Where The Roots are Twin:*
The Connections Between Sexual and Domestic Violence

by Anne Smith, Sexual Violence Specialist

The Vermont Network is known in the anti-domestic and sexual violence world as a dual coalition, meaning we address both domestic and sexual violence in our work. Twelve out of the sixteen Network Programs provide services to victims of both sexual and domestic violence and four provide services separately, but in close connection with the sister program in their community. There are a number of reasons this link is both logical and beneficial for the communities we serve -- this article will address just a few.

In the simplest sense, perpetrators of sexual violence and domestic violence exploit their power over someone because they feel entitled to do so in order to get their desired result. Their belief that this abuse of power is acceptable is supported by our popular culture which in many ways endorses violence and views women and children, and many other members of our society, as less than equal. Because the perpetrator’s violence is usually targeted at those viewed as least powerful in our society (due to age, gender, disabilities, substance use, etc.), perpetrators are often successful at avoiding accountability. Unfortunately, our systems of response traditionally are not well designed to take into account the inequality and power dynamics that are at play. For example, people with developmental disabilities are frequently targeted by perpetrators of sexual violence, yet it is rare that adequate accommodations are provided for them so that their communication and understanding is facilitated during law enforcement interviews or court proceedings.

Sexual and domestic violence also frequently coincide. Sexual violence is very often used as a tactic by batterers to impart fear and control in their partners and many batterers also sexually abuse their children. Sadly, because of the pervasiveness of domestic and sexual violence it is all too common for victims to experience multiple incidences of violence. While a survivor may initially call a Network Program to address an immediate need related to domestic violence, she may also need to address memories the current abuse is bringing up of a sexual assault by an acquaintance or family member some years ago.

The barriers that victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence experience accessing the services and response they need are also often quite similar. Victim blaming (which has been well illustrated in recent high profile cases) continues to hinder both sexual and domestic violence victims from reporting the violence they experienced. Victims of both sexual violence and domestic violence fear most that they will be blamed or disbelieved by those close to them or by the systems they need to access in order to seek justice and heal.

Despite the myriad of connections, it is important to acknowledge there are many ways in which these issues are different and require distinct awareness, response and knowledge in order to identify the issues and respond appropriately. For example, the fact that sexual violence involves sexual contact adds additional barriers for survivors and requires specialized knowledge from those responding to their needs for medical care and evidence collection. Responding to victims of domestic violence requires thorough knowledge of emergency housing options and safety planning.

Acknowledging the connections between sexual and do-

continued on page 2

VT Senate Makes Domestic Violence A Top Priority for 2007-2008 Session

In January leaders in the Vermont Senate announced an exciting initiative: the Senate will spend much of the 2007-2008 legislative biennium focusing on the issue of domestic violence. Senate President Pro Tem Peter Shumlin and the chairs of the Senate Judiciary and Appropriations Committees held a press conference with the Network to highlight the issue and focus on prevention and support for survivors, especially children.

“My personal experience working with troubled youth tells me that this is Vermont’s number one crime problem,” said Senator Dick Sears, Chair of the Judiciary Committee. “We often focus on the high profile cases while ignoring the huge problem that is happening behind closed doors throughout the state. All too often, kids who witness abuse go on to become abusive later in life. We need to do everything we can to help these kids, and to break the cycle of violence.”

Senator Susan Bartlett, Chair of Senate Appropriations, continued: “Domestic violence tears families apart, and the human and financial costs are enormous. Through this proactive dialogue, we hope to think collaboratively about what it would take to end domestic violence in Vermont.”

