

SATRC frontlines

● SPRING 2003

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

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April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

DECIDE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE is the theme of this year's Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign, which focuses on the trauma and prevalence of child sexual abuse, a problem of crisis proportions in Rhode Island and nationwide.

SATRC unveils a massive campaign in April to heighten the community's awareness and to encourage people to take action to end all sexual violence and particularly abuse against children.

The statistics are alarming. One in five children will be the victim of sexual abuse before the age of 18. Only one in 10 children will report the abuse. Last year alone, SATRC provided services to more than 700 victims of childhood sexual abuse.

TAKE ACTION THIS APRIL.

Begin your own campaign to end sexual violence. You can start by reading the articles in this issue of *Frontlines*.

Look for our billboards and posters.

Call 401-421-4100 for a copy of our brochure — *Know the Facts...*

Be a voice for the children.

Be a voice for victims.

Decide to end sexual violence.

1 in **5** children will be a **victim** of **sexual abuse** before the age of 18.



Decide to end sexual violence

Call
401.421.4100

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FROM THIS DESK

Peg Langhammer

SATRC Executive Director



THIS APRIL, IN CITIES AND TOWNS throughout the nation, organizations that work in the trenches of sexual abuse and assault, will speak as one voice — to decide to end sexual violence.

We highlight April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month to bring attention to this horrendous problem and to offer the community ways that they can work to end sexual violence. (See page 5 for 10 steps to end sexual violence.) Although prevention is key, there is also much work to be done to protect the community and hold offenders accountable.

Six months ago, we convened a special task force charged with redesigning and implementing a victim centered sex offender management system (see page 7). Our first task was to rewrite the Sexual Offender Registration and Community Notification Legislation, H-37.1, commonly referred to as Rhode Island's version of Megan's Law.

In the coming months, this special task force, which includes representatives from law enforcement, courts, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), probation and parole, the Attorney General's

office, treatment experts and victim advocates, will continue its work and be assisted by the Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM). CSOM is a national policy group and will be providing technical assistance through the task force.

While it has been several weeks since The Station Nightclub fire claimed the lives of 99 people, we recognize that the pain and suffering of their families and friends will last forever. No one can ever be the same after a tragedy of this scope.

With the financial support we received from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), our Common Threads program, a support program for those who have lost a loved one to homicide or other traumatic event, has been opened to assist these families with individual and group counseling.

All of us at SATRC express our sympathies to those who lost a loved one in the fire and to those who are still suffering in its aftermath.

Children's support group offered at SATRC

Common Threads, a bereavement program for those who have lost someone from homicide or other sudden traumatic events, is offering group sessions designed especially for children.

Fear, shame, intrusive memories, reliving the event through a barrage of media attention, endless court proceedings are only a few of the ordeals faced by surviving family members and friends of homicide or other traumatic events. For children, these feelings are intensified and magnified. Common Threads addresses all of these issues and more through art, music and poetry.

The seven-week program, led by a licensed therapist, will begin April 28 at the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center, 300 Richmond St., Suite 205, Providence, RI. For information and to register, call 401-421-4100, ext. 230. Insurance accepted and no one will be turned away for inability to pay. Services can be provided in both English and Spanish.



**Luz Amparo
Ospina,
LCSW**

Luz Amparo Ospina's appointment as SATRC's newest clinical social worker,

opens the door even wider for the Latino/Hispanic population seeking our services. Luz brings not only a fluency in Spanish, but also an understanding of the cultural differences that play a critical role in providing our Latino/Hispanic clients and their families with education, advocacy and therapy with sexual assault and trauma issues.

"It's my mission to provide a safe environment for children and their families," she said. "I hope that people will find the healing they are looking for when they come to this place."

Luz holds a Masters of Social Work and a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science from Rhode Island College.



Tom Izzo

Tom Izzo joins the staff as a children's policy associate. His duties will include identifying and addressing

systemic issues and gaps in services that relate to children and sexual assault.

Tom served in the General Assembly as a state senator for 14 years, representing Cranston. He is a retired educator, having most recently served as an assistant principal for student services in the Cranston School System. He is a graduate of New York University and Rhode Island College.

