

SATRC frontlines

● SPRING 2002

A NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY THE SEXUAL ASSAULT & TRAUMA RESOURCE CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND

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No one stands alone with SART

Sexual Assault Response Team modeled after successful Children's Advocacy Center

THIS IS THE DAY SHE WILL GIVE TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JUDGE. *This is the day she hopes to send the man who raped her to prison. She has told her story over and over again. First to the police who came in the night in response to her 911 call. Then to the detective who was assigned her case. And again and again to the special assistant attorney general who will prosecute her case. And always she stood alone. Against the night terrors. Against the threats of violence from friends of the offender if she dared to speak out.*

At the start of his career as a detective in the Burrillville Police Department, Wayne Richardson worked alone on sexual assault cases.

"I had the total responsibility of the investigation from start to finish," he said. "Victims would be interviewed by me or another police officer."

Often victims would be forced to repeat their story over and over, resulting in confusion, depression, fear and anxiety. And rather than face another inquisition, many opted to drop the charges.

With SATRC's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) program, the victim never has to stand alone.

Patterned after the successful Children's Advocacy Center, SART comprises a multi-disciplinary team involving prosecutors, police and mental health professionals providing victims of sexual abuse with interview, evaluation and treatment services in a comfortable and safe environment.

continued on page 4



SART TEAM: From left, Emily Dimon, law enforcement advocate; Melissa Alexander, program coordinator, and Burrillville Police Det. Wayne Richardson.

**APRIL IS SEXUAL
ASSAULT AWARENESS
MONTH...**

Watch your glass...



**Know what's in it.
Who poured it.**

**See page 7 for more on our
"Watch your glass..." campaign**

Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center of Rhode Island

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FROM THIS DESK

Peg Langhammer

SATRC Executive Director



IN THIS ISSUE OF *Frontlines* YOU WILL READ about successful collaborations among SATRC, the RI justice system and law enforcement agencies that are focused on the rights and needs of sexual assault victims.

Programs such as Rhode Island Victim Information and Notification Everyday System (RI-VINE) — a new service provided by the Rhode Island Department of Corrections — that is making available to crime victims essential information about offenders and notification of changes in status.

“...when everyone comes to the table with a common goal, everyone benefits, especially the victim.”

You'll meet Carol, whose experience with RI-VINE, gave her satisfaction that the fight to incarcerate her daughter's abuser was worth the struggle. (See RI-VINE article on page 6).

We know there are countless victims who may never be able to come forward and tell their stories, but because of new programs such as the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), are not only given a voice, but the

support to help them navigate through a confusing and sometimes unfathomable court system. (You may read all about our new SART program on page 1).

These successful collaborations depend on many people including dedicated police officers, such as Burrillville's Police Det. Wayne Richardson and Special Assistant Attorney General Kate Harden (see page 1).

It proves the point that when everyone comes to the table with a common goal, everyone benefits, especially the victim.

At the same time we celebrate and acknowledge these successes, allegations of sexual misconduct by Roman Catholic priests have rocked the nation and brought to the surface the silent grief and pain victims have been forced to carry alone.

Clearly the church is in need of change. To this end, we at SATRC have reached out to the Diocese of Providence offering our expertise and assistance in creating state-of-the-art efficient and effective policies that are responsive and accessible to victims.

Finally, in recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, SATRC, in collaboration with statewide colleges and universities, is providing information through workshops, seminars, benefit concerts and educational activities about the danger of the so-called date rape drugs. By bringing attention to these colorless, odorless and dangerous drugs, we may be able to prevent future incidents of sexual assault on college campuses.

CONGRATULATIONS LINDA CIOLFI

Linda Ciolfi, SATRC's director of program services is one of a team of award recipients recognized for their work on Broken Boundaries from Nonprofit Resources, a regional support network for nonprofit organizations.

New staff joins SATRC

Emmy Award winning anchor/reporter for ABC6 (WLNE-TV), **Robin Costello**, joins the SATRC staff as public relations manager. Prior to her 13 year tenure with ABC6, Robin was a reporter,



producer, news director and anchor for television stations in Seattle, Washington and Aspen, Colorado. Robin holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Lisa Casavecchia, prevention educator, was a research assistant for Brown University's School of Medicine and program supervisor for the Brockton Area Outreach and Tracking YMCA, Brockton, MA.

Emily J. Dimon, law enforcement advocate, was a family court advocate for the Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center.

Christine Holmes, ACSW, LICSW, coordinator of children's services, was director of social work at Arbour-Fuller Hospital, South Attleboro, MA.

