

THE SATELLITE

Winter 2010 / 2011 Vol. 2 Issue 2



A publication of the Albany County
Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center



Celebrating 35 Years of Service



The Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center celebrated 35 years of service in 2010. Many events were put together to showcase CVSVC's services and their continued involvement in the community. Posters were displayed in the County Office building at 112 State Street on the topics of male victimization, domestic violence, Take Back The Night and volunteer opportunities with the Center. A Family Fun Day was held in August at the Shaker Heritage site. Local bands and artists performed, and there were carnival games and prizes for the children. A raffle of donated items and services topped off the event. In addition, CVSVC partnered with Equinox and the Upstate Artists Guild to host a gallery show depicting art supporting the Center's message. Equinox even brought their *In Her Shoes* project. It was a year of saying thank you for all the Center has done!



Family Fun Day at Shaker Heritage Society
August 3, 2010

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence had its beginning as a volunteer agency named AWARE - Albany Women Against Rape. In 1975, by a resolution of the Albany County Legislature, the Albany County Rape Crisis Center (RCC) became a department of Albany County government. Since then the Center's mission has expanded to include prevention education (1982), treatment to child victims of sexual abuse (1985), and the Center's inclusion as part of the first domestic violence prosecution team in Albany County (1997). In 1989 the Comprehensive Crime Victims Assistance Program (CCVAP) was created, providing advocacy to victims of crime. In 2001 the Center's name was changed to its current title to reflect the broad range of victims served.

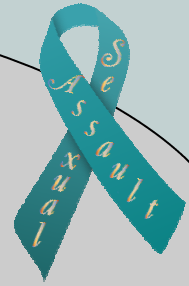


Gallery Show at Upstate Artists Guild
October 29, 2010

The **Mission of the Albany County Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center** is to provide direct and comprehensive services to victims of sexual assault or other violent crimes on a 24-hour basis, and to raise community consciousness of the crime of rape and sexual abuse through prevention education. The Center also assists other victims of personal violence, including adults and children abused in domestic relationships.



April is:
Sexual Assault Awareness Month
National Crime Victims' Rights Week
April 10 - 16
Volunteer Recognition Week
April 10 - 16



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



This is a period of transition for us at CVSVC. With Debra Schramek's retirement and Philomena Moriarty moving on to new challenges, we are restructuring how we provide some of our services. Thanks to hotline volunteers Barbara Lasch and Lauren Touhey for offering to assist with some of the Volunteer Coordinator tasks. We are working with the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) to revamp our volunteer program, and the results have been exciting! We will be changing our training program and incorporating more on-line learning that the trainees can do at their convenience, focusing the face-to-face training on critical experiences such as role plays and hospital tours. We hope this makes the training more dynamic and reflective of the time constraints we all have. We welcome any feedback from current volunteers on this new project.

We are pleased to welcome Marjorie Raymond to our team. Marjorie will assist the Center's staff in coordinating the volunteer program and will handle various administrative tasks. Marjorie retired from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller as an Assistant Director of Information Technology Services in July 2010. She is looking forward to using her knowledge and experience to support the Center's programs.

Joanne Gulum and volunteer Allison Chansky have been hard at work on the "Survivors of Homicide: Informational Guide". This is a terrific resource for the community of victims we serve who have lost a family member to homicide. This is such a traumatic experience that we wanted to provide people with vital information to assist them in dealing with the myriad details that crop up after a sudden death.

Amy Vincent is wrapping up the Department of Criminal Justice Services grant to train first responders, law enforcement, court personnel and community service providers on best practices for victim contact. We have just started a new five year grant with the Department of Health on sexual assault prevention education, and we are collaborating with Planned Parenthood, Trinity Institution, Community Maternity Services and the Next Step to provide support groups to young women at risk.

We hope that everyone stays safe and has an opportunity to enjoy some warm spring days in the coming weeks..

~ Karen Ziegler

NYS Bricks Dedication Ceremony

April 8, 2011

1pm-3pm

The NYS Bricks Dedication Ceremony is Friday, April 8, from 1pm-3pm. The New York State Crime Victims' Memorial, paying tribute to loved-ones who were killed or injured as a result of crime, is set on the grounds of the Empire State Plaza in Albany.

The monument contains the following inscription:

*Dedicated to all New York State Men, Women and Children and their families who are victims of crime.
May Justice Prevail.*

To purchase a brick for \$50, send an email to nyscrimevictimbrickdedication@gmail.com.

The Albany County Crime Victims Memorial: Celebration of Remembrance

April 14, 2011

Noon

The annual celebration honoring those persons in Albany County affected by crime will be at 12 o'clock on Thursday, April 14, in Academy Park, across from Albany City Hall.

