

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #11 - July 2008

Just a Thought

One of the toughest aspects of this career is having to tell someone their loved one is dead. Debbie Bradley discusses the importance of death notification training, and highlights some best practices.
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Just a thought...

Death Notification - The importance of proper training

Debbie Bradley

No one wants to tell someone their loved one has died, and nothing can make this task any easier. No policy, procedure, phrasing, or formula can stop the pain, shock, and trauma for the survivors but how first-responders or victim advocates handle that moment can significantly affect how the surviving family members respond later on in their grief. Unfortunately, most people don't learn in advance healthy ways of dealing with the death of a loved one. Typically, they are plunged into the pain and emotions when that moment arrives and simply do the best they can. Likewise, those who are responsible for giving the death notification usually have not learned in advance the necessary tools to provide a proper notification or how to deal with the aftermath of it.

The Need for Formal Training

Death notifications are life-changing events for the survivors, and in some cases, for the individuals giving the notifications themselves. The words or phrases that are used to deliver the news, the demeanor of the person who performs the notification, and the physical setting in which the notification is given are all factors which may contribute to painful memories of the loss, and will never be forgotten by those on the receiving end. Yet despite the potential significance this moment can have on the bereavement process of the surviving members, few resources exist to train the professionals who regularly perform this daunting task.

A 2001 University of Florida study found that 41% of death notifiers had received neither classroom nor experiential training in death notification, although 70% had performed at least one notification (*Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 2001, Volume 14(1)). A similar trend is present in Maryland. In a death notification training hosted this past spring in Harford County, among the 60 law enforcement officers, clergy, mental health providers, health care providers, and victim advocates in attendance, every participant reported that he or she had completed at least one death notification. Yet when asked how many individuals had ever received any formal training on death notification, only 4 participants responded affirmatively. At the conclusion of

the training, all of the participants agreed that all first-responders and victim advocates who deal with homicide survivors would substantially enhance their skills if they received formal training on: a) specific details on how to deliver a notification, b) how to manage survivor reactions, and c) how to manage their own emotional reactions, before, during, and after a notification.



Best Practices in Death Notification

Often times, when performing a death notification, this is the first interaction a professional has with the family, that moment can inextricably link them with the family forever. The words you say, and the manner in which you present them can either cause further harm or aid the family in their bereavement. A skillful and compassionate death notification may prevent survivors from being secondarily traumatized by the manner in which they learn of their loved one's death, and may facilitate the bereavement process by helping them cope more adaptively with their losses.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings Alumni!

First, let me welcome all the new Alumni members from the recent 2008 Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland! I hope you all had an amazing week. I'm just sorry I couldn't be there this year, but I had to 'suffer' through my Hawaiian vacation. All kidding aside, it was somewhat bittersweet. This is the first Academy that I have missed in four years and you all were getting to do some really exciting things. I can't wait to hear all about it at the debriefing!

This year was our second largest class with 45 participants from all over the state of Maryland, as well as a few from Washington, D.C. And I understand that many of you have been networking with one another since. This is always such an important part of being a member of our Alumni because we all need allies throughout the state. Not only to better serve victims of crime, but also to provide support and encouragement to one another as we work away in the trenches. You will be receiving an updated directory of all of the RVAAM Alumni in the near future, so please keep it handy and use it to stay connected.

Don't forget there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with the Alumni Association now that the Academy is over, and we are looking forward to working with you. So for those of you who are interested, be sure to sign up at the debriefing to help out with any of the committees the Alumni Association oversees.

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. We couldn't do it without you! And most important of all, I would like to send out a heartfelt thanks to Dr. Debra Stanley, Dr. Heather Pfeifer, Elaine Witman, and Dave Thomas for all their hard work in making this 5th Academy another success. All of your time and energy is very much appreciated by all.

I hope you all have a joyful and safe summer, and I look forward to catching up with you again at the debriefing!

Debbie (Creswell) Bradley, Editor

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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!



"Police stress: Death Messenger" - this link is to an article published by Real Police, a law enforcement resource site, on how to carry out death notifications in a professional and compassionate manner.

<http://www.realpolice.net/police-stress-death-messenger.shtml>

"The death notification: The road less traveled ... grief and the homicide survivor" - this link is to another excellent article that provides guidance on how to deliver a death notification.

