Improving Outcomes for Children Exposed to Family Violence

The Improving Outcomes for Children and Families Exposed to Family Violence Workgroup is a product of the June 2014 Children Witness to Domestic Violence Roundtable hosted at the Legislative Office Building by the Office of the Child Advocate and CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The roundtable examined a series of 2014 in-state domestic violence homicides where children were present at the scene, with a broader aim to establish stronger policy and practice amongst Connecticut systems and stakeholders who respond to children and youth exposed to domestic violence.

Earlier this month the group submitted its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly's Children's Committee. Focused in the areas of data, creation of a “Center of Excellence”, multi-disciplinary teams, training, and statewide standards & protocols, some recommendations included in the report are as follows:

**Data**
- Connecticut should consider mandates regarding collection and reporting of data by law enforcement and CPS (e.g., New Jersey) where children are present or otherwise impacted by an incident.

**Center of Excellence**
- Create a Center of Excellence to serve as a one-stop, trauma-informed center for children impacted by family violence that can also capture statewide data and serve as the hub for data, research, policy and technical assistance.

**Multi-Disciplinary Teams**
- Include representation of family violence victim advocates on each team.

**Training**
- Establish statewide, standardized training and curriculum components that at a minimum address national best practice registry, trauma-informed and evidence-based practice, assessment and screening standards, and ongoing professional development in these areas for lawyers, child protection and law enforcement.

**Statewide Standards & Protocols**
- Consider enhanced penalties for the abuser when committing domestic violence in front of a child.
- Create a model policy with best practice guidance for stakeholders responding to children who witness domestic violence, including an advisory committee.

The Children’s Committee will now consider the recommendations for possible action.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)
Verizon Wireless Continues Strong Support of Domestic Violence Victims

The HopeLine program of Verizon Wireless collects no-longer-used wireless phones, batteries and accessories at their stores nationwide. Phones that can be refurbished are then sold, the proceeds of which are used to provide new wireless phones and cash grants to local shelters and nonprofit organizations that focus on preventing domestic violence, raising awareness, and support survivors and their families.

Through the sale of those phones and the generosity of community partners and individuals that support the HopeLine program, Verizon Wireless was able to award CCADV’s member domestic violence organizations across the state with a “Kids in Need” grant to support 2014 holiday gift purchases. Domestic violence organizations then convert those grant funds into multiple gift cards for retailers of their choice for use exclusively by their clients. The gift cards are used directly by clients to empower them to purchase a gift or much needed personal items for their children.

This is the fourteenth consecutive year Verizon Wireless has conducted its “Kids in Need” Holiday Program to help make holidays a little brighter for children whose families are being helped by domestic violence agencies. Many thanks to Verizon Wireless for its continued strong support for victims of domestic violence and those agencies that serve them!

Good Luck, Margaret! CCADV Says Goodbye to One of Our Own

With the departure of longtime Executive Director of Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury, Peggy Panagrossi (see next page), comes an expected shift within the world of domestic violence services in Connecticut. As Safe Haven’s Associate Director, Lee Schlesinger, moved into the role of Executive Director, someone would need to fill his former seat. It came as no surprise that Lee looked to CCADV’s own Margaret Rosa, a known leader, to take on the task.

In 2007, Margaret Rosa arrived at CCADV as an intern, working with Linda Blozie to facilitate the CT Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee. Recognized for her positive outlook and easy-going personality, Margaret was hired in 2008 following her internship. She continued her work coordinating Fatality Review and, never one to shy away from a challenge, later led efforts to expand reviews to include near-fatalities in 2013. Margaret also spearheaded 4 of CCADV’s “domestic violence across communities” events, our biennial conference co-sponsored with the Department of Social Services.

One of her primary roles at CCADV has been working with members to ensure adherence to agency standards and to provide technical assistance whenever needed. Margaret is known among the membership for her responsiveness, always making sure that the members have the information they need to provide the highest quality services. She is incredibly supportive and accommodating of both member organization staff and clients, troubleshooting problems regularly throughout the day and often working late into the evening to catch up on the rest of her work.