**30th annual **

Take Back the Night

April 14, 2011

5pm-8pm

Take Back The Night (TBTN) is an annual rally and march against sexual violence. Take Back The Night is dedicated to all survivors of sexual assault, to those living in fear and/or enduring assault, and to the friends and families of those who have lost their lives at the hands of an attacker.

In 2010, Take Back The Night took place on the campus of Sage College in Albany. Carol DiMambro, a professor in the criminal justice department, helped organize students to lead Take Back The Night as part of a service learning project. It was estimated that 300 people of all ages were in attendance.

Plans are underway by CVSVC staff and volunteers for this year's event. Take Back The Night will be co-sponsored and hosted this year by the College of St. Rose and will take place Thursday, April 14, on the college campus located at 432 Western Ave in Albany.

Law Day Run

April 28, 2011

5:30pm

The annual 5K Capital District Bar Association Run Against Domestic Violence will be on Thursday, April 28, in Albany's Washington Park. Last year's event included over 250 runners and over 40 volunteers, many of them CVSVC staff and volunteers. All funds raised are used to support victims of domestic violence. To register contact:

www.albanycountybar.com/img/document_files/RACE.FLY.pdf

A CVSVC VOLUNTEER'S EXPERIENCE

I was sitting in my Criminal Law class today, and we were discussing rape laws and how they've changed over time. My teacher used several case examples, and my friend and I had a discussion about it over dinner.

Within the last few weeks, I've learned that my time at the internship was even more valuable than I originally thought. It's more than another bullet point on my resume, or something to brag about to potential graduate schools. Even though I was only there for a couple of months, I learned a lot. Sitting in my classes and discussing the rape laws that are around today, I'm learning how many misconceptions exist.

These college-educated individuals still appear to be so ignorant when it comes to rape. For example, my friend didn't think a woman had been raped, because she had asked the rapist to use a condom. She couldn't seem to understand the fact that there is more than just a physical threat when it comes to rape. I envisioned this man verbally threatening her, in any number of ways. She knew that rape was inevitable, and she was trying to protect herself as well as she could during such circumstances. My friend believed that because she gave the rapist a condom to use, she wasn't raped. Somehow my friend's mind had convinced her that by trying to protect herself from something that she viewed as inevitable, the victim was consenting.

And I know that my friend is not the only person who possesses such ignorant views. Many people in my class appeared to be outraged when my teacher informed us that some believe rape should be punishable by death; as if rape could never be bad enough to allow for such severe punishment of the perpetrator. Maybe they don't read the horror stories that are constantly in the news, or maybe they hold the almost caveman view that women are somehow "asking for it."

All I know is that prior to this internship, I would have held the same views as my peers. But thanks to those valuable months I spent with your Center, I now feel much more educated.

Thank you so much for the opportunity. It was truly invaluable.

(Used with author's permission)

HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL OUR MANY CURRENT AND PAST DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

Our comprehensive services include victim advocacy, assistance with NYS Office of Victim Services applications, confidential counseling, referrals and information, a 24-hour sexual assault hotline, education programs and volunteer opportunities.

In 2010 CVSVC staff and volunteers handled almost 200 hotline calls, accompanied more than 70 sexual assault victims to hospitals, and advocated for almost 1800 new crime victims.

All Services are Free and Confidential

CRIME VICTIM COMPENSATION

Did you know that a victim of a crime who files a report with any criminal justice agency may be entitled to compensation under New York State law through the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS)?

OVS compensates thousands of innocent victims and their families each year. In an effort to help reduce some of the stress that comes along with being a victim of a crime, CVSVC staff will meet with victims and their families to assist in completing and filing the OVS application and facilitate the process to receive compensation. Staff members can also keep victims updated on OVS claims once an application has been filed.

There are three simple steps to receiving OVS compensation: 1) meet the eligibility requirements, 2) have a compensable out-of-pocket loss that is the result of a crime and 3) complete an application. Specific eligibility requirements include being an innocent victim, being a child witness of a crime, incurring a physical injury as a result of a crime, being under the age of 18, being over the age of 60, having a disability, or being a relative or dependent of a crime victim. Specific types of compensation include payments for medical and counseling expenses, loss or damage of essential personal property, domestic violence shelters, moving expenses, burial and funeral expenses, lost wages or support of a significant other, occupational/vocational rehabilitation, crime scene cleanup or Good Samaritan property losses.

OVS may also compensate for other types of crimes that may not involve personal physical injury, such as unlawful imprisonment, kidnapping, stalking, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, victims of terrorist attacks outside the United States or victims of frivolous law suits filed against the victim.

Applications and information are available at the CVSVC office or may be downloaded from the OVS website at <http://www.ovs.ny.gov/HelpforCrimeVictims/Application.aspx>.

