer than originally planned. A young woman who arrived in the United States two years ago with her U.S. citizen husband might be afraid to disclose that her husband is abusing her because he took her passport and has threatened to call immigration officials and have her locked up. A mother who was ordered deported from the United States might not know what she can do when her son is shot and

injured. A young man with no legal immigration status might fear retaliation against himself or family members if he assists with an investigation of criminal gang activity in his community. A foreigner must remain mindful of their duties, deadlines, and the consequences for violating immigration laws, as well as potential consequences upon return to their home country, and immigration legal services can be an important resource.

Some immigration applications are specifically designed for crime victims. For example:

\*\* Foreign national victims of certain crimes that occurred in the United States of that violated U.S. law might be eligible to apply for "U" non-immigrant status. "U" eligibility can arise from a variety of criminal activities, including: domestic violence, assault, murder, rape, abduction, extortion, kidnapping, involuntary servitude, and witness tampering to name just a few of the crimes covered. It is intended for victims who are helpful to law enforcement with the investigation or prosecution of the crime, and law enforcement must complete part of the application. "U" status is intended for victims who suffered substantial physical and/or mental injury. The victim's spouse, child, parent, or minor sibling might also be eligible for "U" status for family unity, support, and protection. An applicant for "U"

non-immigrant status must qualify under general admissibility criteria under U.S. immigration law or be eligible for a waiver of inadmissibility. The "U" status is available for up to four years, and in some cases, the victim will be eligible for permanent resident status (i.e., Green Card) and allowed to remain in the United States beyond four years.



\*\* Another application that is specifically designed for victims is the "T" non-immigrant status, which is designed for victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons. The "T" application is similar to the "U" application in that the victim assists law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of the traf-

ficking acts, and law enforcement must complete part of the application that is submitted to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. "T" status might also be available to the victim's spouse, child, or parent. A person with a "T" status might be eligible for permanent resident status and allowed to remain in the United States long-term.

\*\* Immigration applications are also available to victims of domestic violence when the

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings Alumni!

Well we successfully completed another Academy class! What an exciting time it was. The new location was just fabulous and everyone who participated was wonderful! I was honored to be able to participate throughout the week and to get to know many from the class of 2009. There is definitely a lot of talent coming out of this class and I would like to be the first to welcome you all to the RVAAM Alumni Association. I can't wait to work side-by-side with all of you throughout the coming year, so please get yourself signed up for a committee right away during the upcoming debriefing!

For those of you who were unable to attend the advanced training during the Academy, you missed some excellent training! The first training session was on 'The Trauma of Male Victims' and was presented by Clifton E. Files, JD, MSW. Mr. Files led a discussion about the different effects trauma has on males victims and how these effects manifest and the different options we can utilize to assist male victims. The second training was presented by Dr. Kevin Ferentz (Lisa Ferentz's husband) on "Affective and Anxiety Disorders in Traumatized Clients." He provided information on how clients who have been traumatized often suffer from co-existent depression and anxiety disorders. He reviewed the diagnostic criteria and common symptoms associated with these disorders, and then led a discussion on how to interact with anxious or depressed clientele and how to work collaboratively with physicians. Both trainings were excellent and I want to thank Dr. Debra Stanley, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, and Elaine Witman for putting together such outstanding and invaluable training sessions for the Alum.

Finally, I would like to send a huge thank you to all of the Alums who volunteered their time to help out at this year's Academy, especially Debra Snow and Rev. Brian Murray who coordinated all those who participated, and Valda Rotollo for serving as 'dorm mom' once again. I would also like to send out a heartfelt thanks to Dr. Debra Stanley, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, Elaine Witman, and Dave Thomas for all of their hard work in making this 6th

Academy another huge success. And on a personal note I would also like to thank them for the beautiful plaque I received during the graduation ceremony, it was such a pleasant surprise!

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer and some time of relaxation. I look forward to seeing you all again real soon!

Wishing you all the best!

Debbie Bradley, Editor

[bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org](mailto: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!

**Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services** - CCILS provides high quality immigration legal services to low-income immigrants and refugees, and engages in public education, training, and community outreach in order to promote justice for all newcomers and conditions for their full participation in American society. Please visit their website at [http://www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org/services\\_legal\\_services.asp](http://www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org/services_legal_services.asp)

**Maryland Legal Services Corporation** - MLSC was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1982 to raise funds and make grants to nonprofit organizations for the provision of civil legal assistance to low-income persons in Maryland. To view their directory of legal services, go to <http://www.mlsc.org/directory.htm>

**Immigrationhelpline.org** - This website, and corresponding hotline, provides services to assist individuals in preparing, completing, and filing their application for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Other services include assistance with Visitor Visa, Family

Petition, Fiance Petition, Labor Petition, Adjustment of Status, and Renewal/Replacement/Extension Links. Form more information, go to <http://1-888-988-8678.info/immigrationhelpline/>

**Immigrant Legal Resource Center** - The ILRC is a national non-profit resource center that provides legal trainings, educational materials, and advocacy to advance immigrant rights. Take some time and explore the organization's website at <http://www.ilrc.org>

**National Immigration Law Center** - NILC's mission is to protect and promote the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their family members. NILC staff specialize in immigration law and the employment and public benefits rights of immigrants. The organization conducts policy analysis and impact litigation, as well as provides publications, technical advice, and trainings to legal aid agencies, community groups, and pro bono attorneys. For more information, visit the NILC website at <http://www.nilc.org>

## Congratulations 2009 Roper Victims Assistance Academy Graduates!



On June 5th, 2009, we welcomed another 27 wonderful individuals to the RVAAM Alumni Association as they successfully completed the 40-hour training curriculum of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy.

The group was energetic and engaged, and quickly bonded together. The students participated in active discussions on a range of victim services and victims rights issues, such as the importance of active listening (led by Dave Betz) or the mental health issues associated with trauma (led by Lisa Ferentz). In the evenings, the group gathered in the residential lounge to show off their competitive spirit by engaging in the various games our new "Master of Ceremonies," Bill Griffin, set up for them, including a wicked Wii bowling tournament!

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# Just a thought...

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abuser is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident and the victim is the foreign-born spouse, child, or parent of the abuser. These applications arise under the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and include self-petitions to obtain immigrant status, applications for cancellation of removal and for adjustment of status, applications for employment authorization, and for victims who have two-year conditional resident status, petitions to remove the conditions on status.

\*\* Foreign born children who are in the United States and have been abandoned, abused, or neglected might be eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status when a state court has found the child to be dependent on the court or has placed the child in the custody of a state agency or individual or entity appointed by the state. In some cases, adoption of the foreign child might be appropriate, but U.S. immigration laws relating to the recognition of an adoption of a foreign child vary and depend on the child's native country.

Various other immigration legal services can benefit foreign-born victims of crime. This might include assistance with applications to replace lost immigration documents or lost U.S. citizenship documents, as well as assistance with requests for reinstatement of a foreign student's status or extension of a non-immigrant's deadline to leave the United States. Other services might include representation in seeking a stay of deportation or temporary employment authorization. Family members outside the United States might also need assistance with visa applications or a request for humanitarian parole to enter the United States. Similarly foreign nationals who are afraid of persecution or torture in their home country might need to apply for asylum, withholding of removal, or an application under the Convention Against Torture.

Immigration services for crime victims are available from immigration lawyers in private practice, as well as immigration lawyers and BIA accredited representatives with non-profit organizations who have been recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals. The non-profit providers generally request no fee or only a modest fee for services; and some lawyers in private practice might be able to offer assistance pro bono. Records from law enforcement, the court, hospitals, doctors, therapists, social workers and the victim's personal records about their immigration status, as well as their criminal history, must be reviewed to deter-

mine eligibility under U.S. immigration law. Some applications must be submitted to an Immigration Court, others to different agencies and offices of the Department of Homeland Security, and some applications are processed with the U.S. Department of State. Some lawyers and BIA accredited representatives offer services limited to certain types of cases, such as domestic violence, trafficking, or child victims. An office that provides limited immigration legal services may be able to provide a referral to an immigration lawyer for additional assistance.

It is important to note that the necessary assistance might not be available from government immigration officers because they are responsible for carrying out enforcement. Representation by an immigration lawyer or BIA accredited representative can be critical if the foreign victim does not have current documentation or was unsuccessful with prior immigration matters. The immigration lawyer or accredited representative can provide very important advice and advocacy to avoid or delay an enforcement action against the victim.

In sum, immigration legal services offer valuable resources for foreign crime victims and their family members, including advice to comply with immigration laws, assistance to approach government authorities, and representation to protect their rights.