“Margaret is the quintessential team player,” said Tonya Johnson, Vice President for Operations and Margaret’s direct supervisor since 2009. “She always steps up and goes the extra mile, whether it’s to help her colleagues at CCADV or to assist the members with their work. She is going to make a great addition to Safe Haven. The staff and clients are lucky to have her.”

The transition will be bittersweet for her co-workers – we will miss her terribly but we are all very excited for her to have this new, well-deserved opportunity. Margaret, thank you for all of your hardwork over the years. We all wish you well… and luckily we know where to find you.
Saying Thank You...

**TWO LONGTIME LEADERS LEAVE LASTING LEGACIES**

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence is made up of 18 member organizations who work directly with victims of domestic violence 365 days per year. They are the front line, providing essential services that help victims stay safe and regain control over their lives. It is not an easy job, and yet a deep dedication to the cause of domestic violence keeps so many staff members working with their organization for years, the difficult nature of the job often going unrecognized. We want to take a moment to recognize the commitment of two of our own, one who retired at the end of 2014 and one who will retire later this year.

In December 2014, Peggy Panagrossi retired as Executive Director of Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury. Peggy dedicated 27 years to leading Safe Haven, ensuring the best possible services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It is through Peggy’s leadership that the agency grew from a small program known as “Women’s Emergency Shelter” to the robust program that is “Safe Haven.” During her time Peggy oversaw four office relocations, including the relocation of the shelter to a space better suited for families, as well as a name change (to “Safe Haven”) to better reflect the comprehensive work being done with women, men and children. She added sexual assault crisis services to the options available to victims seeking help from Safe Haven and expanded the Family Violence Victim Advocate program to provide increased assistance to victims involved with the criminal court.

Peggy also facilitated the establishment of a satellite office in Southbury to ensure a local presence and easy access for victims throughout the organization’s catchment area. In 2003, Peggy led efforts to begin managing the Southbury Community Thrift Shop, which had been a part of the community since 1998 and donating proceeds to various local charities, including Safe Haven. Formally renamed the “Safe Haven Thrift Shop” in 2011, the store provides free or low-cost clothing, furniture or household items to victims fleeing violence. It also provides a revenue stream in the form of unrestricted funds to support Safe Haven’s programs.

“I have had the opportunity to work with Peg to strengthen Connecticut’s response to victims of domestic violence over the past twenty years,” said CCADV chief executive officer, Karen Jarmoc. “Peg is the perfect blend of a leader who exhibits compassion and competency in her role at Safe Haven. Peg has not only impacted the lives of victims in Waterbury, but certainly across the state. Her strong commitment to improving circumstances for victims and their families is to be applauded and will certainly be missed.”

Also in December, Executive Director of Susan B. Anthony Project (SBAP) in Torrington, Barbara Spiegel, announced that she will retire at the end of June of this year. During her 20 years with SBAP, Barbara oversaw an annual budget that tripled, a staff that grew significantly, and a marked increase in the organization’s ability to provide quality, comprehensive, trauma-informed services. In particular the agency expanded its Transitional Housing program as well as the Community Education program.

From 2003-2006, Barbara led SBAP’s Rebuilding Lives Capital Campaign. The campaign, which raised $2.8 million, allowed SBAP to buy and renovate a historical building in Torrington which now serves as the Counseling and Advocacy Center. This structure provides a safe place for client meetings, support groups, a beautiful children’s playroom, and comfortable working spaces for staff. At the end of the Capital Campaign, SBAP started an Endowment that now stands at over $1 million and growing.

Throughout her time as Executive Director of SBAP, Barbara has been very involved as a community leader. She has been a member of the Torrington-Winsted Rotary, serving as President in 2013-14, received the prestigious Paul Harris award for community service in 2011, and serves on the Advisory Boards of Litchfield Bancorp and Charlotte Hungerford Hospital. In 2014, The Register Citizen named her Person of the Year in recognition of her vocal advocacy for victims following a sexual assault incident in Torrington.