Since January, the Senate Judiciary Committee has dedicated Thursday mornings to committee hearings on the problem of domestic violence in Vermont, especially its impact on children. The committee has heard testimony from more than 50 witnesses, including survivors and children impacted by domestic violence, representatives from the Agency of Human Services and many of its departments, the courts, law enforcement and the advocacy community, prevention educators and the Department of Education, and many more.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will convene this November to continue their conversation and begin to draft legislation for introduction in January of 2008. They also plan to hold a public hearing in November. For more information or to be added to the Network’s Legislative Email Alert List, contact Sarah Kenney at sarahk@vtnetwork.org/ or visit our website at www.vtnetwork.org.
Hello Vermont! Although it has only been a few weeks during which I have been stumbling around in the rather large shoes left to fill by our previous director, Rose Pulliam, I am already delighted to be a part of the anti-violence movement here in Vermont and I stand in amazement at the commitment of the people who are working to end sexual and domestic violence in this state. In just six weeks, this is what I have found:

- Purposeful collaboration between the agents and agencies charged with serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence in this state — resulting in a plethora of public/private partnerships promoting innovative approaches to responding to the needs of survivors.

- A deep understanding of the pervasive nature of sexual and domestic violence, not only by members of the Network, but also by people doing work across other disciplines. I’m thinking specifically of the wonderful group working on behalf of all crime victims at the Center for Crime Victims Services; the Domestic Violence Unit folks at the Department for Children and Families; the advocates and providers working within the disabilities community; the staff and volunteers at SafeSpace who are doing so much to address the needs of the LBGTQIA community; Deaf Vermonter’s Victim Services (DVAS); the staff at the Domestic Abuse Education Project; and members of the Anti-Violence Partnership at UVM who are working to implement The Vermont Approach which is an innovative strategy for preventing sexual violence.

- A state government that is not only interested in promoting peaceful relationships, but is also willing to spend time learning, and provide real support in the form of funding to departments and organizations seeking to end domestic and sexual violence.

- A Congressional delegation that does its homework, asks good questions, and advocates for laws and policies that result in positive outcomes for Vermonter experiencing sexual or domestic violence.

- The Vermont Network Office filled with innovative and brilliant thinkers who use their skills working on projects across the state that will improve the lives of all Vermonter, and specifically women and children, people with disabilities, people who use the services provided by the Agency for Human Services, and any person impacted by sexual or domestic violence.

- Sixteen member Programs serving all thirteen counties in Vermont with a variety of services and offerings designed to help people coping with domestic and/or sexual violence. In 2006, Network programs answered 17,172 hotline calls and provided prevention programming to 17,217 school-aged children (see other stats in graphics). These numbers represent the very tip of the iceberg of the 24-hour-a-day dedication of the staff members and volunteers working from Newport to Bennington, Brattleboro to St. Albans and all points in between.

- And finally, I have had the great honor of meeting Vermonters who are the survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence — those persons who have been willing to courageously share their lives and experiences. It is in hearing from victims that we can learn how to be of service.

Serving sexual and/or domestic violence survivors intersects, like overlapping spheres, and also requires distinctly separate approaches. On a societal level, both issues result from oppression -- the power of one group to use violence to control another group. Our society reinforces such behavior on both individual and institutional levels. Many individuals served by programs in Vermont have experienced both domestic and sexual violence. It must be said that while equity is the standard for providing services to domestic and sexual violence survivors, resources have not been allocated on an equitable basis. This year, however, with the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, the primary source for funding for Programs, there is a significant amount of funding that will be allocated specifically to meet the needs of survivors of sexual violence and survivors from traditionally marginalized groups.

Sexual and domestic violence are hard issues to contemplate and present significant challenges to those of us working to end them and to members of society in general. In Vermont there is much about which to be proud and grateful, and there is still much to be done to support the survivors, and to uproot the societal conditions that allow this violence to persist.

Karen comes to Vermont from Ohio where she gained extensive experience working twelve years in the anti-violence against women movement as the Executive Director of the Tri-County Help Center, Inc., a non-profit domestic violence organization. She now lives in Hinesburg with her partner and son.
Supervised Visitation in Vermont --
Claudia Marieb Joins the Network Staff

I joined the Network staff in December as the Safe Havens Project coordinator, stepping into Anne Smith’s shoes as she moved into the Sexual Violence Specialist position. Under the Safe Haven’s grant I have the privilege of working with all the Supervised Visitation Programs across the state. In all there are ten Supervised Visitation Programs, each providing a neutral space and trained monitors to ensure visits that are safe for all parties involved. They also provide Safe Exchanges – a way for the children to go from one parent to the other without the parents needing to see each other or interact.

