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## Victimized And No Law To Support Her: How one advocate used her personal experience to criminalize Video Voyeurism in Rhode Island

**IT WAS SEPTEMBER 2003** when sixteen-year-old Stephanie Berard became a victim of the invasive, technology driven phenomenon, Video Voyeurism, also referred to as upskirting or downshirting.

Still in her Bay View school uniform Stephanie was picking up supplies at A.C. Moore in Warwick. “I kept hearing these peculiar beeps,” recalls Stephanie. “As I reached for my supplies, I looked to my right and discovered a man with a small digital camera in his hand and the camera was flipped upwards under my skirt. My heart began to race.”

**“Stephanie’s testimony impacted everyone listening and reinforced the important role victims can play in changing laws”**

Unsure of what to do Stephanie alerted the cashier to what happened and exited the store. Stephanie’s father, who had been waiting in the car, immediately noticed a concerned look on his daughter’s face and got out of his car. Together, he and Stephanie confronted the man in the parking lot and the man sped off. Stephanie recorded the license plate, called the police and the man was arrested just minutes later.

As Stephanie prepared to press charges she learned that Rhode Island law did not criminalize this offense. Action and vocal activism filled Stephanie’s spirit.



**Stephanie Berard speaks out at the Sexual Assault Awareness Month Press Conference. Looking on are Joseph J. MarcAurele, President & CEO, Citizens Bank of RI, U.S. Senator Jack Reed and Jay Lindgren, Director, RI Department of Children, Youth & Families.**

She began working with the Attorney General’s office to formulate a revision of the voyeurism bill that was in place at the time. “I knew that by changing the law, I would be able to help provide justice for those who become victims of video voyeurism,” said Stephanie.

Such passion to effect change is a powerful tool and one that is difficult for legislators to overlook. Stephanie testified in front of the RI Legislature when the new bill was on the agenda.

At the hearing, Stephanie shared the thoughts that ran through her head at the time of the victimization: “Was he really taking pictures up my skirt like I thought he was? Do I notify the police? Would the police think I was lying?” She described the violation she felt as she stood in the cashier line and he began taking more pictures of her entire body from six feet away.

“Stephanie’s testimony impacted everyone listening and reinforced the important role victims can play in changing laws,” said Peg Langhammer, executive director, SATRC, who also testified in favor of the legislation that day. Stephanie’s activism was critical in mobilizing legislators to take action and enhance safety in RI.

Video Voyeurism challenges the idea of personal privacy and what it means to be safe from view. These criminal activities undermine the most basic levels of privacy, to which every citizen is entitled.

Rhode Island Governor Don Carcieri signed S.B.2902 (DaPonte) and H.B.7655 (Lally) on June 29, 2004. These bills define video voyeurism as the use of an imaging device to obtain images of an unsuspecting person’s intimate areas for distribution or use

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

# Peg Langhammer

SATRC Executive Director



THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT IS FAR FROM DECREASING and the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center is working tirelessly to end this epidemic. Our staff is growing, our energy and passion to bring an end to violence is building and our programs are expanding to reach more audiences.

Our success is dependent on the efforts of so many. In this newsletter you'll read about our volunteer victim advocates. You'll also learn about a local woman, fueled with activism to seek justice for victims, who helped change the law to protect future victims.

SATRC testified for two additional bills that passed this legislative session. The first was a bill authorizing the use of search warrants to obtain items, samples, exemplars, including but not limited to, bodily tissue, fluids or other bodily substances from the body of a person. The use of DNA as evidence is critical in many sexual assault cases and this bill is essential to enhance the prosecution of perpetrators. A second bill relates to supporting the rights of children and reducing their trauma by raising the age of a child who may give grand jury testimony through a recording from up to the day before the thirteenth birthday to up to the day before the fourteen birthday. This bill is particularly relevant to the Children's Advocacy Center which manages the interview process and taping of these testimonies.

Recently SATRC was awarded two federal discretionary grants through the Violence Against Women Office (VAWO). The first will enable us to provide training to law enforcement, prosecution and the judiciary on the issues of sexual assault and domestic violence for older adults and individuals with disabilities. The second will be used for cross-training with organizations assisting individuals with disabilities. Both grants will position us to improve our services to older adults and individuals with disabilities, two critical and often under represented groups in society.

With 2005 around the corner, we at SATRC remain optimistic that collectively we can bring an end to sexual violence. Our success depends on community support, vocal activism, and a zero tolerance approach to violence.

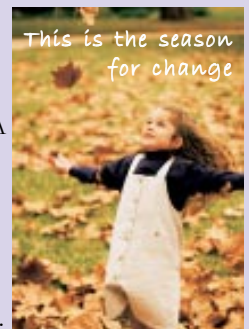
Wishing you a peaceful holiday season.

### SATRC welcomes and introduces new staff:

Gloria Arteaga, Advocate Coordinator  
Linda Bainer, Development Associate  
Cristina Costa, Law Enforcement Advocate  
Sarah DeCataldo, Law Enforcement Advocate  
Sue Donovan, Chief Financial Officer  
Karyn Hadfield, Training Specialist  
Angeline Martyn, Director of Communications

### Workplace Giving

When participating in the United Way, SECA or Combined Federal Campaign, please consider making a gift to the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center of RI (SATRC).