<http://www.ohiocops.com/grief/death.html>

"Responding to a death in the Virginia Tech community" - this link is to an article that highlights the lessons learned by administrators in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech shootings and provides suggestions on how supervisors and co-workers can act following the death of an employee in order to help the work environment return to normalcy.

<http://www.erc.vt.edu/webfinal.pdf>

Death notification - this link is to a powerpoint of a workshop given on death notification. It reviews the grief process, how death notification affects those professionals who are responsible for carrying this task out, and how to give a death notification in a professional and compassionate manner.

<http://www.mh.state.oh.us/all-hazards-preparedness/joining-forces-conference/2005/workshop34.ppt>

Death notification - this is a link to the Office for Victims of Crime's resources to assist professionals in learning how to deliver a death notification.

<http://www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/death.htm>

"Recommended procedures for death notification: The principles of death notification - this is a link to a document that offers guidance on how to notify a family member of a loved one's death in a sensitive manner, highlighting

tips on what not to do or say. http://www.wffoundation.org/documents/LODDWebposting_001.pdf

News From the Field



One of the most important duties of those working in the field of victim services is to stay apprised of any changes or additions the State Legislature or Courts make to victims rights. We highlight in this section any changes made in the legal code that directly affect victims of crime, or Bills the legislature is currently reviewing.

Effective July 1, 2008, the Court of Appeals adopted changes in the discovery obligations in criminal cases, Rule 4-263. These changes necessitate a review of existing victim services to determine perhaps for the first time the extent that system-based victim services (law enforcement and prosecution) are subject to disclosure to criminal defendants.

A number of serious questions are raised in reaction to this change - such as:

* Under Rule 4-263(d)(3) for a written statement as defined under Rule 4-263 (b)(5), to what extent, if any are the notes or other documents memorialized obtained through 'system-based victim services'[SBVS] required to be provided to the defendant? For example, if a SBVS advocate takes notes, or makes referrals to mental health and substance abuse providers, what does a prosecutor have to do to satisfy the "due diligence" obligation, including ascertaining the existence of written statements from any person providing 'system based victim services.'?

* Are there any discovery obligations on the State's Attorney to disclose victim assistance if the assistance is not provided by an employee of the State's Attorney's Office or the employee of a law enforcement agency that reports to the State's Attorney (e.g., a sexual assault center, a domestic violence agency)?

* (Continued on page 4)



Just a thought...

(continued from page 1)

The surviving family members are due the respect of having the death notification done by a professional, and to be given the news in a straightforward and kind manner. As such notifications should be done:

In person - Use of the telephone to make a death notification is callous and can be potentially dangerous. What if the person you are notifying is alone and has medical issues. The stress of that phone call can trigger any number of negative physical, psychological, and emotional responses. Thus, always conduct the notification in person whenever possible.

In pairs - Death notification is best done by two people, and make arrangements to arrive in two separate vehicles. Thus if one person needs to leave, the surviving family members are not left alone when they are experiencing this kind of traumatic shock.

In private - If delivering a death notification at the surviving family members' home, ask to come inside. Do not make a notification on the porch or in a public place. Similarly, if delivering a death notification at the workplace of one of the surviving family members, ask to speak to them in a private place. Make sure you have the correct survivors and ascertain what, if anything, they know. Do not deliver the notification to a neighbor, or a co-worker before delivering the news to the family, even if you need to ask them for information to help locate the family member(s).

In plain language - Use simple, straight forward language to describe how, when, and where the person died. Do not be afraid to use the "D" words - dead or died. Terms such as "expired," or "passed on," or "lost" are words that can be misunderstood. When speaking with children, take extra care not to use phrases like "(person) went to sleep and won't wake up again" as this can cause significant psychological trauma and may instill a sense of fear in the child when going to bed themselves. If the death was a homicide, say "murdered"; if it was the result of suicide, say

"they took their own life." One example of how you could deliver a death notification is to simply say "I'm afraid I have some bad news for you. (Person's name) has been involved in _____ and (s)he has died. I'm so sorry for your loss." Then give the surviving member(s) time to absorb what you have said. Because this can be a time of confusion, also be sure to give the surviving members information about the official procedures that take place subsequent to the death.

In time - Make notifications before the family sees it on the news. When delivering the news, get to the point, don't drag it out. People know when a professional arrives at their door it is not because they have good news to share.

