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*Language interpretation
 services available.*

*Deaf callers please use
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Domestic Violence in the Military

By Laura Harris, *Middlebury College Summer Shepherd Intern*

In the past few years there has been a dramatic increase in media attention towards sexual violence within the military. Yet despite this increased coverage, the issue of domestic violence is often overlooked. According to Department of Defense data, the number of calls to national domestic violence hotlines from people affiliated with the military tripled between 2006 and 2011¹. Each year within the military, victim advocates work with over 18,000 people who have experienced violence.

Domestic violence within the military has all of the same elements of power and control as civilian domestic violence. However, there are several unique aspects of military life that can make fleeing an abusive relationship or reporting abuse particularly difficult. When discussing domestic violence in the military, many people are quick to point to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injuries as excuses for a perpetrator's violent behavior. While PTSD and TBIs may increase a person's likelihood to act violently, these conditions are by no means a justification for domestic violence. However, partners are often reminded of how much the perpetrator has been through and told they should put up with violent behavior. Couples are sometimes encouraged to attend couples' counseling, which typically further entrenches these attitudes and shifts blame away from the perpetrators. The military often

provides a family's sole income, as well as housing. The threat of losing these benefits is often a deterrent to fleeing or reporting.

In light of these significant barriers, the military has taken on initiatives to prevent violence, while providing advocacy for survivors. Nationally, the Department of Defense implemented the Family Advocacy Program, a preventative education program. At the local level, Lt. Col. Theresa Wolbach of the Vermont National Guard is responsible for implementing the Department of Defense's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, as well as coordinating responses to domestic violence. A key component of her work is developing strong relationships and rapport with civilian organizations, including law enforcement officials. Through Lt. Col. Wolbach's work, the Vermont National Guard has entered into Memorandums of Understanding with both local law enforcement and the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. As Lt. Col. Wolbach explains, these MOUs help ensure a "continuity of care" for survivors as they access services. Prevention and education are other crucial parts of Vermont National Guard's programming.

¹ <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/High-risk-of-military-domestic-violence-on-the-5377562.php>

Outreach Goals

By Annie Mientka, *Outreach Advocate*

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WomenSafe’s outreach initiative has some exciting goals for the upcoming year. One of these is increasing accessibility to youth. Rural living comes with barriers to accessing resources that are specific to youth. Maintaining anonymity and accessing transportation are two huge obstacles when youth need our services. To combat this, increasing our social media presence is a major goal. We feel that this will increase the community’s awareness of events and fundraisers. Additionally, a social media presence that perpetuates ideas about healthy relationships and mutual respect can be preventative—and an amazingly positive influence on youth. Further, surrounding county crisis programs found an increase in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender) service users as a result of a social media/online presence. This feels like encouragement enough to embark on this process, since statistics show that

LGBT-identified people experience dating, domestic and sexual violence at the same rates as heterosexual and/or cisgendered people.

Another main goal is to increase partner contacts through the Domestic Violence to Responsible Choices class (formerly Domestic Violence Solutions, through Spectrum Youth and Family Services). DVRC aims to teach men who use violence with their partners to take accountability for their actions and to teach them healthy relationship techniques. To ensure that our communication with their partners does not provoke questioning, the class participants are aware that one aspect of the class is that their partners will be contacted by WomenSafe advocates. Outreach to class participants’ partners not only dispels some of the isolation they may feel, but also serves to keep them informed about their partner’s participation in the classes. With the programming changes and the poten-

tial addition of a class in Hinesburg, partner contacts need to maintain steady and reliable. And as always, making sure partners feel safe and empowered is a top priority.

Last year, WomenSafe successfully facilitated a community support group. Another goal is to continue this group for the upcoming year to increase our community presence and provide comprehensive services to a wide range of service users. Another goal is to create an additional support group, since we have seen that strong bonds between women can be transformative in times of crisis.

With the help of my wonderful coworkers and our community partners in and around Addison county, I am confident that these goals are attainable. Be sure to look for a WomenSafe table at community events, and if you have any suggestions/comments, email info@womensafe.net.

Changes to Batterer Intervention Programming

By Willow Wheelock, *Training & Education Coordinator*

.....

