



A Message from the State Victim Advocate

Domestic Violence in the State of Connecticut has been and continues to be an epidemic. There have been several horrific tragedies in the last week alone - domestic related murders, police standoffs, arrests AND release of several career domestic violence defendants, not to mention the recent derogatory comments by the defense team in the Marriott rape case.

And all the while OVA has been preparing a lengthy investigative report in response to yet another senseless domestic murder in 2007, which will be released in the beginning of October 2009. The report identifies gaps in services to domestic violence victims.

There is a solution.

Violations of Protective Orders and Restraining Orders are the ONLY charge where there is an underlying, prerequisite, identified element of violence. We in the criminal justice field know for a fact these charges involve a threat to the protected party. As such, when the Court, State's Attorney, and law enforcement are faced with violations of these orders, there needs to be a swift, immediate response, which includes an immobilization of the perpetrator. Experience has shown the perpetrator will test the responsiveness to violations of the order, and when there is none, will continue to escalate. We can no longer demand victims of domestic violence to continually beg the government to respond to violations - there needs to be a zero tolerance to domestic violence. The remedies include IMMEDIATE ARREST OF THE OFFENDERS, HIGH BOND, HOUSE ARREST WITH GPS monitoring, and/or INCARCERATION to those who have violated Orders or who have a history of violence and are before the Court on a new domestic related charge.

It has been twenty-six years since the tragedies of Torrington, Connecticut and the assault on Tracey Thurman's life after which we promised we would change the landscape of domestic violence protection - we have not. The changes in laws are clear, but not the attitudes and ramifications of violations of these laws. We cannot simply allow victims to die, live in fear, and go without protection.

Additionally, for victims who are considering leaving, we who populate the Courts, State's Attorney's Offices, law enforcement departments, and victim service agencies, need to continually advise these victims to work with domestic violence professionals regarding safety planning and steps to take to keep safe. Victims of domestic violence need to know that they are not alone and we are all resources for them.

Melanie Ilene Rieger Conference

The 13th Annual Melanie Ilene Rieger Conference was held on May 13 - 14, 2009 at the CT DOC Maloney Center for Training & Staff Development in Cheshire. This year's co-themes were: "Surviving Victimization: Transforming Victimization into Advocacy" and "Hate Crimes: Schools and Communities at Risk".

Some of the guest speakers that attended this year's conference were: Mildred Muhammed, the D.C. Sniper's wife and founder of After the Trauma, Inc.; Christine McFadden, who returned to the conference with an inspirational message based on the violent murders of her 4 children and then the birth of a new family of twins; Marc Klaas, President of the Klaas Kids Foundation who discussed "Human Trafficking"; George Adams, Missing Persons Coordinator at the University of North Texas who provided groundbreaking information on "New Tools Available for Families of Violent Crime featuring NamUs".

For more information on the Melanie Ilene Rieger Conference, please visit their website at: www.melanieriegerconference.com

Inside this issue:

Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)	2
Best Practices of Advocating for Crime Victims	3
DOC Committed to Victims & their Survivors	4
Back to School Safety Tips	5
Upcoming Events	6

USEFUL RESOURCES:

- [Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(CCADV\)](#)
- [Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services \(CONNSACS\)](#)
- [Mothers Against Drunk Driving \(MADD\)](#)
- [Survivors of Homicide](#)
- [Students Against Violence Everywhere \(SAVE\)](#)

A Great Resource for Students, Teachers & the Community!



MISSION:

“The National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), Inc. is a nonprofit organization striving to decrease the potential for violence in schools and communities by promoting meaningful student involvement, education and service opportunities in efforts to establish, support and grow SAVE chapters”.

About SAVE:

The National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), Inc. was started in 1989 by Angela Bynum, a student, and Gary Weart, a teacher, from West Charlotte High School in North Carolina in memory of fellow student Alex Orange. Alex was shot while trying to break up a fight at an off-campus party. The students from West Charlotte High School took the initiative to create a violence prevention program, so Alex’s tragic death was not “just another statistic”. The colors of SAVE are orange and purple, which represent Alex Orange and peace.

The SAVE program focuses on three primary areas for K-12 as well as college students. Those three areas of focus are:

- Crime Prevention
- Conflict Management
- Service Projects

SAVE in schools:

In elementary schools, SAVE can be part of the school day by integrating activities and lessons into the current curriculum. SAVE chapters in middle and high schools meet during or after school to plan activities to promote safer learning environments.

College chapters typically meet in the evenings once or twice a month and establish service projects and awareness campaigns around how to stay safe on and around campus, as well as continuing outreach to local schools and community-based organizations.

“PROMISING” Strategy for schools

A recent evaluation of SAVE conducted by the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI) in Los Angeles, CA, concluded that SAVE improves school environments by teaching students how to manage and resolve conflict, thereby reducing violence and helping more students get involved in safer school efforts. ETI stated that students who participate in SAVE demonstrate increased self-esteem and confidence, conflict resolution skills, presentation/public speaking skills, and knowledge about difference violence prevention strategies.