I was drawn to work on this grant since I love providing training and TA (technical assistance), and because Supervised Visitation is a field that interests me – particularly that these programs are figuring out a way to serve all the members in a family that has experienced domestic violence. Programs grapple with an understanding of child development, child safety, adult victim safety, and providing an environment with clear boundaries for the offending parent. This is a growing step in my work with issues of domestic and sexual violence, which, until this point, has been primarily victim-focused.

I made my decision to work in the field when there was an acquaintance rape at the University of New Hampshire, in the hall where I was the hall director. The unjust campus judicial proceedings, campus-wide protests, seeing the effects on the victim (who withdrew from school), and the sheer number of women who identified as victims of sexual assault after this highly-publicized case motivated me to devote my work to understanding issues of oppression, and provide quality services to victims.

I began as a volunteer legal advocate at Women Helping Batterer Women of Burlington, and after a move out west, took a position as the Rape Prevention Program Coordinator at a feminist collective. In addition to training volunteers I created specialized trainings for volunteer hospital advocates and support group facilitators. I was then hired by Missoula County to develop two programs. One was an innovative community-based program for victims of domestic and sexual violence in a rural area; I worked with everyone from the bartenders to the church groups since the project was to help the community build their own response to the problem of violence. The other was the creation of a Crime Victim Advocate office in the county court house.

I am excited to be doing this work back in Vermont, in a new and exciting part of the field. If you have any questions about supervised visitation please email or call me: claudia@vtnetwork.org / 223.1302 x111.

AHS Phase One Recommendations

The Vermont Network in collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) recently released its updated report on the AHS Domestic Violence Initiative: Phase One Recommendations for Domestic Violence Policy and Practice at the Vermont Agency of Human Services. Throughout the past three years the Agency of Human Services has worked with the Vermont Network to develop strategies to improve the AHS policy response to domestic violence. The report and the recommendations contained therein illustrate the Agency’s leadership and willingness to utilize internal and external expertise to this end. The AHS Domestic Violence Steering Committee and the respective Departmental Advisory Groups have developed thoughtful and comprehensive implementation plans which are sure to carry this very important work forward.

For more information on the AHS Domestic Violence Initiative please contact Jill Richard, 802-223-1302 or jill@vtnetwork.org. You can view the report on the Network’s website: www.vtnetwork.org.
Hip-hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes
An official selection of the 2006 Sundance Film Festival for good reason – it provides a riveting examination of manhood in hip-hop culture. Director Byron Hurt, former college quarterback, gender violence prevention educator and long-time hip-hop fan, pays tribute to the art form while challenging the rap music industry to take responsibility for too often perpetuating destructive and deeply conservative styles of manhood that glamorize sexism, violence and homophobia.

Cry Rape
Bill Lueders, Terrace Books © 2006
A true story of one woman’s harrowing quest for justice, this book is dedicated to people everywhere who refuse to let injustice be the last word. Author Bill Lueders shows what it is to be an investigative reporter – endless energy and skill battling denial and cover-up to get to the truth. An excellent expose on how persons with the best intentions can be very wrong.

The Men's Program: A Peer Education Guide for Rape Prevention
John D. Foubert, Routledge © 2005
This Peer Education Guide to Rape Prevention is a proven approach to help change campus culture, and as a centerpiece of an all-male education program designed to challenge misogynistic and masculine stereotypes about sexual assault that can indirectly contribute to abuse, violence and rape. The focus is on empowering young men with knowledge and support systems needed to become participants in this anti-violence movement and trustworthy and receptive friends for victims of rape.

Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life
Evan Stark, Oxford University Press © 2007
“... provides a rich history of the refuge/shelter movement and a powerful critique of the criminal justice system. This path-breaking exploration of the entrapment of women in intimate partnerships, with its analysis of social context and male social and economic privilege, is a must-read... a crucial addition to the literature.” – Barbara J. Hart, Senior Policy & Legal Advisor, Battered Women’s Justice Project

Education for a Change
Rick Arnold, Bev Burke, et al; Between the Lines © 1991
Genuine democracy does not happen solely through our political and education work. Committed for 20 years to popular education and social change as the vehicle toward a truly participatory society, the authors have worked in social education challenging their own assumptions and refining skills toward an integrated theory and practice.