In Vermont, when someone is convicted of a crime related to domestic assault, they may be ordered to attend domestic violence accountability programming. This programming is designed to address the tactics of coercive control that offenders engage in as part of their chosen behavior with their partners. The programming is facilitated by well-trained, skilled professionals who understand the methods necessary for effective interventions to perpetrating domestic violence.

In June 2015, domestic violence accountability programming for low

to medium risk offenders in Vermont was severely compromised. Addison County was 1 of 7 counties that lost long-standing, certified programs historically offered through Spectrum Youth and Family Services. While some of the counties impacted by this sudden loss will struggle to replace their programming, Addison County, with a proven history of coordinated response to dating, domestic and sexual violence, was poised to ensure that programming in our county continued, at least temporarily, very much as it did prior to June.

Sustainable funding for this program is desperately needed in order for it to continue. For now, however, thanks to the dedicated work of so many professionals in our community, Addison County’s domestic violence accountability program, Domestic Violence to Responsible Choices, is up and running. Given the far reaching impact that domestic violence has on a community, this is worthy news and a salute to the dedicated, caring professionals here in Addison County working every day to ensure safety for everyone in our community.

Rape Culture

By Tyler Harris, *Young Writer's Project*

.....

It makes me sad
that when girls get together
we talk about
our pepper spray.
We talk about
those times we walked
through town on a Saturday
night and wow! Isn't it awesome
that we made it home alive?
We talk about boys
but
it's never the nice ones.
We make fun of
that guy that one night
who wouldn't stop
hitting on us
even after we tried
to walk away.
We talk about the old man
who looked us up and down
without a drop of discretion
when we walked past him or
the 20-somethings that
honked their horn at us
when they drove by.
We talk about how
we put on our jackets
to walk home even though
it was hot outside because
you get a lot more sketchy looks
if you are wearing
a tank top.
We talk about how
some guy's staring eyes
or some guy's comments
made us feel uneasy on
public transportation
or we talk about how
we'll never go back
to some certain place
because someone made us feel
uncomfortable there.
We casually talk about
the places we
unfortunately
can't go and the things
we just can't do
and it makes me sad that
at 18 years old
girls already know
that the world
is not safe for us.

*“It’s sad we have
to accept that. It’s
sad that it’s just
a normal thing
we have to do.
Boys don’t have
to do that. ...
That’s our life.”*

—Tyler Harris

WomenSafe staff members saw this poem in a Vermont newspaper and were so moved that we asked for permission to reprint it. Tyler Harris, a recent graduate of Burlington High School and a summer intern with Young Writers Project, wrote this piece after she was talking with a friend about feeling unsafe at night and how girls feel compelled to carry pepper spray to protect themselves.

Reprinted with permission from Tyler Harris and Sarah Gliech of the Young Writers Project. For more information about the Young Writers Project, please check out their website: <http://www.young-writersproject.org>

Special Thanks



Thank you to **Danielle and the entire staff at American Flatbread** for hosting a Benefit Bake on Wednesday, May 20, 2015.

It is because of their dedication to WomenSafe and the generous community members who ordered take-out or dined-in at the historic Marbleworks location that we received a \$400 donation! Thanks for your support. Please look for our next Benefit Bake in spring 2016.



Please consider donating your old or broken cell phones/ Smartphones to WomenSafe.

We can include them in stalking kits or recycle them for cash. In a recent six month period, we received \$126.77 just for recycling donated phones through Smartphone Recycling: www.smartphonerecycling.com

If you would like to donate a phone, please call us at 388-9180.

Snap!

By Louisa Funk, 12 year old, Bristol Elementary School

It's so much easier to break a pencil than break a finger. Why? They are so similar yet so different. A pencil is made of wood, metal and graphite, A finger is made of skin and bone. Skin that belongs to a human. A human who has opinions, feelings, personality and beliefs. A person who has rights. Objects have no rights. Many, many women in the U.S. are treated like objects, tools to get things that one needs. When a person is treated like an object s/he is also stripped of the rights that s/he undoubtedly deserves. One shows little regret after whacking at a pinata even if it looks like an animal. A child would never swing at a live puppy even if its insides were filled with copious amounts of candy. This is because, while a pinata is portrayed as a mere container, a puppy is seen as a living breathing thing. Why is the puppy seen differently from the pinata? Because it has emotions, reactions and personality. This distinction is extremely important to consider as we move through our daily lives.