In the ETI study, the majority of students reported that they joined SAVE to improve the school environment by making the school a safer place.

Currently, there are approximately 33 states in the US that have SAVE chapters. To learn more about how to start a chapter and learn more about this great resource, please contact:

National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)

322 Chapanoke Road, Suite 110

Raleigh, NC 27603

Toll Free: (866) 343-SAVE

(919) 661-7777

Email: cwray@nationalsave.org

Visit their website at: www.nationalsave.org

SAVE: Back to School Safety Guide

****Please Note: All information has been obtained from the www.nationalsave.org website.**

“Best Practices of Advocating for Crime Victims”

On June 19, 2009, the Office of the Victim Advocate sponsored the first annual “Best Practices of Advocating for Crime Victims” seminar. This free seminar was held at the Legislative Office Building and provided a networking opportunity for victim advocates, as well as a chance to broaden their knowledge of key players in the criminal justice system. The seminar started with opening remarks from State Victim Advocate, Michelle Cruz, followed by keynote speaker Beverlee Dacey. Panel members briefly addressed previously submitted questions and gave a synopsis of their roles in the system. The day ended with yoga techniques by West Hartford Yoga coach Sarah Powers. Sarah provided the group with simple techniques an individual can do anytime or anyplace to relieve stress. Additionally, Michelle Cruz provided information on burn-out prevention. Approximately 45 attendees from various victim service agencies throughout Connecticut attended this one-day seminar.



Michelle Cruz, Esq.
State Victim Advocate

The Office of the Victim Advocate would like to thank the following panel members for their participation: (alphabetical order)



- *John Duffey, Department of Corrections - Victim Services Unit*



- *Eric Ellison, Parole & Community Service Division*



- *Trooper Todd Gauvin, Connecticut State Police*



- *Judge Susan B. Handy, New London Superior Court*



Sarah Powers
West Hartford Yoga



- *Tracey Kelly, Witness Protection Unit*



- *Richard J. Kenny, Kenny, O’Keefe & Usseglio, P.C.*



- *Joanne Lewis, Connecticut Legal Services, Inc*



- *Scott J. Murphy, New Britain State’s Attorneys Office*



- *William Silk, Safe at Home Program*

Additionally, the OVA would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our Keynote Speaker, Beverlee Dacey, who lost her mother tragically by a drunk driver on April 6, 2005. Beverlee came to the seminar sharing her experiences, challenges and her voice to express the difficulties faced by crime victims every day across the state.



*“I didn’t like being labeled a victim,
it bothered me tremendously.”*

Department of Corrections

Committed to Victims and their Survivors A Message from the Commissioner of DOC

In a classroom at the Robinson Correctional Institution in Enfield, a group of 25 adult male offenders silently take in a painful story of incest. Committed by a step-father, it destroyed a young girl's childhood, crushing her self-esteem and leading to a number of destructive choices as she matured. The story is being told by a woman in her 40's. She was and remains the victim. Her message to the inmates is two-fold. First, if this happened to you, come forward and get the help you need. But in this session of the V.O.I.C.E.S program the second moral to the story was far more direct. If you were the abuser, you need to know and understand what you have done to your victim.

V.O.I.C.E.S, which stands for Victim Offender Institutional Correctional Educational Services is a key program within the Connecticut Department of Correction and is indicative of the agency's long standing and continuing commitment to the rights of victims and their survivors. Offered at more than a half dozen facilities it utilizes volunteers to broaden an inmate's understanding of and sensitivity to the impact of their crime on others. Within the Department's Administrative Directives, as part of its Mission and Vision is the statement, "We accord victims the empathy, dignity, and respect they deserve, as well as a voice in correctional policy." The agency's adherence to that responsibility takes a number of other forms in addition to the V.O.I.C.E.S program, chief among them its Victim's Services Unit. Any victim of crime, their survivor or representative may confidentially register with the DOC Victim Services Unit, and request notification when an inmate is released, escapes or is scheduled for a sentence review or parole hearing. Additionally, the Unit will request victim input anytime an offender is being considered for a discretionary release, and will, when requested by the victim, arrange a one on one meeting between victim and offender. Those affected by crime are notified of this support mechanism through the Judicial Branch and its Office of Victim Services, and it is also prominently featured on the Department of Correction web page at www.ct.gov/doc.

Currently more than 3,500 individuals are registered with the Victim's Services Unit. The Department has hosted the Melanie Ilene Rieger Conference for many years. Unfortunately, the state's current budgetary constraints will not allow the Department of Correction to host the 2010 edition of the Conference, however the agency has pledged to remain as a key supporter and expects that its staff will again be a major component of the audience. The Connecticut Department of Correction Reentry Model and its mission statement require it to provide offenders with the opportunities that support successful community reintegration. The agency considers an understanding of the effects of crime and violence to be among those opportunities. As a mother who had lost her son to a drunk driver said after she addressed a V.O.I.C.E.S. class, "It provided me the opportunity to feel like what I went through had some meaning. By sharing my story, I was able to impact offenders so that they would better understand my feelings and then be less likely to reoffend."