“Susan B. Anthony Project is most certainly a stronger and more viable organization as a result of Barb’s incredible leadership and diligence to help victims and their families in her region,” said Karen Jarmoc, CCADV chief executive officer. “Barbara has been a thoughtful and steady force out in Torrington and the organization has flourished under her chief guidance.”

**THANK YOU**
Established pursuant to Public Act 14-217 (Section 121), the Task Force to Study Service of Restraining Orders, which was led by CCADV CEO, Karen Jarmoc, and State Representative Michelle Cook, met from August 2014 through January 2015. The group engaged in meaningful dialogue and evaluation leading to several recommendations to improve Connecticut’s policy and practice related to the service of restraining orders for family violence under CT General Statutes 46b-15.

According to the Connecticut Judicial Branch, the state has averaged nearly 9,000 restraining order applications annually over the past four years from 2010 through 2013. Of that number, approximately 5,000 orders are granted through an ex parte status with a mandate that they be served to the respondent in-hand or abode at least five days prior to the hearing. Such hearing is statutorily defined as occurring within 14 days of the issuance of the order.

Several presentations were made to the group including: law enforcement and a victim advocate from Massachusetts, which uses law enforcement to serve restraining orders; victim advocate from Rhode Island; several staff from various offices within the CT Judicial Branch; state marshals; and the CT Police Chiefs Associations.

The Task Force submitted its findings and recommendations to the Judiciary Committee of the CT General Assembly on January 9, 2015. The group made over 25 recommendations concentrated in the areas of access, communication, and practice. Some of the recommendations included in the final report are:

**Access**
- Certified domestic violence counselors who function as family violence victim advocates in all civil courts in the state to assist victims with applying for a restraining order and to provide safety planning.
- Allocated space in each court house, where feasible, to ensure a consistent place where victims can locate and meet privately with marshals.
- Following the lead of 20 other states that allow for the extension of temporary, ex parte orders if service was not successfully made prior to the scheduled two week hearing.
- Shortening the length of time that notice of hearing or the ex parte order must be served prior to the two week hearing from 5 days down to 2-3 days.

**Communication**
- The Judicial Branch should create an “applicant packet” to ensure the consistent dissemination of forms and information.
- Mandate the use of Connecticut’s statewide judicial protective order registry system to improve communication and timeliness of notification of service to all system partners, including the court and law enforcement.

**Practice**
- Expand who is authorized and/or mandated to serve restraining orders to include law enforcement, particularly when service of an ex parte order must be made and there are firearms or ammunition present (this would also require that the restraining order application be updated to require that the applicant disclose any known possession of firearms or ammunition by the respondent).
- Similar to Massachusetts, allow law enforcement to verbally inform/notify someone that they are the respondent of a temporary restraining order.
- Establish a working group to study the need and feasibility of creating a mechanism by which an applicant can apply for an ex parte restraining order when the court is not in session.
- Connecticut statute should be amended to more clearly allow abode service or other forms of alternative service, but only so long as the court receives sufficient evidence that actual notice was provided to the Respondent regarding a) the factual basis for the restraining order application, b) the terms of any ex parte order against the Respondent, and c) specifying the date and time of the hearing.

The Judiciary Committee will now consider the recommendations put forth by the Task Force and potentially introduce statutory changes for consideration during the 2015 session of the General Assembly.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)
Two Additional Civil Court Advocates Begin Work Helping Victims

Last year, CCADV successfully secured funding to hire two new, full-time Civil Court Victim Advocates to be stationed in family court and available to assist victims dealing with civil matters. Following a proposal and review process, Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury and Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis were awarded contracts for the civil advocate positions. These advocates will work at the Meriden JD and Waterbury JD courts.

The primary role of the Civil Court Victim Advocate is to provide support services to victims seeking civil court remedies, such as a restraining order, divorce, child custody and visitation. All services are carried out in a manner that empowers victims with respect to their safety and their right to self-determination of what legal options are best and safest for them. While not able to provide legal advice, victim advocates explain the court process, assist with the completion of necessary court paperwork and attend court hearings with the victim. Perhaps most importantly, as certified domestic violence counselors, these advocates are able to work with victims to design and implement safety plans. The importance of safety planning for victims who have initiated court proceedings cannot be overstated and is a critical service that should be available to every victim who enters family court.