Even if there is no physical shock response, death notification must be considered a crisis for the survivors. Every situation and every person react differently. Survivors not only need to express their feelings, but also need to have a calm and reassuring authority present, to help determine what happens next and how to restore control by making some choices. For example, who should they call for support or which funeral home should they contact? These needs can be met through the humane, patient, and non-judgmental approach of notifiers. Therefore take the time to listen and offer your support.

It is important to understand that a death notification is given only one time. This means that you only have one chance to say the right words, in the right tone, with just the right degree of compassion.

Debbie Bradley is the Victim Services Coordinator at the Harford County Sheriff's Office.

Best Practices

Sometimes it's hard to take what we've learned and apply it out in the field. In this section, we highlight a best practice other agencies have implemented to better serve victims of crime.

TIPS, Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc. - "Citizens Helping Citizens in Crisis"

TIPS, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1985 in San Diego, California by Wayne Fortin, a mental health professional, to provide immediate support to individuals in cri-

sis. The program is staffed by citizen volunteers who receive 55 hours of crisis intervention training, including a unit on death notification. TIP volunteers work in tandem with police, fire, and hospital emergency departments to provide emotional and practical support to victims and their families in the first few hours following a traumatic event. Volunteers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. One of the services TIPS has received public accolades is their assistance in death notification.

When a death notification is to be given, a TIP volunteer is dispatched at the same time as the police. The volunteer first meets with the officer and then accompanies him or her to the surviving family member(s) home. In some cases the officer gives the notification; however, an increasing number of jurisdictions are now having the TIPS volunteer deliver the notification because of their specialized training. After the notification, the officer is able to leave while the TIPS volunteer remains with the family for the next several hours to provide emotional and physical support. In just the Arizona Chapter in Prescott Valley, TIPS volunteers responded to 314 death related calls last year.

Currently there are 20 regional TIP chapters within 8 states - Arizona, California, Florida, Oregon, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Washington. The program has received national awards, including the "Innovations in State and Local Government" from Harvard University and Ford Foundation, as well as a "Crime Victim Service Award" from the U.S. Department of Justice.

For more information about the program, as well as how your jurisdiction could start its own TIPS chapter, go to <http://www.tipnational.org>





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 recently became engaged to her boyfriend Marc, and the two are planning a wedding for the summer of 2009. Congratulations Dianna!

Heather Courtney (2006) - Heather and her husband Jesse Falcomeni became the proud parents of a healthy baby boy on May 1, 2008. Blake William Falcomeni weighed in at 8 lb. 12 oz.! Happily, Mom, Dad, and baby Blake are all doing fine and Heather recently returned to work as the victim-witness coordinator in the Baltimore City States Attorney's Office.

Karen Crawley-Buckholtz (2005) - Karen recently had extensive surgery on her cervical spine. Thankfully, the operation went well and she is now able to walk with the aid of a walker. Always the fighter, Karen is planning on returning to work in the next few months. If you would like to drop her a note of encouragement, you can email her at buckholt@djs.state.md.us ... get better soon Karen, we are all praying for your full recovery!

Diedre Gardner (2006) - Diedre, who was formally with the Family Bereavement Center, recently accepted a position as the Coordinator of Victim Services at the Maryland Crime Victim Resource Center. Congratulations Diedre!

Maria Gonzalez-Ruiz (2006) - Maria got married this past June 21st down in Florida and is happily adjusting to married life. Congratulations Maria, we wish you and your new hubby all the best!

Sophia Kosh (2007) - Sophia was recently accepted into the Doctoral of Education in Counseling Psychology program at Argosy University. She has already finished her first

class and is eager to learn more. Congratulations Sophia, we wish you all the best in your studies and can't wait to hear of your graduation!

Kathy Masterson (2004) - Kathy recently had shoulder surgery and sent the following note to the Alumni Association - "*Dear Academy Alumni and Staff: Please know that your kind thoughts and well wishes following my recent surgery are deeply appreciated. And the tulips were absolutely beautiful! It is not lost on me that I am blessed to know so many truly caring people. I was struggling following the surgery, and was in a great deal of pain. Your gift arrived at the perfect time. It was so comforting to know that you were thinking of me. It was exactly the 'medicine' I needed. With heartfelt thanks, Kathy*" ... We're so happy you're back on your feet Kathy!