Safe Return: Domestic Violence & Prisoner Reentry
Creasie F Hairston, PhD and William Oliver, PhD; Vera Institute of Justice 2006. www.vera.org

Religion and Domestic Violence: Information & Resources

New at the Network Library

If, When & How:
Best practices for parent/child contact in the context of domestic violence.

A conference for judges, attorneys, advocates, GALs, supervised visitation program staff, DCF & more.
OPEN TO ALL!
Featuring national & local guest speakers/workshops.

May 31, 2007, 8:30 to 4 / $35  Killington, VT
Contact: Bethany@vtnetwork.org
The Third Annual Red Flag Campaign and 14th Annual Crime Victims’ Rights Week Awards Ceremony

This year the Network held its third annual Red Flag Campaign, honoring people victimized by perpetrators of sexual violence and the people who support them. Network Programs provided services to 1,514 victims and survivors of sexual violence this year while collaborating with community partners and local agencies to improve community response and support services. Locally, 10 Programs had flag displays around the state and on April 25th, the Network and allies converged on Montpelier for the statewide ceremony.

The Victims’ Rights Awards Ceremony, sponsored by the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services with the support of the Vermont Victim/Survivor of Crime Council and the Vermont Network, followed at the Pavilion Building Auditorium. Recipients are as follows:

- Anna LaPerle and Amy Messina each received the Survivor/Activist Award
- Catherine Waltz, State-based Victim Advocate, received the Lifetime Achievement Award
- Karen Burns, CUSI, and Anna Pirie, ED of AWARE, each received the Victim Advocate Award
- Deborah Celis, State’s Attorney, received the Criminal Justice Professional Award
- Karen Vastine, Vermont Network, received the Trailblazer Award
- George Schenk, American Flatbread, received the Grassroots Community Support Award
- Holly Leach, Sexual Assault Crisis Team, received the Sexual Violence Advocacy Award
- Kylie Kenney received the Youth Activist Award
- Holly Nicole, formerly DCF, received the Patrissi Award

April Is Not the Only Month for Sexual Violence Awareness

Helping our youth is a critical part of the work
What’s Up With The Vermont Approach?

Since the launch of The Vermont Approach: A Strategic Plan for Comprehensive, Collaborative Sexual Violence Prevention 2006-2010, author and Project Director, Susan Roche, Ph.D., M.S.S.W., has continued to direct implementation efforts. She worked with the Vermont Network to define state funding support. With the help of the Steering Committee of the Anti-Violence Partnership (AVP), a university-community collaboration at the University of Vermont Department of Social Work, she was able to site the project under the AVP umbrella, a good fit for the collaborative vision of the Plan’s strategies.

The AVP Steering Committee initiated a search process for a coordinator and also recruited a graduate student assistant, Hannah Hauser, former program coordinator at SafeSpace in Burlington. At the same time, Steering Committee members were involved in working with Network staff and several state agencies to establish a Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force mandated by the Legislature. The Task Force is to complete a survey of current curricula and programs used by schools for sexual violence prevention at all grade levels.

In February, Anne Liske was hired as the Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator for The Vermont Approach and Coordinator of the AVP. She comes to the role from Albany, New York with more than fourteen years of experience in the anti-sexual violence movement, most recently as the Executive Director of the NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault. She is delighted to have the opportunity to assist such a well envisioned plan take shape and to share the leadership of the AVP with its Co-Chairs, Judy Rex and Sharon Lamb. With the AVP Steering Committee, Anne is pulling together a slate of members for the Leadership Forum, the core group of individuals and representatives from diverse agencies across the state who will guide the remainder of The Vermont Approach implementation.