With the addition of the new advocates, there are now a total of 4 Civil Court Victim Advocates in Connecticut (in addition to the two new advocates, there is one full-time advocate employed by The Center for Family Justice in Bridgeport and one part-time advocate employed by Interval House in Hartford). Connecticut currently has 45 Family Violence Victim Advocates available to assist victims dealing with criminal court cases.

Funding for the civil court advocate positions was largely secured through the leadership of Appropriations Committee Chairs, Senator Beth Bye (D-West Hartford) and Representative Toni Walker (D-New Haven); then Representative and Committee Vice Chair, Mae Flexer (D-Killingly); and, Committee member, Representative Catherine Abercrombie (D-Meriden).

Save the Date
Spring Reception to Benefit CCADV

Tuesday, June 23, 2015
5:30pm - 7:00pm

Governor’s Residence
990 Prospect Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

Sponsored by at&t
CCADV Announces 2015 Policy Priorities

In November CCADV’s Board of Directors approved the organization’s 2015 policy priorities, which were developed in collaboration with our member organizations. During the upcoming session CCADV will focus on the removal of firearms, including ammunition, at the time an ex parte restraining order is put in place. At least 20 other states allow courts to prohibit possession of firearms during temporary, ex parte orders. Connecticut already has precedence for the removal of firearms following the application for a warrant, but prior to a court hearing, for individuals deemed to pose a threat to themselves or others.

We will also work with the other members of the Task Force to Study Service of Restraining Orders (see task force update on pg. 4), which was co-chaired by CCADV Chief Executive Officer Karen Jarmoc and Representative Michelle Cook, to make improvements to the state’s system for serving restraining orders, ensuring that burdens on the victim are minimized. The Coalition will also seek to secure a temporary hold or “cooling off” period for certain individuals arrested for family violence that provides the victim with time to safety plan with a domestic violence counselor, and ensure uniform, accepted standards for the provision of domestic violence offender programs within Connecticut. Additionally, we will work with the Office of the Child Advocate and the Children’s Committee to improve outcomes for children exposed to family violence.

We will continue to monitor other issues that may impact victims such as child custody, divorce/alimony, health insurance, Family & Medical Leave Act, wage gap, etc.

Click HERE to review the full set of 2015 priorities. Please contact Liza Andrews with questions.

Senators Blumenthal & Murphy Film Domestic Violence PSAs

This past fall, US Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy teamed up with Cablevision to film PSAs highlighting the signs of domestic violence, as well as the free and confidential services available 24 hours per day through CCADV’s 18 member domestic violence organizations. Cablevision ran the PSAs about 100 times during October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, throughout its Connecticut service areas. The PSAs also ran during the months of November and December.

It’s fairly unprecedented for two sitting US Senators to be so invested in an issue that both are willing to film PSAs on a single subject. We are grateful to Senators Blumenthal and Murphy, as well as Connecticut’s entire Congressional Delegation for their continued support of domestic violence victims and those organizations that serve them.

And many thanks to Cablevision, including Area Director of Government Affairs for Connecticut and CCADV Board member, Michael Chowaniec, for donating their time, services and resources to this important cause.

Click above to watch the PSA.
CCADV Calls for Increased Protections During the Most Dangerous Time

Connecticut averaged 14 intimate partner violence homicides annually between 2000 and 2012. Firearms have been the most frequently used weapon in those homicides (39%). Unfortunately, current Connecticut law leaves a significant gap in the protection of domestic violence victims from potential gun violence. Despite having some of the toughest gun laws in the nation, as well as progressive policies addressing domestic violence, nothing in Connecticut law prohibits respondents of temporary, ex parte restraining orders from possessing firearms and ammunition.