Debbie Neighoff (2005) - Debbie has played an integral role in broadening the VOICE program in the Division of Corrections. VOICE, which stands for Victim Offender Impact of Crime Education program, incorporates 10 lesson plans that cover topics such as assault, drunk driving, homicide, etc. One integral component of the program are victim impact panels in which victims come into the prison to tell inmates their story and let them know how crime affects not only the victim, but also family members and the community. This past June, 29 new VOICE instructors were trained. As a result, nearly every DOC facility will now be able to offer VOICE, however, the facilities need the support of victim advocates by educating victims about the program and encouraging them to become panel members. For more information, please contact Debbie at dneighoff@dpscs.state.md.us

Nicole Quinn (2006) - Nicole became the proud mother of a beautiful baby girl, Olivia Grace, on May 13, 2008. Both Mom and baby Olivia are doing great. Congratulations Nicole, we send the both of you a big hug!

Rosemary Raiman (2004) - Rosemary was recently recognized in the 2008 Who's Who in America and Who's Who in American Women. Rosemary, who has worked as a victim advocate for over a decade in Charles County, was among the first 200 advocates to be nationally credentialled, and is one of only nine nationally credentialled advocates in the state of Maryland. Rosemary is a founder of the Charles County Silent Witness Program and co-coordinator for the Maryland Network Domestic Violence Legal Advocates Task Force. She has been the recipient of numerous awards over her career, including a Governor's Citation and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault Hats Off Award. For her accomplishments, she is currently under consideration for inclusion in the 2009 Who's

Who in the World. Congratulations for all of your accomplishments Rosemary!!

Sarah Rickter (2004) - Sarah earned her Masters degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice this past May from the University of Baltimore. Well done Sarah, you did it!

Vince & Roberta Roper - On July 12th, Vince and Roberta celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Happy Anniversary, we send you a heartfull of love!

Debbie Tall (2004) - Debbie recently celebrated her 31st anniversary of working in the criminal justice system, and will celebrate her 29th wedding anniversary with her wonderful husband Ben this August. That is indeed reason to celebrate! Congratulations Debbie!

Diane Wilkins (2007) - Diane recently became a Grandma again, with the birth of her second grandson Jordan this past February. Then in June, she celebrated her son's graduation from high-school. Diane will continue the celebration with her birthday this August. What a great year Diane! Congrats!!

News From the Field (continued from page 2)

* Under Rule 4-263 (d)(6)(C) to what extent, if any are the "material or information in any form, whether or not admissible" that "tends to impeach" the witness obtained through "system based victim services" required to be provided to the defendant to show that the witness has a prior criminal conviction, pending charges, or probationary status?

* If a witness receives counseling from a licensed social worker employed by the State's Attorneys Office (or a law enforcement agency), is that communication privileged under Courts Article 9-121 or is that communication subject to disclosure under the discovery obligations?

* To what extent will "system based victim services" staff inform witnesses of the discovery obligations of the State's Attorney and what effect will this chill a witness' cooperation with system based victim staff?

* Clearly, these changes to the discovery obligations in criminal cases may have serious consequences for system based advocates.



Save the Date

“Death Notifications: Delivering the News with Compassion” - a one-day training opportunity

Thursday, August 7, 2008; Harford County Sheriff’s Office Training Academy, Harford Community College, 401 Thomas Run Road, Bel Air, MD.

This is a free training but only 25 openings are available. For more information, please contact the Harford County Sheriff’s Office Training Academy at (410) 638-3860.

Victim Information and Notification Everyday [VINE] Training

Tuesday, August 19, 2008; Workshop #1 - 9:00am - 11:00am; Workshop #2 - 1:00pm - 3:00pm; Maryland State Police Barrack D, 1401 Bel Air Road, Bel Air, MD.

The Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention is sponsoring a free training for any one who is interested in learning more about the VINE program and how to help victims of crime use it. Participants just need to attend one of the two workshops offered.

Seating is limited - please RSVP by no later than August 12th to Kristy Shields at kshields@appriss.com. Include your name, title, email address, and the location and session time you would like to attend.

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Women of Color Network’s 3rd Annual Statewide Conference

Thursday, August 21, 2008; Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, North Bethesda, MD. Theme - “East Meets West - Cross Cultural Perspectives Towards Addressing and Preventing Sexual Assault”

This one day advocacy based conference is designed to address and engage communities of color about sexual assault, its prevalence in

those communities, and what strategies can be adopted to address and prevent it.