## What Motivates Our Volunteers?

**CANDICE CORRAO JUST MOVED TO RHODE ISLAND FROM CALIFORNIA.** She knew that she wanted to get more involved in one-on-one advocacy work. She learned about our helpline training online and decided she wanted to participate.



**Fall 2004 Helpline Graduates: Top L-R John Self, Amanda Hernandez, Allison Eddy, Elizabeth Godfrey, Theresa Sousa, Jasper Jones, Francine Green, Palma Sardihna. Bottom L-R: Candice Corrao, Anna Lickwar, Abirami Kumaresan, F. Elizabeth Layfield. Not pictured: Kristen Creider, Cynthia Manzano, Lisa Bedard.**

Jasper Jones found out about the helpline training through a posting on her public library's community bulletin board. The flier caught her eye many times before and this year she decided she just needed to do it. "Everyone participates for different reasons, for me it was about human relations, learning to better deal with people and helping other people through difficult times," said Jasper.

This fall Candice and Jasper, along with thirteen new volunteer advocates, graduated from the Victims of Crime Helpline Training Program.

Asked about their readiness to serve as Victim Advocates, a resounding **yes**, was heard. "It was scary at first," said Candice. "But, I'm not nervous anymore, I'm really prepared."

Helpline volunteers offer advocacy services to sexual assault, hate crime and domestic violence victims at hospitals and police stations throughout the state offering support, information, referrals, and safety planning.

Annually helpline volunteers respond to more than 200 calls.

The training does more than prepare advocates to work with victims. Advocates described the process as fulfilling, informative and therapeutic. "The information was presented in a way that didn't seem daunting, and it was easy to 'get', said Palma Sardihna, one of the recent graduates.

"The training is also a good thing to learn for general life practice," said Candice. "You begin to notice a lot more of the prevalence of sexual assault and domestic violence in the news and become more concerned about how things are reported on TV and in newspapers."

Volunteer advocates must successfully complete a 36 hour training program, before joining forces with the 55 active Helpline volunteers. The training is a partnership between the Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center of Rhode Island, the Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center and the Rhode

### VIDEO VOYEURISM CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

of the images for purposes of sexual arousal, gratification, or stimulation. These bills impose punishment for this crime as a maximum of three years in jail and/or fines not exceeding \$5,000.

Thanks to the work of activists like Stephanie, Video Voyeurism gained the attention of Congress as well. Congress is expected to pass the Video Voyeurism Prevention Act of 2004 before the end of the year.

As Stephanie reflects on her experience and the legislative process, she says to other victims: "TAKE ACTION!!! Don't just stand around and let the opportunity to make a difference pass you by! Don't be afraid to lean on your friends and family for emotional support. But if you talk to a friend, make sure it is someone close, who is willing to listen and provide comfort and support." Stephanie reinforces, "Some people may not accept what happened as being a "big" deal, but it is. They might push it aside and think that things (media, press, etc.) are just blowing it out of proportion....that's not true....it's a very serious issue!"

Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The training includes topics related to domestic violence, hate crimes, sexual assault, legal issues, medical matters, LGBT supportive resources, and crisis intervention.

Volunteers participate in periodic in-service trainings and have open access to the advocate coordinator to discuss any concerns or questions. The next training will be held in early January. To participate contact Gloria Arteaga, advocate coordinator at [garteaga@satrc.org](mailto:garteaga@satrc.org) or 401-421-4100 ext. 288.

**SATRC acknowledges and thanks Richard Genovesi for his commitment to community service & for increasing public awareness about sexual violence in RI.**



To obtain his Eagle Scout Award, Richard Genovesi collected over 300 Teddy Bears for the RI Children’s Advocacy Center as well as sweatsuits and undergarments for adult survivors of sexual assault & domestic violence. A special thanks to Troop 31 of Crompton (pictured with Richard above) and to the parishoners at the following Coventry & West Warwick based churches for their contributions to the clothing and bear drives: Emmanuel Lutheran, Saint’s John and James, St. Andrew & St. Phillip, and St. Matthias Church.

**Event Photo Gallery**

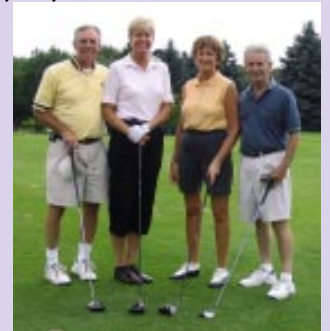
The support of friends of the agency is vital. We look forward to seeing you once again at the Golf Tournament on May 16th, 2005 and at Under the Stars by the Sea on August 13, 2005! In 2004 the events raised a total of \$45,000.



Enjoying an evening Under the Stars by the Sea on August 14, 2004 are event co-chairs, Karen Follet and Susan Buonanno.

Nominated by SATRC, Susan Buonanno was recognized as a Partner in Philanthropy (PIP) on National Philanthropy Day.

Representing hole sponsor Verizon are golfers John Kent, Mary Reavey, Lillian McGee & Peter Landry, at the Annual CAC Golf Tournament, May 28, 2004.



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