Each of the seven strategies of The Vermont Approach will require broad participation of individuals and institutions. Many who attended the April 14, 2006 launch and the follow-up workshops at the April 27 Dismantling the Rape Culture conference at UVM signed up to be involved in implementing one or more of the strategies. Meanwhile, Anne and Hannah will be reaching out to others to serve on the Leadership Forum, in the Media Project, and in other aspects of this comprehensive plan. Anne can be reached by email at anne.liske@uvm.edu or 802-656-1200.

What Teen Girls Say About Bullying and Harassment

In mid-March the Girl Scout Council of Vermont and the Vermont Commission on Women officially released the results of a new statewide survey, “What Teen Girls Say About Bullying and Harassment”. 211 girls between the ages 11-17 from 69 Vermont middle and high schools participated.

This survey explored the important role that technologies play in harassment and bullying – included were social networking websites, e-mail, and instant and text messaging. Some examples of findings were:

- 20% of 7th graders and 71% of 12th graders reported being approached by strangers to be added to their friends list – thus gaining access to their personal profiles in virtual community websites (i.e. Myspace, etc.)
- 25% of 11-13 year-olds and 80% of 11th graders reported having a social networking site
- 60% of 12th graders reported that their parents had seen their profile, while only 25% of 6th graders reported the same
- School attendance was impacted for 33% of all participating girls
- Those who were bullied, bullied others in return

“...the Commission is concerned and is working with the Girl Scout Council of Vermont to explore ways to address these issues,” said Wendy Love, Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women.

Visit www.women.state.vt.us or www.girlscoutvt.org to view the executive summary, or request printed copy from library@vtnetwork.org.
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AWARE</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 307, Hardwick, VT 05843</td>
<td>(802) 472.6463</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Battered Women’s Services and Shelter</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 652, Barre, VT 05641</td>
<td>1.877.543.9498</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clarina Howard Nichols Center</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 517, Morrisville, VT 05661</td>
<td>(802) 888.5256</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEKCA Step ONE</strong></td>
<td>273 Main Street #1, Newport, VT 05855</td>
<td>1.800.224.7837</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Beginnings</strong></td>
<td>12 Valley Street, Springfield, VT 05156</td>
<td>(802) 885.2050 or (802) 674.6700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PAVE (Project Against Violent Encounters)</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 227, Bennington, VT 05201</td>
<td>(802) 442.2111</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rutland County Women’s Network &amp; Shelter</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 313, Rutland, VT 05701</td>
<td>(802) 775.3232</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safeline</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 368, Chelsea, VT 05038</td>
<td>1.800.639.7233</td>
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<tr>
<td>*<em>Sexual Assault Crisis Team <em>(SACT)</em></em></td>
<td>4 Cottage Street, Barre, VT 05641</td>
<td>(802) 479.5577</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Umbrella</strong></td>
<td>1222 Main Street #301 St. Johnsbury, VT 05819</td>
<td>(802) 748.8141 or 748.8645</td>
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<tr>
<td>*<em>Voices Against Violence <em>(VAV)</em></em></td>
<td>P.O. Box 72, Saint Albans, VT 05753</td>
<td>(802) 524.6575</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WISE</strong></td>
<td>79 Hanover Street, Lebanon, NH 03766</td>
<td>(603) 448.5525 or 1.866.348.WISE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women Helping Battered Women</strong> <em>(WHBW)</em></td>
<td>P.O. Box 1535, Burlington, VT 05402</td>
<td>(802) 658.1996 (also the TTY#)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Crisis Center</strong> <em>(WCC)</em></td>
<td>P.O. Box 933, Brattleboro, VT 05302</td>
<td>(802) 254.6954 or 1.800.773.0689</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Rape Crisis Center</strong> <em>(WRCC)</em></td>
<td>P.O. Box 92, Burlington, VT 05402</td>
<td>(802) 863.1236 or 1.800.773.0689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WomenSafe</strong></td>
<td>P.O. Box 67, Middlebury, VT 05753</td>
<td>(802) 388.4205 or 1.800.388.4205</td>
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* represents Programs with shelters

**Statewide Hotlines**
[will connect you with closest local Program]
800.228.7395 (Domestic Violence)
800.489.7273 (Sexual Assault)