The conference fee is \$35, and includes all meals, parking, training materials, and certificate. For more information, please email Kathy at kathy@mcasa.org or call (410) 974-4507 ext. 102, or download a registration form at www.mcasa.org

“In Plain Sight” - A One-day Seminar presented by the Baltimore County Department of Social Services and The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Friday, September 26, 2008, 8:30am - 4:30pm; Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2004 Greenspring Drive, Timonium, MD.

This one day seminar offers participants the opportunity to attend a morning and afternoon workshop on topics such as: Innovations in Forensic Technology, Faith Based Communities Response to DV, When Immigration Becomes a Challenge, Animal Abuse: A New Perspective, etc.

Cost for the seminar is \$35. For more information, please contact Christina Emrick Bauer at (410) 853-3033.

34th Annual National Organization for Victim Assistance Conference

September 28 - October 2, 2008; The Galt House, Louisville, Kentucky. Theme: “Advocacy: Turning Survivors into Thrivers”

For more information and registration form, go to www.trynova.com

The Maryland Crime Victim Resource Center’s 5th Annual “Chocolate Affair”

Saturday, October 17, 2008, 6:30 - 9:30pm; the Florian Hall, Bowie, MD.

Come enjoy the fantastic food and the silent and live auctions! For more information, please contact MDVRC at (410) 234-9885.

2009 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week

April 26 - May 2, 2009. A few of the scheduled events: OVC’s National Observance and Candlelight Ceremony - April 23; Attorney Gen-

eral’s Crime Victims’ Service Awards Ceremony - April 24.

Did you know 2009 marks the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)?

Congratulations 2008 Roper Victims Assistance Academy Graduates!



On June 6th, 2008, we welcomed another 45 wonderful individuals to the RVAAM Alumni Association as they successfully completed the 40-hour training curriculum of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy. This was the second largest class to graduate from

the Academy, and one of the most diverse both professionally and demographically. Would you believe we had NINE men attend!

The group was energetic and engaged, and even demonstrated a wicked sense of competitiveness during Dave Betz’s collaboration exercise. However, Valda and Heather (the resident dorm mom’s) could have warned Dave of that fact since they were witness to a number of the class members’ fierce competitive spirit during the impromptu Family Feud Tournament. But during the day, the students were all business as they participated in active discussions on a range of victim services and victims rights issues, such as the spiritual consequences of victimization (led by Father Ray Chase) or the mental health issues associated with trauma (led by Lisa Ferentz).

This year, the students also got to experience a few new training modules, including a field trip to the *Illuminations Gallery* in Timonium, MD to see an exhibition created by two brothers who had been sexually victimized by a family friend, who in turn created a series of artwork to help educate the community about the consequences of childhood sexual victimization. Another new training module highlighted an innovative program from King County, Washington, that uses facility dogs to assist victims of violent crime through the prosecutorial process. We even were fortunate enough to have Jeeter and his handler and founder of the program, Ellen O’Neill-

Stephens, demonstrate some of his many 'tricks' for the students. By the end of his visit, Jeeter definitely had his own fan club.

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. Dave Betz gave a wonderful (and tear jerking) keynote address on how we can remain dedicated to the field by always remembering the reason we became involved in the first place. 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 Kim Vasco, the founding president of the RVAAM Alumni Association, who helped lay the foundation for the Alumni Association and created its vision; another to Bonnie Robertson, the outgoing president of the RVAAM Alumni Association, who readily stepped in when Kim resigned and made that vision a reality; 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 2008 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.

A Message from the President ... Valda Rotolo

Dear Fellow Alum,

I am writing to invite each of you to share your ideas with me to help build the Alumni Association into something beneficial to all of us. I am excited to serve as your President and look forward to hearing about your ideas and working together to continue to develop an Association that will support our professional needs. I believe together we can establish the first nationally recognized victim service provider network.

I know from attending the Academy each year there are so many creative and caring people who work in the field of Victim Services. Please take a few minutes to email, fax or call me. This is your organization and your voice should be heard, I truly believe that so often the best ideas go unheard, let's not let that happen with yours!