The days following a victim's application for a restraining order and attempts to end an abusive relationship are the most dangerous. This is a period of time when the abuser realizes that he or she is losing control of the victim and may resort to extreme measures to regain power. If, in applying for a civil restraining order, a judge determines that a temporary, ex parte order should be in place preceding a hearing for a full, one year restraining order, then that judge believes that the victim faces “immediate and present physical danger.” This is precisely the time to remove firearms from the equation, as is recognized by at least 20 other states that give courts explicit authority to temporarily remove firearms from some or all individuals subject to ex parte restraining orders. Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence and our 18 member organizations advocate for changes in our State’s laws that will strengthen protections offered to victims during this critical time.

These changes include:

- Explicitly empower courts to order respondents to surrender firearms and ammunition upon the issuance of certain ex parte restraining orders should a judge find one of the following four risk factors present upon issuance:
  1. The use or threatened use of a deadly weapon against the applicant or a pattern of prior conduct of using or threatening to use a deadly weapon against the applicant;
  2. Threats to seriously injure or kill the applicant or minor child by the respondent;
  3. Threats to commit suicide by the respondent; or,
  4. Serious physical injuries inflicted upon the applicant or minor child by the respondent.

- Require respondents to surrender firearms and ammunition within 48 hours of receiving notice that they are ineligible to possess either.

- Make noncompliance with an ex parte order to surrender firearms and ammunition a criminal offense.

CCADV understands and appreciates that there are concerns regarding how this proposal, if implemented, would affect individuals’ rights to possess firearms. First, it is important to note that the United States Supreme Court, in challenges related to the Second Amendment of the Constitution, has stated that the core protection offered is the “right of law-abiding, responsible citizens” to possess firearms, and that this right is “not unlimited” and should not be understood to confer the “right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever and for whatever purpose.” This proposal will not impact the rights of law-abiding gun owners. As noted earlier, at least 20 other states have successfully implemented and upheld strong laws prohibiting possession of firearms during ex parte orders based on the state’s interest to protect victims of domestic violence.

Our proposal is akin to existing Connecticut law that gives prosecutors and police officers the ability to apply for a warrant to seize firearms from a person who poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or others. If the warrant is issued, a hearing is held within two weeks to determine if the seized weapons should be returned. Finally, while CCADV recognizes the importance of individuals’ rights to possess firearms, we contend that the lives and safety of victims, their children and their family members, including the government’s interest to protect them and the larger community, is of paramount importance.

Click above to read the complete policy brief.
Many Thanks...

To all who attended our 4th Annual First 100 Plus Breakfast and Awards Ceremony. It was a wonderful morning with over 80 men inducted into the Class of 2014 for their dedication to improving the lives of domestic violence victims across the state. Congratulations to the Class of 2014 and honorees Senator Martin M. Looney (Coalition Crusader Award) and ESPN, Inc. (Lawrence & Shirley Bostrom Pillars of Change Award). And thank you to all of our sponsors, including presenting sponsor, Verizon Wireless!

Check out more photos from the event on our Facebook page! And thank you to former CCADV Board President and owner of Perceptions Photography, Sandy Aldieri, for donating her time to take these amazing photos!

5th Annual First 100 Plus
Save the Date | November 6, 2015 | Hartford Marriott Downtown

CCADV Training Institute
Upcoming Trainings

Don’t miss out on these exciting opportunities through CCADV’s Training Institute!
Click on the training opportunities below for a description and registration information.

Community Welcome
Teen Dating Violence
February 3 | 10:00am - 1:00pm | CCADV

CONNECT: Suicide Prevention & Intervention
February 10 | 9:00am - 1:00pm | Valley United Way

Train the Trainer: Training Law Enforcement on Domestic Violence
(Members & Law Enforcement welcome)
February 25 | 9:30am - 3:30pm | CCADV

Initiating Green Dot Violence Prevention on College Campuses
(Members & Campus Personnel welcome)
March 24 | 10:00am - 1:00pm | CCADV

Entendiendo la Violencia Domestica
April 14 | 10:00am - 3:00pm | CCADV

Members Only

New Staff & Volunteer Orientation
2/27 - 2/28 & 3/6-3/7 | 9:30am - 4:00pm | CCADV