Carolyn Marshall joins the staff as executive administrative assistant. A graduate of Lake Erie College, Painesville, Ohio, with a B.A. in Home Economics, she has completed several courses in the University of South Carolina's MBA program, including organizational behavior, accounting and management.

Paula J. McMurrough is a foster care case manager. A graduate of Roger Williams University with a bachelor's degree in health and human services, Paula most recently was a mental health

specialist at Arbour-Fuller Hospital in Attleboro, Massachusetts.

Nicole L. Theroux is child abuse intervention specialist. A graduate of Boston University with a masters of Arts degree in psychology, she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in personality psychology from Suffolk University, Boston, Massachusetts. Nicole's most recent job was with the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service as special assistant to the assistant district counsel/Inmate Removal Program (IRP) coordinator.



Elisabeth Carey-Davis recognized for outstanding volunteer work

Rhode Island recognizes SATRC volunteer Elisabeth Carey-Davis with the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) Award for Outstanding Advocacy and Community Work in Ending Sexual Violence. As Rhode Island's representative, she is one of 50 volunteers nationwide to receive this prestigious award.

Elisabeth has worked as a Volunteer Helpline advocate since October, 2001. Her leadership skills, compassion and commitment have become a model for Helpline advocates.

"Elisabeth's dedication to the fight against sexual violence is inspiring," Peg Langhammer, SATRC executive director said. "Her compassion and knowledge of services available to victims sets her apart from the rest. She is an invaluable resource for other advocates and is a vital asset to the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center of Rhode Island."

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For more information email us at info@satrc.org or check our web site at www.satrc.org.

Violence against children reaching crisis proportions

There is a crisis of children in Rhode Island. And there are no easy solutions to this dilemma, according to Dr. Carol Jenny, medical director of the Child Safe Program at Hasbro Children's Hospital.



“Over and over I see kids abused by family members and nobody talks. Nobody tells. They keep it in the family.”

apathetic community and Rhode Island laws that are defense attorneys and sex offenders.

“The bar is set very high for children in Rhode Island compared to other places I have worked,” she said.

“It will take a major shift in attitude toward children, increased funding to support family violence programs and a dramatic increase in mental health services for children to affect change,” she said.

SATRC and the Child Safe Program are partners in dealing with incidents of child abuse. Child Safe is the front line for abused children entering a complicated and traumatic system. SATRC works closely with Dr. Jenny and her staff to ensure that children get the best treatment possible.

“The sexual abuse and violence in Rhode Island is endemic,” she said. “The problem is deeply rooted and is generational and intergenerational. Over and over I see kids abused by family members and nobody talks. Nobody tells. They keep it in the family.”

The problem, according to Dr. Jenny, is exacerbated by juries that don't convict, an heavily weighted in favor of

Although Rhode Island has a head start in initiating programs that deal with child abuse, such as SATRC's Children's Advocacy Center, Dr. Jenny knows there will always be a tremendous amount of work to do. On the plus side, Dr. Jenny cites the state Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) as an example of positive efforts on behalf of children.

“The DCYF is doing a pretty good job compared to other states,” she said.

Although her work brings her in close contact with the horrors of child abuse, Dr. Jenny loves her job.

“Every day is different. It's stressful, but interesting,” she said, “And I like knowing I make a difference.”

Know the facts, then decide to end sexual violence

- One in four girls and one in six boys will be victims of sexual abuse before the age of 18.
- Only one in 10 children will report the abuse.
- Most child sexual abuse occurs within a circle of family and friends.
- Children who are sexually abused and do not “tell” are at far greater risk for emotional, social and physical problems, often lasting into adulthood.
- Sexual assault is the least reported crime to law enforcement — 28 percent.
- More than 70 percent of rape and sexual assault victims knew their attackers.

10 ways to help end sexual violence

1 Talk to your children. Make sure they know abuse is something you can and want to talk about.

2 Learn the facts. Provide your children with accurate and age-appropriate information about child sexual abuse.

3 Encourage education. Ask your children's schools to offer programs on the subject of child sexual abuse for students and teachers.