**Kathy J. Zehr is a Senior Attorney with Immigration Legal Services of Associated Catholic Charities of Baltimore.**



## Best Practices

**Foreign Born Information and Referral Network [FIRM] Inc.**

**Pedro Reyes, BIA certified Immigration Counselor**

FIRM Inc. is a private, non-profit grassroots organization in Maryland dedicated exclusively to assisting immigrants and refugees. FIRM provides direct client services including English tutoring, interpreters and translators,

information and referral services, and immigration counseling.

The immigration clinic staff includes an Immigration Attorney and two Immigration Counselors accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) who work together to carry out the duties of assisting clients with their immigration matters. For example, FIRM Inc. assists women with filing for Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) applications, which allows a woman who has been subjected to abuse by her spouse the opportunity to self-petition for permanent residency if her husband is a U.S. citizen or green-card holder who never properly filed for her immigrant status.

As part of the immigration benefit from the Immigration and Nationality Act, the U Visa is also available for alien individuals who have been victims of qualifying criminal activity, and possess information about the criminal activity, and has been, is currently, or is likely to be helpful to the investigation and prosecution of the perpetrator(s).

FIRM's services include all of the following: a) reviewing immigration document and forms for eligibility determination; b) liaising with outside counsel and conducting research related to various immigration questions; c) preparing forms and correspondence to be submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in support of various applications and petitions; and d) representing clients before federal agencies, such as USCIS, the Department of Justice, and the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

The clinic is well structured to meet the needs of our ever-demanding clientele. Individuals are able to come to FIRM on a walk-in basis on Mondays and Tuesdays from 8:30am-5:00pm. An Immigration Counselor is available at the front desk to review FIRM's pre-screen intake form, which will determine whether the client's matter can be handled by the counselors on staff, or will require a meeting with the Immigration Attorney.

FIRM currently has two offices to help serve Maryland's immigrant population. The Columbia Office is located at 5999 Harpers Farm Road, and the North Laurel Office is located at 9105 All Saints Road. For additional information, please call (410) 992-1923 or visit the organization's website at <http://www.firnonline.org/index.html>



## 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...*

**Dianna Abramowski (2007)** - Dianna is going to get married on July 18th! We wish her and her husband-to-be, Marc Liberto, a heartfelt congratulations and hope their wedding day is all that they dreamt it to be!

**Stacy Bolin (2008)** - Stacy and her husband, Ron, celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary on May 6th. Stacy is also celebrating 15 years of remission from Hodgkins Disease. Congratulations on two awesome anniversaries!!

**Angela Giles (2006)** - Angela just celebrated her 40th birthday on June 27th. Be sure to give her a big hug when you see her - Happy Birthday Angela!!

**Constance Hannigan-Frank (2008)** - Constance and her husband just celebrated the birth of their daughter. The sweet angel weighed 5 lbs. 7.8 oz. and was 19 inches long. We send a heart full of love to all three of you!

**Nicole Quinn (2006)** - Nicole's little girl, Olivia, just celebrated her 1st birthday on May 13th. Happy Birthday sweetheart!

**Sarah Rickter (2004)** - Sarah just announced that she is getting married! Congratulations Sarah on the big event - we can't wait to hear the details!

**Raymond Scaraggi (2008)** - Ray recently became an adjunct faculty in criminal justice at Kaplan College. Congratulations Ray on your new endeavor!

**Debra Snow (2004)** - Debra now has her own private practice and it has relocated! Her new address is 606 Baltimore Avenue, Suite

404B, Towson, MD 21204. Congratulations on the move!

## 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:*

Recently, Governor Martin O'Malley signed SB620 into law. Existing Rule 4-345 prohibits a court from holding a hearing on a reconsideration of sentence unless victim notification requirements were complied with. However this new legislation indicates the judge may continue even if notification is not provided. We encourage you to contact your representative to express your concerns about this change and to take action to repeal this backwards step to victims' rights in Maryland.



## Save the Date

### Class of 2009 Roper Victim Assistance Academy Debriefing and Luncheon

Thursday, July 17th, 11:30am-2:30pm. University of Baltimore, 5th floor Multi-Purpose Room, Student Center.