Many situations unfold differently depending on one's perspective. If a

husband sees his wife merely as someone who made him dinner and folded his laundry as opposed to the person who loves and cares for him, it is easier for him to objectify her because it changes the scenario from personal to general. A personal scenario often includes love while a general scenario often includes actions and duties. Seeing a woman as just a wife makes it easier to eliminate emotion and feelings towards her (like the pencil). Men often objectify women not with the intention of dehumanizing them, but with the intention of making the pain and guilt less for themselves. By convincing oneself that a partner is an object it makes it easier to treat her poorly and take out anger and frustration on her.

When people are objectified they are seen as what they are not who they are. A who has a name and a personality entirely their own. A what, has a certain way she is supposed to look, act and live. If a woman is seen as just any woman they lose all their individuality. When her life is being grouped into a category it is like a box around her that forces her into the shape her partner is

forcing her to take. An abusive partner is often the one holding the box together. This makes women feel as if they don't have control over their lives, which may or may not be the intention of the partner.

It isn't fair to women. It isn't fair that they should suffer to make it easier for men. It isn't fair that they are dehumanized. It isn't fair that women don't feel safe and dignified in their home. It isn't fair that they are pressed into a certain shape. It isn't fair that their personalities and opinions are cast aside as if they don't matter in their own life. Most of all it isn't fair that some women's lives lack the love they deserve. Love is not a given, but everyone should strive to give it, and accept it when it is given. Give the gift of love. The kind of love that you would give to someone you love and respect instead of the kind of love bestowed upon your favorite watch. Receive the gift of love as a true present. Love is a gift. A gift that every human deserves.

Legislative Wrap-Up

By Christina Grier, Services Director

The following is a brief description of some of the laws passed during Vermont's 2015 legislative session that impact survivors of dating, domestic and sexual violence and stalking. More information is available about any of these acts or the hundreds of other bills that didn't become law on the legislative website: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/>

Thank you to Auburn, Associate Director of Public Policy at the Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, for providing us with

all this information. If you are interested in learning more about these acts or legislative advocacy in general, please contact us at info@womensafe.net or call us at 388-9180.

FIREARMS BILL—S.141 (INCLUDES former bill S.4)/ACT 14

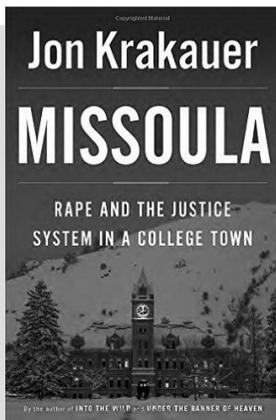
This act contains a number of provisions related to firearms, including the prohibition of a person convicted of a violent crime from possessing a firearm—"violent crime" is defined in this statute and includes all listed

crimes related to stalking, domestic assault, and sexual assault.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY CHANGE— H.16/ACT 1

This act requires a sex offender who serves his or her maximum sentence to register with the Department of Public Safety as a sex offender prior to the offender's release from a correctional facility or within 24 hours of being released from probation, parole, furlough, or a supervised community sentence.

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A BOOK REVIEW

MISSOULA

By Abbey Spoth, *Advocate*

John Krakauer's *Missoula: Rape and Justice in a College Town* is infuriating. It's meant to be. In his exploration of a rash of rapes in Missoula,

Montana between 2010 and 2012, Krakauer shows how the legal options available to survivors further exacerbate the trauma they've experienced. All told, Krakauer retells the stories of six young women, all college students, many raped by men they knew and trusted, and each with their own devastating and infuriating experience with campus, court, and law enforcement responses.

Missoula is home to the University of Montana, known for its fiercely supportive football fans. This is key as many of the perpetrators described in *Missoula* are members of the UM Grizzly football team. Throughout the book, we see how "Grizzly Nation" politics impact the cases happening both on campus and in the public courts. Krakauer does an expert job of showing just how these unique social systems impact the judicial process and the experiences of survivors.

