Youth Advocacy Task Force Member Programs

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence Program Members

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<th>Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>AWARE</td>
<td>Hardwick area</td>
<td>472-6463</td>
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<tr>
<td>Battered Women’s Services and Shelter</td>
<td>Barre/Montpelier area</td>
<td>1-877-543-9498</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarina Howard Nichols Center</td>
<td>Morrisville area</td>
<td>888-5256</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Beginnings</td>
<td>Springfield area</td>
<td>885-2050 or 674-6700</td>
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<td>PAVE</td>
<td>Bennington area</td>
<td>442-2111</td>
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<td>Rutland County Women’s Network</td>
<td>Rutland area</td>
<td>775-3232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault Crisis Team</td>
<td>Barre/Montpelier area</td>
<td>479-5577</td>
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<td>Safeline</td>
<td>Orange and Northern Windsor Counties</td>
<td>1-800-639-7233</td>
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<td>NECKA Step ONE</td>
<td>Newport area</td>
<td>1-800-224-7837</td>
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<td>Umbrella</td>
<td>St. Johnsbury area</td>
<td>748-8141</td>
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<td>Voices Against Violence/Laurie’s House</td>
<td>St. Albans/ Franklin &amp; Grand Isle area</td>
<td>524-6575</td>
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<td>WomenSafe</td>
<td>Middlebury area</td>
<td>1-800-338-4205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women Helping Battered Women</td>
<td>Burlington/ Chittenden Co. area</td>
<td>658-1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>WISE (Women’s Information Service)</td>
<td>White River Junc., VT/ Lebanon, NH</td>
<td>603-448-5525</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Crisis Center</td>
<td>Brattleboro area</td>
<td>1-800-773-0689</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Rape Crisis Center</td>
<td>Burlington/ Chittenden Co. area</td>
<td>863-1236</td>
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Statewide Domestic and Sexual Violence Program Members

Safe Space
(for LGBTQQ survivors of domestic/sexual violence)
1-866-869-7341 (toll free)

Deaf Victim Advocacy Services
(Support for Deaf Victims) TTY Warm Line:
1-800-303-DVAS (3827)

The Youth Advocacy Task Force (YATF), is coordinated by the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. It is a statewide coalition of Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocates who focus primarily on providing domestic and sexual violence advocacy services and prevention education programs to children and youth in Vermont. As part of our mission, we are committed to acknowledging the specific injustices experienced by young people and to holding their integrity and human rights as paramount in our work to end domestic and sexual violence. We meet regularly to share resources, design children and youth related materials, and support one another in carrying on this important and challenging work. The idea to produce a newsletter grew out of a desire to share our work and other youth related resources with a wider audience. Enjoy!

Special Focus - A Book Review: The Revealers By Doug Wilhelm

Written by: Erica Shambo , Youth Program Coordinator, New Beginnings, Inc.

In early spring 2005, I had the opportunity to meet Doug Wilhelm, the author of The Revealers, at the Black River High School. Mr. Wilhelm is a tall man standing 6 feet 10 inches high. He starts the discussion addressing his towering stature and admits that he knows all too well what it’s like to be different in middle school. According to Mr. Wilhelm, whenever he mentions the words middle school to others their first reaction is – “those kids can be so vicious!!” Middle school can be a scary place. Kids in school today can take us back to the place buried deep within our psyche!! This is exactly what the characters in The Revealers do - they take you on an exciting and frightening journey through the halls, classes, cafeterias and long walks home that some targets of bullies experience on a daily basis.

The book revolves around three main characters who are the targets of severe bullying - they are Russell Trainor, Elliot Gekewicz and Catalina Aarons. When the story opens, we immediately meet Russell whose main bully is Richie Tucker. Richie is one of the scariest loners in the school and ends up terrorizing Russell throughout the book, forcing him to call upon an “expert” named Elliot. Elliot Gekewicz is the low person on the totem pole at Parkland Middle School - he is one kid that everyone picks on. He is smart with a small build and a last name that is just begging for someone to take advantage of - and they do!! Russell looks to Elliot for advice and eventually the two hit it off and realize they are not the only victims of bullies and that the bullies are not always male.

Enter Catalina. She is the new girl from Manila who is extremely tall, darker skinned and a tad bit awkward. Her tormentors are a group of popular girls who write her nasty notes and spread rumors around school about her. Eventually the three get together and realize that what is happening to them not only hurts them deep down inside, but is also reeking havoc on their daily lives - both in and out of school. They make it their mission to do an experiment to try and put a stop to their bullies’ nasty ways. Together they embark on a brave journey to learn what makes a person a bully. They use different tactics along the way as well as the school’s experimental computer network which connects all the students of Parkland Middle School into one huge communication system. It’s a wild journey that will have you cheering for the underdog the entire way!