4 Be vigilant. Make sure the daycare center, after school program or other programs your children attend have employees who know how to help prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to child sexual abuse.

5 Minimize opportunity. Avoid placing your children in one-on-one child/adult situations.

6 Become a volunteer advocate. Take the training and learn how to assist victims of sexual assault. This involves meeting victims at emergency rooms and police departments to offer support.

7 Report child sexual abuse. Call the Victims of Crime Helpline — 1-800-RI-CHILD or Child Protective Services to report child sexual abuse. For support and information 24-hours-a-day, call 1-800-494-8100. A trained advocate will take your call and provide you with information.

8 Contact your elected officials. Let your elected representatives know that ending sexual violence is a priority and urge them to support legislation that protects victims.

9 Support organizations that protect victims. Your financial support will help organizations committed to providing sexual assault victims with services and advocacy, the resources they need to continue their work.

10 Believe victims and support survivors. Never blame the victim. Respect and understand the issues that victims of sexual abuse face. Enlighten other community members on the subject of sexual violence. Don't tolerate sex offender behavior. Become part of the solution.

Children's Gallery



Children's Gallery brought to you by SATRC's "Keeping Kids Safe" program.

For more information on our education/prevention program, call 421-4100, ext. 246.



Development

Grant funds support of Family Foster Care Treatment Program

A grant from the Carlisle Foundation and the Rhode Island Justice Commission has allowed SATRC to develop the Family Foster Care Treatment Program. This innovative new program will address the needs of sexually abused children in foster care by providing case management, treatment and support services to these children and their foster families.

Champlin Foundation awards SATRC \$20,000

A \$20,000 grant from the Champlin Foundation will be used to upgrade video and recording equipment for all four Rhode Island Children's Advocacy Center sites.

\$15,000 grant received from the Fred M. Roddy Foundation

The Fred M. Roddy Foundation has made a \$15,000 grant available to SATRC to support the expansion of our clinical services for child victims of sexual abuse.

Primary Flow Signal, Inc. raises funds for SATRC programs

Employees from Primary Flow Signal, Inc. of Warwick chose to donate funds to support SATRC's clinical advocacy, Rhode Island Children's Advocacy Center and education/prevention programs rather than exchange holiday gifts this year. Our thanks to them for their generous and thoughtful contribution of \$320.

Hertz Auto Rental donates hundreds of Teddy bears

Once again this year, Hertz Auto Rental at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick donated hundreds of brand new Teddy bears to the Rhode Island Children's Advocacy Center. The bears will be "adopted" by children who come to the Center for services.

Newport Kiwanis helps equip new RI Children's Advocacy Center

A generous gift of \$1,350 from the Newport Kiwanis helped purchase necessary equipment to open our new RI Children's Advocacy site in Newport. In addition, the Kiwanis donated Teddy bears, books, puzzles and games to make the Center a warm and child-friendly space.

Common Threads

■ A bereavement program for those who have lost someone to homicide or other sudden traumatic events

ANYONE WHO HAS LOST A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND TO A HOMICIDE or other traumatic event suffers a special kind of grief that goes far beyond the pain of losing a loved one to death.

Fear, shame, intrusive memories, reliving the event through a barrage of media attention, endless court proceedings, are only some of the traumas faced by surviving family and friends.

For a child, the feelings are intensified and magnified.

Common Threads, a bereavement group for children and adults, addresses these issues and pays particular attention to the needs of its youngest clients.

“The sooner that people get in for counseling or even debriefing, the better the outcome.”

“Often children will act out because they can't deal with death and the uncertainty which follows. Some of the symptoms are depression, which in children may manifest itself in behavior problems, sleeplessness and eating disorders,” Christine Holmes, director of Children's Services, said.

“There is a stigma attached to a death associated with homicide. Children have to deal with school, other kids and people asking them questions. If it is a case that gets a lot of media attention, the child is constantly bombarded with images and then they have to relive it if a court process is involved.”

At Common Threads, Christine works with the children in an eight-week program and through the use of art, poetry and music, their feelings are drawn out and examined with care and compassion.