I know that to build a strong organization we need to work together. One of the ways that we can begin to work together is to participate in some of the planning activities throughout the year. There are many levels to participate in the Alumni Association; one way is to serve on an Executive Board sub-committee. I want to encourage you to join us on one of these committees as a way to connect with your fellow alumni, and also to be a part of the building process in establishing a professional association. The more we continue to network and work together as a group of professional service providers, the better we can serve our victims and survivors. If you are unable to participate due to scheduled meetings, then share your ideas via the internet or telephone. I hope that you will feel comfortable enough to reach out and make contact with me so that your interests and professional needs can be included when planning future training and events through the Alumni Association.

It is time for the Alumni to take ownership of *our* organization. It is not, nor should it be one person's responsibility to be the sole voice for all of us. We all need to take a small bit of ownership, so that as an organization we develop. Each day on the news I hear this is the **TIME FOR CHANGE**. I believe it. Kim and Bonnie have built a solid foundation during their terms as President of the Alumni Association. Now is the time for us to change the face of our profession and establish ourselves as serious professionals. So please, join me in making the Association one of the fastest growing, professional organizations across the United States. I would like every other state to join us in building a nationally recognized Alumni Organization. United we can provide the best service to victims and motivate others to learn what we know so they may better serve their community.

Thank you, and I look forward to working with you ~

Valda



Coming August 1st - The Academy's New Website!!!

After a year of planning and design, the Academy will finally launch its new website on August 1st! The site, www.rvaam.org, will not only

provide the community with information about the Academy, but it will also provide a place for the Alumni Association to highlight all of its activities and resources. The site will also host an electronic edition of the most recent "Academy Forum," as well as a copy of the updated Alumni Directory. When the new application is published for the 2009 Academy, a copy will also be made available on the site, thus allowing Alumni to direct potential recruits to the site to not only learn about the Academy but be able to download an application form directly.

Ultimately, we want this website to serve as a vehicle that Alumni can use to help remain in contact with one another. Over the next year, we will explore additional ways to expand the site to further promote networking opportunities. In the meantime, if you have any training announcements or come across a job opportunity you would like to share with your peers, please email Heather at hpfeifer@ubalt.edu or rvaam@mac.com so she can post the information.

We are really excited about our new site and we hope you will take the time to visit it each month to see what's the latest news!

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 Tania Golocovsky, a recent graduate of the 2008 Academy

My childhood nickname was ... Dulce

My least favorite things to do is ... clean up after my grown younger brother :)

My favorite indulgence is ... Only one? Hmm - cupcake with vanilla or strawberry frosting.

Best piece of advice I ever got ... Always be compassionate, even to those who have done you wrong.

My motto or favorite saying is ... Let it be ... Let it be

The last book I read was ... "Anger" by Thich Nhat Hanh. A phenomenal book on learning to identify and release emotions in a healthy controlled manner.

My favorite retreat is ... anywhere outdoors where I cannot hear cars

My childhood ambition was ... to be a marine biologist and tango dancer!

My favorite food is ... Asado Argentino (aka Argentine BBQ).

What I love about my job is ... constantly learning about human nature in different scenarios.

My greatest accomplishment thus far is ... my cultural awareness.

I appreciate ... Mother Nature and all her gifts.

The biggest challenge for me is ... not knowing when

to say "no" to family and friends when I'm already swamped.

My inspiration is ... people who live to care for others - like my Mother.

The occupation, other than the one I am currently in, I would want is... working for National Geographic as a travel photographer.

The occupation I would certainly not like to have is ... slime eel fisherman :)

My proudest moment ... when I became a big sister.

My wildest dream ... to charter a boat through Europe and having the locals show me around, just like the Travel Channel!

The soundtrack that best exemplifies my life is ... Rainbows by Radiohead - it's laid back but energetic.

One of my goals for 2008 is... to enter a Masters program in Social Work

2009 RVAAM Date Announced!

We are pleased to announce that the 6th Annual Roper Victim Assistance Academy will be held June 1-5, 2009, at the Maryland Public Safety Training and Education Center in Sykesville, MD. We hope you will help spread the word and recruit members for the upcoming class. Applications will be available in January 2009.

Alumni Directory

The 2008 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, has just been completed and 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. We will then publish those changes in the following newsletter.

We Need Your Help!

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
Heather Courtney — Assistant Editor
Alicia Johnson-Davis - Assistant Editor
Bonnie Robertson - Assistant Editor
Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor

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