The Revealers is a definite must read for all middle school aged youth and the adults who love and care for them.
Program Highlights from some YATF members...

**Voices Against Violence/ Laurie’s House**
By Emily Allard, Children’s Services Coordinator

Since the new bullying and harassment legislation was enacted in Vermont during the summer of 2004, the Voices Against Violence Prevention Education program has seen a huge increase in the number of schools interested in including us in their bullying and harassment prevention efforts. Currently, we have one group of 7th and 8th grade students at the Saint Albans Town Educational Center (S.A.T.E.C.) that meets on a weekly basis to work on and address the bullying and harassment problems at their school. The group named themselves *Making A Change* (or M.A.C. for short). The group has decided to take the lead on educating their peers as well as younger students at their school about bullying and harassment and how they can help prevent it. This group has the potential to work closely with several schools to facilitate support groups for children who have or who are living in a home where there is battering. Partnering with the schools to coordinate support groups is working well and we look forward to continuing this collaboration in the future. All in all, it’s been a busy year!

Voices Against Violence/ Laurie’s House
Dianne Vock DuPrat, Advocate / Educator

Finally the long spell of cold has ended and the summer is upon us. With that comes the end of the school year and a winding down of a year full of prevention presentations in area schools. My position at Voices stretches from working with adult survivors of domestic and sexual violence to providing outreach specifically to teens in Franklin and Grand Isle counties.

Part of the Outreach Program at Voices includes presenting in schools and in other places where teens gather. The topics that I do have presented this year have included information about Boundaries and Respect, Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Media Literacy, Teen Dating Violence, and Bullying and Harassment (which includes the new Vermont laws.)

If time allows, during the bullying presentations, I show the AIMS Multimedia movie: *The Teen Files Filmed*: Bullying, Loners, and Violence. This movie includes teens who survived the Santana and Columbine school shootings. It is well executed and usually holds the audience’s attention right to the end. The movie shows the different types of bullying, how bullying differs among genders and the devastating effects of bullying. Teachers have commented positively on the movie as well.

A lot of my time has been spent helping to put together the “Big Shabang” for the Grand Isle County communities. It was an awareness day for prevention and health with fun filled activities for the whole family. It was held on June 7th and 8th graders artwork and our YATF logo and the cool dancing people letterhead.

Thanks to Erica Shambo, Meg Kuhner, and Sandra Brauer for always being willing to pitch in and for writing the two Spotlight articles for our second issue. And, thanks to all of the YATF members who provided program highlights, design feedback, and energy toward this project.

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**Videos**

The Teen Files: Filmed: “Bullies, Loners, and Violence” AIMS Multimedia
Tough Guise: by Jackson Katz

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**Thank Yous...**

A huge thanks goes out to Sandy Hart, Youth DV/SV Specialist at Umbrella for putting so much time and energy into the design and layout of this newsletter.

A special thanks to Amy Tchoria, Children’s Advocacy Coordinator at the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, for all of her editing skills, support and creativity that helped to make this newsletter possible.

Thanks to Meredith Needham for providing incredible original artwork and our YATF logo and the cool dancing people letterhead.

There is NO EXCUSE for abuse. If you need help, call 1-800-228-7395 to reach your local Domestic Violence and Teen Dating Violence program OR 1-800-489-7273 to reach your local Sexual Violence program.
Summer is here! WISE had a particularly exciting year. We provided one thousand Vermont high school students with several workshops on Healthy Relationships, Dating Violence, Sexual Violence and Gender Stereotypes. In recognition that workshops about bullying are fundamental in violence prevention work, we have continued to provide our local middle schools with interactive workshops on Bullying as well as Sexual Harassment. We are looking to broaden this effort next year with more staff training on Bullying.

This year, we had the wonderful opportunity to work especially close with Woodstock Union Middle School. We participated in a day devoted to safe schools and healthy choices and were also staffed a bead table for jewelry making. All ages joined in. This summer will be time to revamp and create new presentations and programs for the coming school year. Later this summer we will reconnect with schools as well as send them our new flyers and information brochures.

As the school year winds down - I am happily approaching my first year anniversary at New Beginnings. In August 2004, I became the Youth Program Coordinator for New Beginnings and eagerly took on the challenge of introducing myself and pitching our prevention programs to the schools within our service area. I did not get into the schools immediately, but once I did - my confidence got its needed boost! Eventually, I found myself presenting in our local schools on a regular basis. I presented at the Springfield High School on Healthy Relationships and Teen Dating Violence and was invited to be an area advocate within the Springfield Middle School and be involved in the 8th grader’s annual health fair as well. At the fair, I was able to explore the topics of Sexual Harassment, Teen Dating Violence and Media Influences with the youth who attended.