Back to School Safety Tips



The following safety tips are adapted from an original American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Traveling to and from school:

If your child is riding the School Bus

- ◆ If your child's bus has lap/shoulder seat belts, make sure your child uses one at all times when in the bus. Stay seated while the bus is moving.
- ◆ Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- ◆ Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing.
- ◆ Make sure to always remain in clear view of the bus driver.

Car Rides

- ◆ All passengers should wear a seat belt and/or an age- and size appropriate car safety seat or booster.
- ◆ Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then in a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a booster seat when they have reached the top weight or height allowed for their seat, their shoulders are above the top harness slots, or their ears have reached the top of the seat.
- ◆ Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4'9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age).
- ◆ All children under 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles.

Is your child riding their Bike

- ◆ Always wear a bike helmet, no matter how short or long the ride and where bright color clothing to increase visibility.
- ◆ Ride on the right, in the same direction as traffic.
- ◆ Use appropriate hand signals and know the "rules of the road". Respect traffic lights and stop signs.

Walking

- ◆ Make sure your child's walk to a school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.
- ◆ Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
- ◆ Wear bright colored clothing to make your child more visible to drivers.
- ◆ If you are able use the "buddy system" (have your child walk with a friend, so they are not alone)

Bullying:

When your child is bullied

- ◆ Help your child learn how to respond by teaching your child how to:
 - *Look the bully in the eye, Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation and walk away.
- ◆ Teach your child how to say in a firm voice: "I don't like what you are doing," "Please do NOT talk to me like that," "Why would you say that?"
- ◆ Teach your child when, how to ask for help, always tell an adult and tell the child who to tell.
- ◆ Encourage your child to make friends with other children.
- ◆ Support activities that interest your child.
- ◆ Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
- ◆ Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety when you cannot be there.
- ◆ Make sure to check in with your child, if he or she seems withdrawn or more isolated. Sometimes children, regardless of age, can't find the words to ask for help, so their body language and/or change in behavior are good indicators.

Before and after school child care

- ◆ During middle childhood, youngsters need supervision. A responsible adult should be available to get them ready and off to school in the morning and watch over them after school until you come home.
- ◆ Children approaching adolescence (11 and 12 year olds) should not come to an empty house in the afternoon, unless they show unusual maturity for their age. If the your child is alone after school for a short time make sure they do the following:
 - *Make sure to keep the doors locked and have your child call you at work or on your cell phone as soon as they come home.
 - *Never tell someone on the phone that they are home alone, teach them to say that the adult can't come to the phone right now and make sure to post emergency phone numbers near the phone.
 - *Post emergency phone numbers near the phone.
 - *Be sure to set up guidelines on what they are or are not allowed to do (ie: have friends over, talk to strangers, etc.).
 - *Role play to ensure your child can manage a dangerous situation.
- ◆ If you choose a commercial after-school program, inquire about the training of the staff. There should be a high staff-to-child ratio, and the rooms and the playground should be safe.

Stranger Safety

- ◆ Teach your kids not to talk to strangers. Make sure they know not to accept presents or rides from strangers. If a stranger offers your child a present or a ride home from school, have them tell a responsible adult immediately.
- ◆ Pick a family password. This word will be used if someone different is picking them up from school, sports, or other locations. It should be a weird word, something that someone would not be able to guess. If too many people have heard the word, change it.





OVA

OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE

505 Hudson Street, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: 860-550-6632
Fax: 860-560-7065

Internet: www.ova.state.ct.us

*As a crime victim you have certain
important legal rights!*

Please visit us online!

www.ova.state.ct.us

Upcoming Events...



New Haven MADD Dash!

Sunday, November 8, 2009

Start Time: 9:00 am

Edgewood Park , Coogan Pavillion

Whalley Avenue; New Haven, CT

For more information on this 5 mile race & 2 mile scenic walk, please contact Carole at 203-764-2566 or ct.state@madd.org

Register online at: www.hitekracing.com

Candlelight Vigil of Remembrance & Hope

For all victims & survivors of alcohol-related crashes

November 15, 2009 at 1:00 pm

Cathedral of St. Joseph

140 Farmington Ave.; Hartford



*Sponsored by: Tremont & Sheldon Law Office
Porto Funeral Home & Celentano Funeral Home*

Please bring in the coupon below to West Hartford Yoga for a New Student Special...

***** New Student Special *****

10 classes for \$10

westhartfordyoga

Offering over 50 classes per week, including:

Hot Yoga

Beginners Yoga

Power Yoga

Gentle Yoga

32 jansen court
west hartford, ct

860 953 YOGA

www.westhartfordyoga.com