

Diana Rule is Kimberly Krans Award Recipient

By Christina Grier, The Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator

WomenSafe is pleased to announce that Diana Rule was selected as the recipient of the 2010 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award (Kimberly Krans Award). The Kimberly Krans Award is presented annually to a woman in Addison County and Rochester whose outstanding work and achievements have had positive impacts on, and furthered the safety of, women and children in our community.

Diana is a remarkable woman who believes "...hope is possible as long as people care." She has been working in the field of human services in Addison County for more than 20 years. Diana has touched the lives of many people while working at Mary Johnson's Children's Center, the Counseling Service of Addison County, as part of the Parent Stipend group at the



Diana Rule

Parent/Child Center, and Addison County Community Action Group (ACCAG is currently known as HOPE). Additionally, Diana worked on the Parent/Child Center's newsletter and the ACCAG tenant newsletter. While driving a school bus, she started the Books for Children program between the Vergennes Union High School teachers and the area children who were in low income housing. Currently Diana is the Shelter Manager at the John Graham Shelter, where she has been working for 11 years. Diana believes that her "job is to help [people] find hope." She believes that it is a "gift to be able to see people for who

they are on the inside, instead of who they appear to be on the outside." In addition to the Shelter, Diana is a member of Housing Solutions and the Addison County Housing Coalition. She also works with local churches during the holidays to offer gifts to the homeless families in our area. The Director of the John Graham Shelter wrote, "Diana is somewhat of a North Star for people who have endured abuse and very tragic circumstances." Diana perfectly exemplifies the spirit of Kimberly Krans as a tireless, effective and joyful agent of change.

Each year the award ceremony is held in March as part of National Women's History Month. This year's Kimberly Krans Award ceremony was held on Tuesday, March 23, 2010 in Middlebury. We are honored to recognize Diana and her tremendous impact on the community.

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2011 Kimberly Krans Award, please contact us at info@womensafe.net or 388-9180. Nominations are accepted until December 31, 2010.

Benefit Bake at American Flatbread!

We are honored to announce that American Flatbread in Marbleworks is hosting a Benefit Bake for WomenSafe. This is a great way to enjoy great food and atmosphere while making a difference in the lives of others. \$3 from every flatbread sold will be donated to WomenSafe! Please join us:



**Tuesday, April 20th, 2010
5:00 - 9:00pm**

We appreciate American Flatbread's ongoing support and dedication to our efforts in memory of our dear friend, colleague and supporter Kimberly Krans. For more information, call us at 388-9180 or American Flatbread at 388-3300.

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A Close Look at Middlebury College's Sexual Assault Oversight Committee

By Cecilia Goldschmidt, Middlebury College Student Intern

The Sexual Assault Oversight Committee at Middlebury College seeks to improve the college's official response to incidents of sexual assault that occur on the campus through working to revamp the college's sexual assault policy and raising awareness about resources available on campus pertaining to sexual assault. As well as the faculty,

particular I was, and remain, interested in getting men to engage with the issue of sexual assault, since for a variety of reasons and on a range of levels it affects them too. I thought it might be valuable to have a male student on the Committee both to represent that perspective and to show the potential for inter-gender dialogue is real.

What is the committee currently working on?

At the moment there's a lot going on simultaneously! A revised sexual assault policy is close to being finalized. Also near to debuting is a new school web page that will contain relevant information for anyone who thinks they may have been assaulted or is attempting to counsel a friend in that position (i.e. definitions of consent and sexual as-

Oh boy. One big one is the resistance of those who think it doesn't happen here, which is far from true. Another is confusion over what constitutes sexual assault in the first place. Many people aren't aware that an individual doesn't have to say "no" for sex to be non-consensual. As on any college campus, people at Middlebury drink, and the role of alcohol in sexual assault needs to be incorporated into any programs that we do as far as education and prevention. A subject dear to my own heart is the "guy culture" that can put men and women alike in danger. Hopefully we can get a constructive dialogue going about the ways in which men may (often unknowingly) promote attitudes about women that enable perpetrators to justify their actions.

" . . . I thought it might be valuable to have a male student on the Committee both to represent that perspective and to show the potential for inter-gender dialogue is real."

staff, and administrators working on the committee, there are currently three student members, Carolyn Birsky, Todd Swisher, and Andrea Jones, who all bring distinct contributions, perspectives, and experiences to the committee. As the one male student member of the committee, Todd Swisher hopes to show that sexual assault is not solely a "women's issue." In this interview, Todd discusses the current work of the Sexual Assault Oversight Committee and what he hopes to see it accomplish in the future:

Why did you decide to work with this committee?