Article written by Bernard Amador, Supervising Crime Victim Caseworker

STRANGULATION AND THE LAW

Strangulation is recognized to be one of the most lethal displays of power and control in domestic violence relationships. Strangulation, or “choking” as it is often incorrectly referred to, produces not only devastating psychological effects but also potentially fatal consequences. The physical effects of strangulation may not be readily visible. Such effects may include voice changes, difficult or painful swallowing, and difficulty breathing. Visible physical injuries, which are often not immediately apparent, may include bruising, scratches, and ruptured capillaries.

Up until recently strangulation was lumped in with the existing penal law, under charges of “harassment” or “assault”. Taking effect in late 2010 were three new charges meant to address the truly serious nature of strangulation. Now this behavior is a crime in and of itself, carrying stiffer penalties than an assault or harassment charge. These new crimes are *Criminal obstruction of breathing or blood circulation*, Class A Misdemeanor, *Strangulation in the second degree*, Class D Felony, and *Strangulation in the first degree*, Class C Felony. The law defines the misdemeanor charge as “applies pressure on the throat or neck” or “blocks the nose or mouth” of the victim with the “intent to impede the normal breathing or circulation of the blood”. At the felony level, the victim must experience stupor, physical injury or impairment, or loss of consciousness (Strangulation in the second degree). “Serious physical injury” to a victim is the highest felony charge (Strangulation in the first degree).

While laws meant to hold batterers accountable for their actions are not perfect, this acknowledgement of strangulation as a crime in and of itself is yet another step in the right direction. For more information contact the NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) at nyscadv@nyscadv.org or www.nyscadv.org.

Article written by Amanda Petrie, Caseworker, Domestic Violence Specialist

CONTACT INFO

Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center

112 State Street, Room 1100
Albany, NY 12207

Main: (518) 447-7100

Crime Victims: (518) 447-5500

Fax: (518) 447-7102

Email: cvsvc@albanycounty.com

Website:

www.albanycounty.com/cvsvc

**24-HOUR SEXUAL
ASSAULT HOTLINE
(518) 447-7716**

CRIME VICTIMS IN ALBANY COUNTY CAN USE YOUR HELP!

Volunteers are needed to staff the 24-hour sexual assault hotline, to accompany sexual assault victims to area hospital emergency departments and police stations, and to be court advocates for victims of violent crime.

The Center offers training for both hotline volunteers and volunteer court advocates.

Court Advocate Volunteer

Volunteer court advocates are trained in the workings of the criminal justice system and the emotional issues of victimization.

Hotline Volunteer

Hotline volunteers staff the 24-hour sexual assault hotline and accompany sexual assault victims to area hospitals and police stations.

Office Volunteer

Office volunteers assist in the Center's everyday functioning.

If interested in volunteering please complete the application found on our website and return it to the address above.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: *AMY VINCENT*



Amy Vincent's interest in the subject of sexual assault began when she was in college at SUNY Buffalo, as a result of coordinating several Take Back The Night rallies and her work with an on-campus agency that provided education on healthy life choices. This brought her into contact with rape survivors. "When you hear someone's story, it makes you want to do something." Amy joined CVSVC as Prevention Educator shortly after completing her Master's degree.

Amy coordinates the Albany region's annual Take Back The Night rally and march. She does presentations at schools, businesses and organizations to help raise awareness of the issues of crimes and dispel the many public misconceptions about sexual violence. She has noticed that people have become more involved in helping an individual who is being victimized. She continues to work with and support sexual assault victims. She has learned that "being a victim does not mean you are powerless", and that victims "can make positive strides".

Outside of her work at CVSVC, dancing is an important part of her life, and Amy has showcased her talents at many public venues. She also enjoys playing with her dog and spending time with her family. She would like others to know that she loves her job and what she does.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: *SAINT ROSE'S WOMEN'S INITIATIVE*



The Women's Initiative at the College of Saint Rose offers programs and activities that celebrate the contributions and talents of women in the Saint Rose community. The group strives to promote awareness and advocacy regarding women's issues both on and off-campus by providing dynamic and proactive responses to the interests, questions, and concerns students both explore and present. The group is committed to serving the needs of women both on campus and in the community by providing leadership opportunities in the form of service work and social justice activities.

The Women's Initiative is committed to exploring the issues which concern both women and men on campus in our promotion of gender equality. Therefore, we invite students of all backgrounds, men and women, to join us in our endeavors. We believe that collaboration and solidarity among men and women is vital to achieving our goals both within the organization and around the world

*For more information, visit <http://www.strose.edu/officesandresources/diversity/officeofinterculturalleadership/womensinitiative>