“They need to know that someone understands. They are in such pain,” Christine said. “Kids today are living with an increased violence that is visited upon them in their homes, their neighborhoods and their schools.”

Christine offers valuable advice to parents of a child, or anyone who loses a family member or friend to homicide or other traumatic events.

“Get help immediately. Don't wait for symptoms to develop. Most people wait too long. They wait until something happens or a child is hospitalized. The sooner that people get in for counseling or even debriefing, the better the outcome.”

If you are a family member or a friend of someone who was a victim of homicide or other traumatic events, or if you know a child whose family member was a victim, you may call 401-421-4100, ext. 230 for an assessment. The Victims of Crime Helpline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-494-8100. Your call will be answered by a trained advocate.

THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION AND COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION LAW, commonly referred to as “Megan’s Law, was enacted in Rhode Island in 1996. Named for 7-year-old Megan Kanka who was raped and murdered by a twice-convicted sex offender, the law requires that every state have a community notification process.

In Rhode Island, the system designed to address the requirements stipulated by Megan’s Law is not working. As a result, the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center convened a special task force to address the problem and find solutions. The task force, comprising representatives from every department or agency that deals with sex offender registration and community notification, as well as sex offender treatment experts, has rewritten the current Rhode Island law and submitted it to the General Assembly for approval.

The intent of Rhode Island’s version of Megan’s Law remains the same — to protect the public by setting up a system for sex offender registration, community notification and sexually violent offender determination.

State Police Col. Steven Pare, a member of the task force, shares his views about Rhode Island’s proposed legislation.

In what ways do you feel Rhode Island’s version of Megan’s Law will provide safety for the community?

Col. Pare: If the legislation is passed, Rhode Island’s law will make Megan’s Law more practical to manage. The revised law will streamline the process and create speedier community notification for those sexual offenders living in our society.

How will this revised law affect the day-to-day operation of law enforcement agencies?

Col. Pare: Megan’s Law created a huge demand on law enforcement agencies. The law was cumbersome and there were no resources to effectively implement it. For law enforcement, the revised law puts the responsibility back on the offender. If they don’t register, they violate the terms of their parole and could face new charges.

What advice would you give to people who learn a sexual offender is living their neighborhood?

Col. Pare: First, I would advise them on what not to do. We don’t do vigilantism or paint a scarlet letter on their foreheads. That is not the intent of the law. I would advise people to be aware and take common sense precautions.

In your opinion, how effective is the task force?

Col. Pare: This particular task force worked extremely well. We have representation from the Attorney General’s office, corrections, the court system, parole board and health care professionals. All of these people came together with SATRC spearheading the task force. SATRC did yeoman’s work in pulling together the information that was critical to revising Megan’s Law. The agency was the glue holding us together. Without SATRC, none of this work would have happened.

Do you see a future role for this task force and if so, in what way?

Col. Pare: I think the task force needs to continue to ensure passage of the new legislation and if it does pass, it should continue to ensure that the implementation is seamless.

Megan’s Law

Volunteer advocate training set for June

SATRC is currently recruiting for the next Network Advocate Training, scheduled to begin in June. 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 Colette Laffan, advocate coordinator, at 401-421-4100, ext. 233.

save the date(s)

★ **SATRC'S 2003 CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT** for the benefit of the RI Children's Advocacy Center — **JUNE 9, 2003**, Alpine Country Club, Cranston, Rhode Island. Shotgun start: 12:30 p.m. Co-chairs: **Phil Rivers** and **Bob Vincent**
For corporate sponsorships or foursomes, contact **Grace Quintin** at 401-421-4100, ext. 214.

★ **UNDER THE STARS BY THE SEA — AUGUST 3, 2003**, North Beach Clubhouse, Narragansett Town Beach.

★ **NEXT ADVOCACY TRAINING PROGRAM** begins in **JUNE**. Call **Colette Laffan** at 421-4100, ext. 233 for information.

★ **30TH ANNIVERSARY BLUES BASH — NOVEMBER 8, 2003**, VMA Arts & Cultural Center.

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