Leah Manchester, forensic interview specialist, was a Head Start case manager and social worker for the Tri-Town Community Action Agency in Johnston.

Melissa Ann Merolla, clinical social worker, was an inpatient family worker and a social work intern at the Faulkner Hospital-Inpatient Unit, MA.

Lillian Morel, secretary/receptionist, was an administrative assistant at the Housing Opportunities Corporation, Providence.

Christine M. Pellegrini, development manager, was campaign director for

the United Way of Greater Attleboro/Taunton, Attleboro, MA.

Zoe Rawson, child abuse intervention specialist, was a research assistant for Women and Infants' Hospital.

April Richmond, intake manager, was a residential services advocate/provider for the Women's Resource Center of South County and the South Shore Mental Health Center, Inc.

GIRL SCOUTS AND CHILD'S PLAY DONATE TEDDY BEARS TO SATRC



SATRC Executive Director Peg Langhammer, back row center, and Grace Quintin, special projects manager, at right back row center, accept hundreds of teddy bears from the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island. The Girl Scouts donated the bears with proceeds from their 2001 cookie sale.

The Child's Play Cooperative School is one of several organizations donating teddy bears to the RI Children's Advocacy Center over the holiday season.



Dear Child Advocacy Center,

"We are sending these bears to help when bad things happen. We hope you like these stuffed animals. They might help you to feel better if you get sick or have an accident. We think they may help the most if you cuddle awhile with one or maybe sleep with them. We liked bringing them to our school and naming them. We gave each one a hug. We are sending our love with them.

Child's Play Cooperative School

Sexual Assault Response Team *continued from page 1*

It often begins with that initial call to our Helpline, 911 or that trip to the emergency room, said Melissa Alexander, SART program coordinator. "If a person is reporting a sexual assault and is interested in pursuing criminal charges, SART will stand with them from the beginning to the end."

"When a person reports a sexual assault, I tell them about SART and how it works. I let them know there is someone they can talk to..."

Detective Richardson agrees:

"With SART, there are so many things we do now that we couldn't do before. We can get a prosecutor assigned to the case right away and it gets them involved with the initial interview so the victim doesn't have to constantly retell the story and the victim has someone to stand with them."

"When a person reports a sexual assault, I tell them about SART and how it works. I let them know there is someone they can talk to, someone who can help them when they talk to me."

SART has worked for Detective Richardson's benefit as well.

"Working with SART helps me to identify what is best for the victim and the case," he added.

Currently in operation in Providence, Pawtucket, Cranston, Woonsocket, Warwick and Burrillville, this team approach to assisting victims is more than collaboration among police, prosecutors and victim advocates.

It is a lifeline for the fragile and exposed. It is a link to the courage it takes to wind their way through a court system that often seems to protect the rights of the offender rather than the victim.

"I have seen so many victims give up in frustration because of the system," said Special Assistant Attorney General Kate Harden. "SART is great for helping the

Help is available for victims of sexual assault

SART, a free service, is available to adult and adolescent victims of sexual assault. Adolescents must be 14 or older. For more information, please call the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center of Rhode Island at 401-421-4100.

victim with support. The advocates keep them informed, help them navigate the court system and provide much needed counsel and support."

Emily Dimon is one such advocate. She works with four police departments including Burrillville, Woonsocket, Smithfield and North Smithfield.

She is often the one who stays with the victim during the preliminary interview and provides support throughout the process. Her role is made much easier, she said, because of police officers like Detective Richardson.

"Wayne is a very cooperative and understanding person and he really does his job well," she said. "He's a compassionate police officer. He understands that other people may have something to offer and he is very open to a collaborative environment."

And that's what is making SART work in Rhode Island. Cooperation. Collaboration. Compassion and support for the victim.

"Our goal is to provide this service to victims statewide," said Peg Langhammer, SATRC executive director. "In the short time since we have introduced SART, we have already seen a difference in victims' attitudes and actions in staying the course to make sure their offenders are prosecuted. But SART wouldn't work without the extraordinary cooperation and support of the police, prosecutors and human service providers, who work in close collaboration with us."

K-MART PRESENTS \$1000 CHECK TO SATRC



Marlene Roberti, director of policy and development, accepts a \$1000 check from Bob Maxwell, K-Mart manager, at the grand opening of the store, located in the new Cranston Parkade.

On the Frontline

KATE HARDEN IS A SPECIAL ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, specializing in sexual assault and domestic violence cases. One of three prosecutors in the Sexual Assault unit, Kate usually has 70-80 cases pending at any one time.

Although she has only been with the RI Attorney General's office for one year, Kate spent 12 years as a prosecutor in Florida.