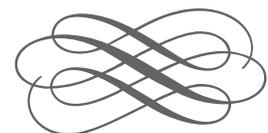
An email went out last spring announcing that there were student openings on the Committee. Since I'd been educating myself about feminism and so-called 'women's issues' for a while, I was eager to make a personal contribution within the College community. In

sault, reporting options, medical care, counseling, etc.). The other student members, Carolyn and Andrea, are hard at work, in conjunction with Jyoti Daniere and Karin Hanta on a peer advocate program that would connect victims with trained students. My own subcommittee has concluded that applying for a Department of Justice grant would be premature given how much work needs to go into that, so we've begun preparing to apply for next year, and we hope to partner with Women-Safe and the Addison County Council on Sexual and Domestic Violence on this. On top of all that there's some education and prevention program talk in the background (for instance, how best to introduce the issue into first year orientation).

What do you believe are the most prevalent issues on the Middlebury campus relating to sexual assault?

What do you envision for SAOC in the future?

I'm optimistic that it will accomplish its short-term goals (like the creation of a peer advocate program and the publication of a new sexual assault policy), given how dedicated everyone on the Committee seems to be. I think the biggest challenge will be catalyzing a cultural shift that gets at the root of the problem. That will take a lot of cooperation and effort among students, faculty, staff, and administration- as well as community organizations like WomenSafe. We are a ways from becoming a community that expresses a true collective desire to eliminate sexual assault on campus.



The Dangers of Sexting

By Willow Wheelock,
Education Coordinator

Sexting is a relatively new phenomenon in this world of technological advances. With the click of a button, nude or partially nude photos can be taken and instantly forwarded to others. While this behavior has taken many adults and parents by surprise, many teens (and tweens) are all too familiar with it. It is important for everyone to understand the nuances of sexting, so that meaningful conversations with youth can be had.

How teens are familiar with sexting varies. Some have used it as a means of flirting, to tell someone "I like you." Others have been fooling around and trying to be funny (think: locker room, young teens and cell phones with cameras). Some people unwittingly receive sext messages on their phones and immediately delete them. Many more have been pressured by others to send sexy images. A recent survey from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and CosmoGirl.com found that one in five teen girls (one in ten ages 13-16) have electronically sent or posted nude or semi-nude

photos or videos of themselves. This same study quoted 51% of the girls and 18% of the boys saying "pressure from guys/girls is why they send sexy messages or images."

Sexting can have unintended and dire consequences. When a person sexts, whether it's to be funny, flirtatious or in



response to pressure, once that picture leaves their control it can be distributed to anyone, anywhere. In one incident, a young woman sent a picture to her boyfriend who protected it and kept it private until the day a friend used his phone. As a joke, this friend forwarded the picture to a few people, who forwarded it to a few more, etc... Soon,

the young woman was humiliated, embarrassed and harassed by her peers leading to her dropping out of school. The recent suicides of Jesse Logan, 18, and Hope Witsell, 13, have also been linked to bullying from the widespread distribution of photos. Jesse's boyfriend distributed her fully nude photo after they broke up, and when a boy that Hope liked got a partially nude photo of her, he forwarded it on. Successful, social, 'regular' kids can have their lives turned upside down by a single, carefree act of sexting.

Sexting is not an isolated trend, but a new way for teens to express their experimentation with the social and sexual world. By nature, teens don't always think through the risks of their choices, and with sexting, it's no different. Be active with the teens in your life: know what's going on with their relationships with friends and significant others; explore (don't preach) with them the dangers of sexting; take their concerns about harassment seriously; emphasize that responsible behavior extends to the online world; monitor their phone accounts; disable the camera on their phone; let them know that sending or keeping nude photos of someone younger than 18 years old is against the law; show them you're informed and interested.

Student Intern Experience

By Cecilia Goldschmidt, Middlebury College Student Intern

I trained to become a volunteer at WomenSafe during the Fall of my Junior year, and I have found both the training and my work as a volunteer to be one of the most eye-opening and rewarding experiences that I have had in my time at Middlebury. Volunteering with WomenSafe has given me the opportunity to connect with the community in Addison County in a different way. The issues of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and poverty in this community are not very openly discussed at Middlebury College, but they are very pertinent both on and off campus, and volunteers not only learn important skills about how to be an effective advocate for women seek-

ing WomenSafe's services, but they also learn about the wide array of resources available in Addison County from homeless shelters to child services to legal aid. The most common component of being a WomenSafe volunteer is doing direct service through covering the nighttime and weekend hotline shifts of the 24-hour hotline, but there are other opportunities as well. In my Senior year January-term, I interned at WomenSafe and had the chance to assist with direct service during office hours, attend court hearings, and connect more with the community resources that WomenSafe works with. In addition, there is a great support network within the group of volunteers. Through the training and the monthly volunteer meetings, I have made some great connections with other young women from the college and with women who live in the surrounding community.