At Windsor High School, I was asked to present on Teen Dating and Sexual Violence. At Windsor Middle School, I was asked to present on Healthy Relationships and Sexual Harassment to two large 7th and 8th grade classes. This was one of my more exciting accomplishments - and marked the first time that New Beginnings had successfully made inroads into the Windsor Schools. I am eager to continue this relationship and look forward to the great things that we will accomplish together in the future.

This year, I also had the good fortune to co-facilitate a girl’s group at the Black River Middle School in Ludlow, VT. The group was called Ophelia Speaks and it’s curriculum is based on the book of the same title written by Sara Shandler. The girls who attended the group were delighted and eager to discuss a variety of topics that challenge today’s youth. My last endeavor with Black River Middle School was leading a discussion group on bullying. It was part of a community read of The Revelers, a book about bullying that was written by Doug Wilhelm - a local Vermont author. This was a huge honor that I was most excited to be a part of as a member of our community. During my first year as Youth Program Coordinator, when I wasn’t busy doing

preparations, I was busy either in the office or out in the community doing work alongside other community members with several area coalitions. I also got a chance to be part of the DIVAS program which is a support / informational group that offered to the women at the Southeast State Correctional Facility in Windsor, VT.

Now that I have my first year under my belt, I am anxious to make the next year even better! I hope of reaching even more schools and getting involved with a lot more activities that involve the wonderful youth in my service area.


 the heart on your side, tell some

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“Power of Play: Art, Respect, Talking” which encourages both parents and children to come together in a safe environment, relax, and enjoy each other’s company.

As we approach summer, our Children’s Advocates look forward to designing and facilitating groups for children in Newport. Liz will begin presenting “Half-Hour Haven”, a new children’s support group at the Newport City Elementary summer program. The creation of this group will carry over into the fall with the promise of a second “Haven” starting out the school year.

Violence prevention, building and supporting positive self-esteem, encouraging healthy choices in relationships, and discovering the powers of one’s own voice are the goals of the HEA/NECA Step O.N.E’s children’s programming. We are open to any opportunity to continue this programming and hopes to the children of Orleans and Northern Essex Counties.

by Elizabeth Bryant, Youth Advocate

This year AWARE’s children and youth staff team, which includes Amy Hornblas and myself, has worked hard on broadening our sexual and domestic violence prevention programs to encompass the role media plays in domestic and sexual violence. Amy has been diligently revamping her book This is Your Brain on Television and is hoping to have it published by next year. Amy used her sixth-week curriculum, This is Your Brain on Television, in 7 classes this year and was met with great enthusiasm and a lot of invitations for next year. I developed a four-week program for male youth at Buffalo Mountain School to raise awareness of violence and video games, what their effects are on the brain and how it relates to violence. Lastly, this program explores how media influences the identity of young male in our society.

AWARE’s Teen Group focused a lot this year on how media and our culture influences teen girl’s feelings toward their bodies and the roles females play in society. We finished off this theme in April with a “Healthy Body Image” Retreat. The teens experienced a hip hop workshop in a safe environment to move their bodies, rejoicing in the freedom to be their unique selves. We listened to horror stories, ate healthy foods, explored movements representing our feelings, wrote in journals and tattooed our bodies. We had so much fun, it was hard to leave the security of the retreat and enter back into society!

AWARE’s Teen Group also found empowerment through becoming engaged in the legislative process by writing letters to Senators regarding the Voyeurism bill. Their letters were well received and were read at the Judiciary Committee by Senator Campbell, giving a voice to young girls on how voyeurism affects them. We made a presentation to the State House and met the Senate Judiciary Committee and were there to witness the Voyeurism bill pass the Senate floor. This was an exciting moment for the teens. The teens also took part in the PSAs’s for Sexual Violence Awareness month after appearing on GDR radio station to read their poetry and speak out against domestic and sexual violence.

I had the privilege of being asked by a school to develop a four-week program to teach communication skills for 8th grade classes. This was a great opportunity for me to explore with teens their own ways to resolve conflict and find healthy ways to get your needs met. Having the continuity of two weeks created a relaxed atmosphere to talk about taking responsibility for oneself, their school and peers and identifying red flags in communication when a relationship is not a healthy one.

This year has been full and exciting as Amy and I worked hard on developing and meeting the needs of the children and youth in our area. We have found that broadening our violence prevention programs to include media awareness a rewarding experience. We look forward to next year’s challenges and are ready to meet them head on!