Strengths Based Case Management
March 17 | 9:30am - 1:00pm | CCADV

CCADV Member Program Standards Training
March 26 | 10:00am - 1:00pm | CCADV

Day of Advocacy Staples
April 8 | 9:30am - 4:00pm | CCADV

Advocate Response After a Call to Law Enforcement
April 9 | 10:00am - 1:00pm | CCADV

Click HERE to download the complete Winter/Spring 2015 Training Catalog
Stalking Awareness Month
Know the Signs...

courtesy of National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and the Stalking Resource Center

What do you think of when you hear the term “stalking?” Is it Glenn Close’s character in Fatal Attraction? Is it the “love” demonstrated in the song “Every Breath You Take” by The Police? Through characters and songs like these, we absorb cultural notions and views about what a stalker is and what they do.

However, with the glamorization and misrepresentation of stalking as “obsessive love” or the normalization of “just a little Facebook-stalking” of an ex, we have minimized the danger and severity of what stalking is and how it really affects survivors’ lives. Stalking is a serious issue, a terrifying crime, and an indicator that there may be even more red flags of abuse.

Through its signature programs, the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) regularly addresses stalking. During Stalking Awareness Month (January), they bring awareness to the issue of stalking and highlight some of the ways that stalking and domestic violence intersect with our work.

Connecticut defines stalking as a person who:

(1) knowingly engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for such person's physical safety or the physical safety of a third person; or

(2) Such person intentionally, and for no legitimate purpose, engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear that such person’s employment, business or career is threatened, where (A) such conduct consists of the actor telephoning to, appearing at or initiating communication or contact at such other person's place of employment or business, provided the actor was previously and clearly informed to cease such conduct, and (B) such conduct does not consist of constitutionally protected activity.

Think you might be a victim of stalking? Here are some safety tips from the Stalking Resource Center:

- If possible, have a phone nearby at all times, preferably one to which the stalker has never had access. Memorize emergency numbers, and make sure that 911 and helpful family or friends are on speed dial.
- Vary routines, including changing routes to work, school, the grocery store, and other places regularly frequented. Limit time spent alone and try to shop at different stores and visit different bank branches.
- Do not interact with the person stalking or harassing you. Responding to stalker's actions may reinforce their behavior.
- Inform neighbors and, if residing in an apartment, any on-site managers about the situation, providing them with a photo or description of the stalker and any vehicles they may drive if known.

Check out more important safety tips at the Stalking Resource Center and be sure to connect with your local domestic violence agency.
MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

The Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services
Ansonia  New Haven
(203) 736-9944  (203) 789-8104
www.bhcare.org

Women’s Center of Greater Danbury
Danbury
(203) 731-5206
www.wcgod.org

Network Against Domestic Abuse
Enfield
(860) 763-4542
www.thenetworkct.org

Interval House
Hartford
(860) 527-0550
www.intervalhousect.org

New Horizons
Middletown
(860) 347-3044
www.newhorizonsdv.com

Safe Futures
New London
(860) 701-6000
www.safefuturesct.org

Women’s Support Services
Sharon
(860) 364-1900
www.wssdv.org

Safe Haven
Waterbury
(203) 575-0036
www.safehavengw.org

The Center for Family Justice
Bridgeport
(203) 384-9559
www.cwfefc.org

Domestic Violence Program/
United Services, Inc.
Dayville  Willimantic
(860) 774-8648  (860) 456-9476
www.unitedservicesct.org

Domestic Abuse Service/
Greenwich YWCA
Greenwich
(203) 622-0003
www.ywcagreenwich.org

Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis
Meriden
(203) 238-1501
www.mwchrysalis.org

Prudence Crandall Center
New Britain
(860) 225-6357
www.prudencecrandall.org

Domestic Violence Crisis Center
Norwalk  Stamford
(203) 852-1980  (203) 588-9096
www.dvccct.org

Susan B. Anthony Project
Torrington
(860) 482-7133
www.sbpchapter.org

CCADV is the state’s leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those agencies that serve them.

Statewide Hotline - 888.774.2900 (English) 844.831.9200 (Español)
Call to be connected with your local domestic violence service agency.