Movie Review

Precious

Based on the Novel *Push*
by Sapphire

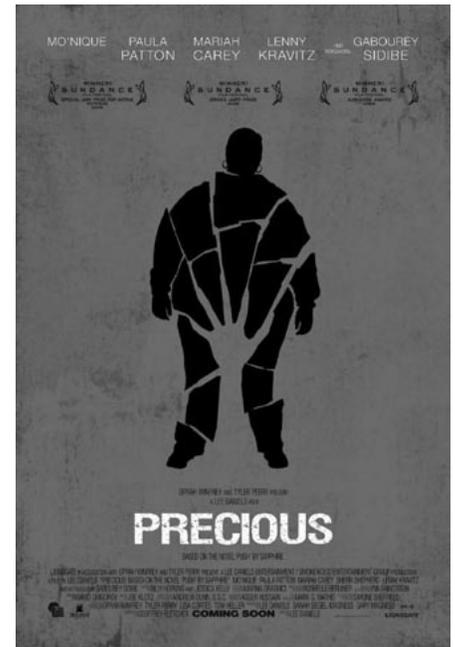
By Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, Advocacy
Program Coordinator

To say that the movie "*Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire*" is difficult would be a gross understatement. However, it is also a beautiful piece of work. The movie blends together a diverse variety of images, settings and actors to paint the picture in this story, which is ultimately a tale of strength and perseverance.

As the movie opens in Harlem in the late 1980s, we meet Clareece Precious Jones, who is in the process of being kicked out of middle school for being pregnant. Life has failed Precious. She is sixteen and pregnant with her second child, both of which were conceived through her father's repeated sexual assaults. Her mother is worse, though in this respect the book and the movie dif-

fer. If you caught that I wrote "middle school" and "sixteen", you would have noticed that it is not just the people in her life that have failed her, but also the systems. She is illiterate, despite a desperate thirst for learning. The social workers in her life have let her down on every level, and law enforcement did not get involved even after she told nurses that her father was the father of her first baby, for which she never received prenatal care. Out of this life, Precious rises like a phoenix into a tentative life of her own.

The movie and the book it is based on is also a commentary on Regan-era welfare policies and institutionalized racism (Kelley, Raina, "The Problem with Precious," *Newsweek*, November, 2009). The prison that Precious and the other characters are trapped in is one out of which there is the illusion of escape dangled in front of them without the actual tools to do so. There is a school system that enables students to get "A"s in English without being able to read. There are benefits which provide



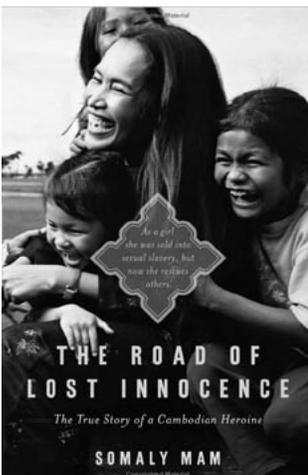
just enough to survive, while keeping people stuck in the same place. Lastly, there are a whole lot of white folks out there getting their desires met while people of color are working themselves to death to meet them. The movie's recent release begs the question of the viewer: "...how much of this has changed in the past 25 years (Kelley, R., 2009)?"

Book Review

The Road of Lost Innocence

As a girl she was sold into sexual slavery, but now she rescues others. The true story of a Cambodian heroine.

By Somaly Mam.



Reviewed by
Foresta Castañeda

Born into a racial minority in rural Cambodia during the time of the Khmer Rouge, Somaly Mam endured a childhood dictated by poverty and abuse before being sold into sexual slavery at the age of 12. In her book, *The Road of Lost Innocence*, Somaly Mam pieces together the details of her life before entering the brothel and recalls the harrow-

ing details of the decade she spent in captivity as she was sold from one brothel to the next in the ever expanding network of human trafficking that is the sex trade in South East Asia.

Somaly Mam spares no details of her account of the horrors that she experienced: rape, torture, deprivation. In the same breath she captures both her vulnerability and hopelessness and also her strength and courage to continue. Then she illustrates how that strength and courage leads her, not only to escape, but to return and make assisting others to escape her life's work.

Somaly Mam acts as not only a memoirist but a journalist, investigating the historical and political details that shape and inform the reality of the child sex trade. In telling her own and others experiences, Somaly Mam helps the reader to understand not only what it is like to live (and sometimes die) as a child in sexual slavery, but also how racism, classism and social norms converge to create a climate in which gender oppression can occur with such magnitude.