### 35th Annual North American Victim Assistance Conference

August 23-27, 2009, Westin Keirlandd Resort & Spa, Scottsdale, AZ

### Supporting Children Living with Grief and Trauma: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach

October 27th-28th, Courtyard Baltimore Downtown/Inner Harbor, 1000 Aliceanna Street, Baltimore, MD. Cost of the training is \$200.

### 2010 Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland

June 7 - 12, 2010 (tentative). The Pearlstone Conference Center, 5425 Mt. Gilead Road, Reisterstown, MD.

## Class of '09 (continued)

The week's events culminated with a very special graduation and luncheon, where the students were able to reunite with their family and co-workers. Father Ray Chase gave a wonderful keynote address that highlighted the value and importance of the work we do and the services and care we provide to victims of crime and their families. Prior to the handing out of certificates, we honored three very special individuals for all of the work they have done for the Academy, as well as the field of victim services. A plaque was presented to Dave Thomas, for his dedication to the field of victim services and his unwavering support and service he has given to the Academy since its inception; another to Debbie Bradley, the outgoing vice-president of the RVAAM Alumni Association, who has played an integral role in growing the Alumni Association and for her dedication to the success of the Academy; and to Father Ray Chase, for bringing "Illuminations" to the community and the unwavering spirit and dedication he exhibits to helping children who have been victims of crime.

The ceremony concluded with handing out the certificates to each member of the 2009 graduating class. As always, there were lots of hoots and hollers, laughter and tears, and even some silly poses for the camera. Although it was a grueling week, everyone went home recharged with new knowledge and some new friends.

From the Academy Faculty and Staff, "Congratulations!" It was truly an honor and a privilege to spend the week with all of you, listening to your stories and learning from your experiences. We look forward to working with you in the Alumni Association.

# 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 *Bethany Backes, a graduate of the 2007 Academy*

**The last book I read was ...** the most recent book in the Sookie Stackhouse series: "Dead and Gone"

You can have it all - good relationship, career, family - once you change your mindset to 'you can,' all obstacles are easier to overcome

sleeping in, a good cup of coffee, and having a lazy day with my husband

**My wildest dream is ...** to move to Hawaii, open a chocolate shop, and learn to surf!

am able to do and finding new things to evaluate so we know we are helping people to the best of our abilities

**My least favorite thing to do is ...** any kind of yard work, I'm allergic to everything

**If I could go anywhere in the world, it would be ...**

**The three words that describe my life are ...** busy, fulfilling, funny

**My proudest moment is...** crossing the finish line at the Chicago Marathon

**What I hate about my job is ...** the long commute!

**My motto or favorite saying is ...**

Tahiti

**My fondest movie is ....** "Pretty in Pink"

**The biggest challenge for me is ...** waking up every day at 5am

**One of my goals for 2008 is...** to be less critical of myself

**Be the change you wish to see in the world"**

**My childhood ambition was ...** to be a pediatrician

**My favorite food is ...** brownies!

**My favorite indulgence is ...** a massage

**I can't stand ...** ignorance

**The perfect day to me would be ...**

**My inspiration is ...** people, more specifically, my family and friends. They inspire me in the most simple ways every day

**What I love about my job is ...** the diversity of work I

**I appreciate ...** kindness

**Best advice I ever got was ...**

## Preliminary Dates for 2010 RVAAM!

Hold the date!! We have tentatively selected June 7-11, 2010 for next year's Roper Victim Assistance Academy. We hope you will help spread the word and recruit members for the upcoming class.

## Alumni Directory

The 2009 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, is in the process of being completed and 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](mailto:bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org) or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

## Occupational Outlook



**TurnAround, Inc.**, a private non-profit organization dedicated to serving victims of rape, child sexual assault, domestic violence, and adult survivors of child sexual assault is currently seeking a *Victim Service Specialist* to provide outreach/advocacy to victims of sexual and domestic violence. Requires knowledge of sexual assault and domestic violence and experience working with victims. Candidate will have a B.A. in human services, strong computer skills, excellent written and verbal communication skills, and reliable transportation. Some evening hours are required. If interested, please fax resume to (410) 377-6806, Attn: ER Program Manager

## Editorial Board

**Debbie Bradley — Editor**  
**Heather Courtney — Assistant Editor**  
**Alicia Johnson-Davis - Assistant Editor**  
**Dianna Abramowski - Assistant Editor**  
**Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor**

**Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in October 2009**