Krakauer states that he was compelled to write *Missoula* when a close friend revealed that she had been raped. The well-intentioned outrage that fueled his research and writing is palpable throughout the book. It manifests as a staunch defense of survivors, a stance of unconditional belief in their stories. It also, unfortunately, appears as an equally biased portrayal of perpetrators, which to some extent undermines his credibility. This becomes a recurring problem throughout: while well-meaning, Krakauer's anger can unintentionally harm those he is trying to help.

One of *Missoula's* main strengths is its richly detailed narrative, creating an engaging story that is far more readable than its "nonfiction" classification suggests. Krakauer relies heavily on court and police records to achieve this level of detail, which combines with solid facts and statistics to create a clear depiction of the failings of the legal system in the aftermath of rape. However, these sources are less useful when it comes to depicting the people working within these systems, who are left as one-dimensional caricatures. For example, defense attorneys are "uncommonly combative," "over-bearing" and hell-bent on destroying survivors' reputations, college deans are knights in shining armor coming to victims' defense, and (most disturbingly) the women at the center of the story are reduced to no more than their victimhood as we learn nothing about them apart from their rape and its aftershocks.

Still, *Missoula* is a useful and necessary book. Given the attention being paid in the national media to campus sexual assault, it's a timely expose of just how these cases can be damaging to victims and can easily go from an empowered choice for self-determination and holding a perpetrator accountable to a disempowering re-victimization. It educates on just how widespread the problem is, clearly stating that while Missoula may have been characterized as the "Rape Capital of America" during the scandal, it actually isn't too far from the statistical average—Missoula is everywhere. *Missoula* is Krakauer's call to arms to campuses and communities across America to reconsider how we think about rape and rework how we respond to it.

Legislative Wrap Up

Continued from page 4

PROHIBITING THE DISTRIBUTION OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT IMAGES WITHOUT CONSENT—H.105/ACT 62 (Sections 1-3)

This act creates a misdemeanor crime for knowingly disclosing a visual image of an identifiable person who is nude or who is engaged in sexual conduct, without his or her consent, with the intent to harm, harass, intimidate,

threaten, or coerce the person depicted, and the disclosure would cause a reasonable person to suffer harm. This behavior is often known as "revenge-porn."

BILLING FOR SANE EXAMS—S.60/ACT 34

This act prohibits health insurers from imposing cost-sharing

requirements such as co-payments and deductibles on a victim of alleged sexual assault. It specifies that the State will bear the costs of medical care for victims of crime committed in Vermont only if they do not have health insurance or their health insurance does not cover all of the care provided.



Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award Celebration

By Christina Grier, *Services Director*



WomenSafe was pleased to honor Susan Veguez as the recipient of the 2015 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award (Kimberly Krans Award) on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 in Middlebury. It was a wonderful evening with about 75 guests, including almost 20 children. Thanks to the assistance of Roberto Veguez and the Open Door Clinic’s volunteers, we were able to offer the event program in English and Spanish. In addition, thanks to the generous interpreting skills of Miguel

Fernandez, the evening’s presentation was also offered in both English and Spanish. Katarina Lisaius, Outreach Staff from Senator Bernie Sanders’ Office, read and presented a congratulatory letter from Senator Sanders to Susan for her hard work and dedication to our community.

We were truly honored to shed some light on such a dedicated woman who continues to make a tremendous impact on our community. The award ceremony is held in March as part of National Women’s History Month.

Looking for Nominations!

WomenSafe is accepting nominations for the **2016 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award**. Each year, a nomination committee selects a woman whose work or volunteer efforts in Addison County or the Town of Rochester have had positive impacts on the women and/or children in that community.

Make your nomination now!! If you know a woman who deserves recognition for her outstanding local work and dedication, please submit an essay in 500 words or less that describes her and her efforts and the reasons you believe she should be the recipient of the 2016 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award.

If you’d like more information about selection criteria, please call **388-9180**. Email your nomination to cg@womensafe.net or mail it to: Nomination Committee, PO Box 67, Middlebury, VT 05753 **by December 31, 2015**.