I wanted to be a social worker, but went to law school where I thought I wanted to be a defense attorney. But somewhere along the line I decided to be a prosecutor so I could help victims. I kind of see it as getting in a bit of social work in what I do.

It also works out great with interviewing. For victims, it's frustrating having to tell their story over and over again. It is helpful having only one interview. It's better for everyone and it helps me do my job more effectively.

The work is challenging. It's the only kind of law where you are fighting both sides. You are fighting the defense and sometimes the victim who doesn't want to go to trial.

That's why SART is so important. It's great to have an agency with contacts to the victim. One of the biggest difficulties I face is physically locating the victim and that is where SART is particularly helpful. They keep them on board; keeping tabs on them and giving them support and counsel.

“Most sexual assaults are *committed by people known to the victim.*”

The guy in the trench coat jumping out of the bushes is the exception.”

I remember one case where SART would have been helpful to the victim and the prosecution. Initially the woman, a victim of domestic violence and sexual assault, was very cooperative. I could see in her eyes, that she got it. She understood the cycle of violence would continue if she didn't do something about it. In the end, she changed her mind about cooperating with us. It's not unusual for the victim to recant and change her mind. It's par for the course.

Most sexual assaults are committed by people known to the victim. The guy in the trench coat jumping out of the bushes is the exception.

I think SATRC really helps us get the message out to the public. It's not enough to say she (the victim) doesn't care, so why should we care? It does matter. And SART is making it easier for victims to stay on board and bring their offenders to justice.

“...SART is making it *easier for victims to stay on board and bring their offenders to justice.*”

UNITED WAY DONOR #5580 • Planning to participate in the United Way, SECA or Combined Federal Campaigns this fall? Please consider designating your donation to SATRC. For more information email us at info@satrc.org or check our web site at www.satrc.org.

RI-VINE gives back power to crime victims

Call 1-877-RI-4-VINE for information and notification

A NEW SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT of Corrections and in collaboration with SATRC, is making a world of difference to victims of sexual abuse. Just ask Carol P.

A few years ago, Carol found out that her now ex-husband was molesting their daughter and other family members. He was ultimately found guilty of the crime and sentenced to nine years in the RI Department of Corrections.

“Many times during the long and difficult court process, I felt my daughter and I had no rights; that he had all the rights,” Carol said.

“For victims, it is another tool to allow them to create their own safety plan.”

But through the Victim Information and Notification Everyday System (RI-VINE), Carol was given back some power. And for the first time, she had control.

RI-VINE is a free, anonymous computer-assisted service that provides victims of crime information about the offender and notification when an offender has changed status such as escape, return from escape, death, qualification for work release or furlough.

For Carol, the notification came in the form of an upcoming parole hearing.

“My friend called and told me about this article that had appeared in the *Providence Journal*,” she said. “When I called seeking information, I learned that my ex-hus-

band was up for a parole, three years before I thought he was eligible.”

The person on the other end of the phone was Mikel Nicolo, SATRC staff person and program coordinator for the Office of Victim Services.

“Since the inception of RI-VINE in January of this year, we have received nearly 6000 telephone calls on our automated system,” Mikel said. “I get calls from people like Carol, asking many different kinds of questions including information about release dates and parole hearings.

“In Carol’s case, I met with her and her daughter and explained the entire parole process. There have been times when I’ve received calls about a person violating a restraining order and I can assist the victim in reporting the incident to the State Police or prison authorities.”

Mikel urges people who want or need information about an offender who is being held at the RI Department of Corrections, to call the RI-VINE hotline at the toll free number, 1-877-744-8463 and follow the computer prompts.

Although people accessing the service may remain anonymous, Mikel said, “It’s

important that people register early to receive advance notification. Once registered, they will be notified by the automated system.”

The service is free, open to anyone who is a victim of any crime, and available 24 hours a day.

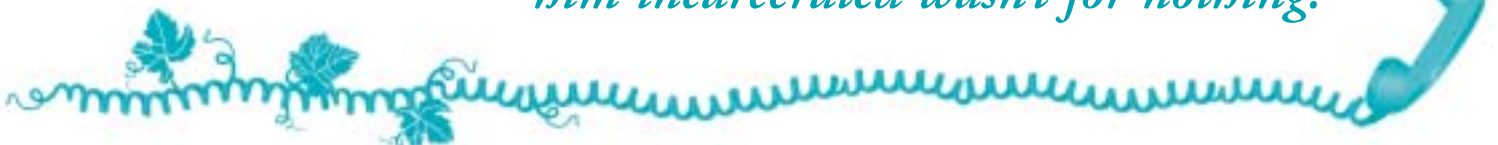
“For victims, it is another tool to allow them to create their own safety plan,” Mikel said. “It can allow them to receive notification if they are registered early enough with the system, so they are not surprised to learn that the offender is about to be or has been released.”

Fortunately for Carol P., the RI-VINE service saved her from an unpleasant surprise.

“I would suggest that anyone who has been a victim, or knows a victim, to use the VINE service,” she said. The crime and memory and pain won’t go away, but at least with VINE, you have the satisfaction that all the fight it took to get him incarcerated wasn’t for nothing. For my daughter’s sake, the system is trying to give the victim back some power and to let her know that the fight was worth it.”

For more information about RI-VINE, or to receive a brochure fully explaining this important service, call the Office of Victim Services at 462-5203.

“The crime and memory and pain won’t go away, but at least with VINE, you have the satisfaction that all the fight it took to get him incarcerated wasn’t for nothing.”



SATRC collaborates with statewide colleges and universities in April's Sexual Assault Awareness Month

It's colorless, odorless and tasteless. It can intoxicate, incapacitate, and cause memory loss.

These are the signs of the so-called date rape drugs. And on college and university campuses, statewide, an all out campaign will be waged to make students aware of these dangerous drugs throughout the month of April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

SATRC, in collaboration with statewide colleges and universities, has education programs planned throughout the month geared toward preventing occurrences of drug-facilitated sexual assault.

Students will learn about the dangers of drugs used to facilitate sexual assault, ways to protect themselves and where to get help.

Watch your glass... Know what's in it. Who poured it.

While there are no reported incidents of drug-related sexual assault cases in Rhode Island, over the last 10 years, health providers have seen an increase in the numbers of cases involving "date rape drugs."

The campaign — titled *Watch your glass... Know what's in it. Who poured it* — will center on a series of activities throughout the week of April 8–12. The Campus Sexual Assault Task Force will play a crucial role in reaching college-age people throughout the state.

Among the tactics designed to reach young people with this message are billboards, posters, drink coasters, as

well as on-campus workshops, seminars, benefit concerts, information booths and other educational activities.

"While most college students may be aware of the existence of these drugs, few are aware of their dangers, the effects and the types of situations they may face that could cause them to disregard their instincts or values." Peg Langhammer, SATRC executive director, said.

"By bringing attention to date rape drugs and the potential danger that exists, we may be able to prevent future incidents of sexual assault."



Did you know?

On college campuses...

- According to the National College Women Victimization Study, 2.8 percent of college women were victims of rape during the six months in which the study was conducted.
- Of victims, 22.8 percent were raped multiple times.
- 33.7 percent were victimized on campus, 66.3 percent off campus.
- Less than 5 percent of completed or attempted rapes against college women were reported to law enforcement agencies.
- In two-thirds of these incidents the victim did tell another person, usually a friend, not family or school officials.

In the United States...

- 1 rape/attempted rape occurs every 1.6 minutes
- Once every five minutes someone reports a rape.
- 261,000 rapes and sexual assaults occurred in the year 2000.
- 1 of 6 women and 1 of 33 men has experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.

In Rhode Island...

- 39.5 incidents of rape per 100,000 were reported in the year 2000, exceeding the national average of 32.7.
- With the exception of rape, all violent crimes decreased in the year 2000.

Calendar OF Events

coming soon...

SATRC's 2002 CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

For the benefit of the
RI Children's Advocacy Center
Alpine Country Club
Cranston, Rhode Island

JUNE 17, 2002

**Co-chairs:
Phil Rivers and Bob Vincent**

*For sponsor information, or to reserve
your spot, contact the RI Children's
Advocacy Center at 401-421-4100.*

save the date...

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND FOR
THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR**

Sexual Assault & Trauma
Resource Center brings you

UNDER THE STARS BY THE SEA

AUGUST 3, 2002

Narragansett Town Beach
7 p.m. to midnight

*For advance reservations or
sponsorship opportunities, contact
Grace Quintin at 401-421-4100, ext. 14*

Volunteer Advocate training set for May

SATRC is currently recruiting for the next Network Advocate Training, scheduled to begin in May. This training is required of anyone willing to become a part of our volunteer program that assists victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and hate crimes at area hospitals and police stations.

Volunteer advocates provide emotional support, information and referrals on an on-call basis. Applicants must be over 18 years, have reliable transportation, and be able to pass a criminal background check.

For more information, or to request an application packet, please call Erin Osborne, Advocate Coordinator, at (401) 421-4100.

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