VAWA's LGBTQQ Provisions Help, Systemic Biases Still Need to be Addressed



By Hannah Phillips, *University of Vermont Bachelor's of Social Work Intern*

2014 marked the twentieth anniversary of the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**, a body of legislation that serves to ensure that no survivor of sexual or domestic violence, particularly survivors from underserved communities, be denied access to the right to the services, protection, and support they need to live free of violence. Despite being victimized at about the same rate as heterosexual survivors, LGBTQQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning) individuals are often left out of the cultural dialogues and policies around sexual and domestic violence.

Eighteen years after VAWA's inception, and following NCAVP (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs) findings showing that nearly 62% of LGBTQQ survivors were denied access to shelters in 2011, a provision was made to the legislation that explicitly commits resources to improving services for LGBTQQ survivors.

This provision protects LGBTQQ survivors by officially naming the community as an underserved population, allowing organizations serving LGBTQQ survivors to benefit from grant funding that supports underserved populations. It also contains a non-discrimination clause that prohibits agencies from turning survivors away on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Since the inclusion of this provi-

sion to VAWA in 2012, the NCAVP has reported a 4.9% increase in LGBTQQ survivors accessing first-responder services like orders of protection and civil and legal processes, proof that more LGBTQQ survivors are coming forward for protection and the provision is following the course of its goals. However, the total number of LGBTQQ survivors actually pursuing services still remains low, with just 17% of all LGBTQQ survivors reaching out to relevant agencies and civil protections.

While VAWA addresses LGBTQQ discrimination by increasing grant support for LGBTQQ-specific anti-violence organizations and establishing protections for LGBTQQ survivors at the federal level, the actual experience of accessing services with a marginalized sexual or gender identity can still be ridden with discriminatory practices at the state and community level.

Many veiled barriers still exist for LGBTQQ survivors accessing services—ranging from exclusive language on protection orders that reflects the state's bias against gay partnership to the potential of being re-victimized with homo/trans-phobic treatment in agencies who are not educated in cultural sensitivity to the experience of LGBTQQ intimate partner violence.

As it stands, the inclusion of LGBTQQ-specific provisions within VAWA provides a set of solid federal

protections, and is certainly an important precedent to continued efforts, but it does little to address the culturally-embedded bias against LGBTQQ folks that so often silences their voices when reaching out for help.

Combating these types of cultural biases is a central piece of improving victim's services for LGBTQQ-identifying survivors, and the onus is on the systems providing services to survivors to recognize the role that homo/trans-phobia and discriminatory practices plays in the gap of services being provided to LGBTQQ survivors and make a conscious effort to actively push back against them in our work as advocates.

Alongside useful systemic changes like the VAWA provision must come joint action from community agencies and state-level policymakers to provide consistent, research-supported education to providers on the unique experience of LGBTQQ intimate partner violence in a concerted effort to foster an environment of empathy and non-discrimination within the systems designed to assist survivors.

WomenSafe is committed to fostering a non-judgmental, inclusive environment, sensitive to the experiences of survivors of all sexual identities and across the gender spectrum. As an agency, we take a firm stance of non-discrimination and continue to centralize the importance of safety, dignity, and wholeness for all survivors in our community.



GONE PAPERLESS YET?

WomenSafe works hard to conserve our environment. Please help us by signing up to receive *The Advocate* via email. Your participation means that not only would we save

more trees and use less petroleum products in the production and distribution of this newsletter, but you would also be helping us to continue to raise awareness and consciousness of the issues faced by families, friends and neighbors who are being victimized by their partners or other people in their lives—in a cost-effective manner.

Thank you to our **more than 115 e-readers** who already receive the newsletter via email! If you would like to "Go Paperless," let us know at info@womensafe.net. In order to avoid gaps in delivery, please inform us of any email address changes by calling Carol at 388-9180.

The Advocate

Newsletter of WomenSafe

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Thank you to **TaeKwon Do K.I.C.K.S, Master Kellie Thomas** and her wonderful students who raised over **\$2000** for WomenSafe at the Break-a-thon event this year!

WomenSafe does not necessarily share the opinions expressed by the writers and reserves the right to edit and determine the content of **The Advocate**.

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