Written eloquently and simply with a starkness that captures the raw reality of the violence and brutality that she experiences and observes, Somaly Mam draws *continued on page 5*

The Road of Lost Innocence *(continued from page 4)*

the reader into a world that few outsiders see firsthand. The result is a haunting but moving page turner that manages to capture both the atrocities and the resilience of the human experience. *The Road of Lost Innocence* is a one of a kind journey exposing and giving voice to this taboo and often silenced form of oppression. While the subject matter may

not be suitable for younger audiences, readers should find it an engaging and quick read despite its heavy content. The strength and resilience that Somaly Mam displays in writing about her life in *The Road of Lost Innocence*, and her rescue and recovery work through the Somaly Mam Foundation serves as an important reminder that one person truly can change the world. Her story should not be overlooked.

For more information the Somaly Mam Foundation please visit: www.somaly.org

OTHER NEWS

Spring is Coming!

If you are not in the mood for a tag sale and are wondering what to do with your gently used clothes and household items, you can donate them to Neat Repeats and designate WomenSafe as the recipient of the proceeds. For more information, call Carol at 388-9180 or Neat Repeats at 388-4488.

Help Us By Going Paperless!

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 our family, friends and neighbors who are being victimized by their partners or other people in their lives - but in a cost-effective manner. Thank you to the over 50 people who have already signed up!

If you would like to "Go Paperless," let us know at info@womensafe.net

RSVP

Thank you to Faith, Sylvia, Gertrude, Joyce, Alice, Agnes, Phyllis, Helen and Lucille - the RSVP volunteers who spend many hours preparing over 2,000 newsletters for our mailing. We couldn't get this information out to our readers without their help. We appreciate all their hard work and dedication! A special thank you to Helen Ryan who coordinates the biannual RSVP mailing for WomenSafe.

WomenSafe Mission Statement

WomenSafe works toward the elimination of physical, sexual and emotional violence against women and their children through direct service, education and social change.

The Advocate

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

The Advocate
WomenSafe
Spring 2010
Volume 15, Issue 1

WomenSafe

Committed to ending domestic and sexual violence

24-hour Hotline:
388-4205 or 800-388-4205

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office: 388-9180 fax: 388-3438

The Supervised Visitation Program at WomenSafe
(The SVP): 388-6783



Assaults on Campuses

By Kara Stewart, University of Vermont
Master's in Social Work Student Intern

Sexual assault has become an ever-increasing problem on college campuses. One in four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime and the odds are four times more likely for college-aged women. While the most common fear on campuses is that of the stranger hiding in the bushes, these "stranger rapes" comprise only about ten percent of sexual assaults. The remaining 90% are perpetrated by someone who is known to the survivor (Department of Justice, 2002).

There are certain environmental risk factors that increase the possibility of acquaintance rape. The number one risk factor is alcohol. At least one third of sexual assaults have occurred when the perpetrator was under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Alcohol can also impair one's ability to respond to the situation or make clear decisions. Other risk factors include unsupervised college parties and accessibility to private spaces such as individual dorm rooms (Department of Justice, 2002).

Although safety precautions are important, focusing solely on these measures sends a false message that women are responsible for safeguarding themselves against sexual assault. And it doesn't take us anywhere closer to improving the problem. Instead of spending time

on what women can do differently to avoid assault, perhaps it is time to ask what can be done to change the social climate of sexism and entitlement that allows rape to continue.

Since ultimately it is the attitudes of men that need to be changed (as they are the ones who perpetrate the majority of assaults), it is time for men to participate in the education of boys and men to change negative attitudes and beliefs surrounding women, sexual assault and masculinity. Some steps men can take to help end violence are:

- Understand how male entitlement and unhealthy ideas of masculinity are the foundation of violence against women. Refute these traditional views.
- Understand our own beliefs and the ways in which we support other men's violent behavior.
- Educate others, especially boys and men.
- Do not support myths around domestic and sexual violence, sexist jokes, or misogynistic views.
- Take an active role to transform cultural and social values that tolerate violence and discrimination. (ACT Men Inc., 2004).

No matter how careful one is, sexual assault cannot be completely prevented. However, there are some precautions that can be taken. Among these are:

- Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, remove yourself from the situation.

- Never leave your drink unattended or accept an opened/uncovered drink unless you have seen it made/poured.
- Avoid secluded areas and walking alone at night.
- Be mindful of inviting someone to your home or going to his/hers. Three out of five assaults occur at one of the two parties' homes.
- Don't mix sexual decisions with alcohol, they may inhibit your ability to make decisions or react if the situation becomes dangerous.
- Don't feel like you "owe" a date anything.
- Avoid people who ignore your boundaries, make you feel guilty for resisting sexual advances, or convey sexist attitudes.
- Be aware of your surroundings and walk with purpose.
- Make sure to always have a charged cell phone with you. (Moving to End Sexual Assault, 2010).

As stated above, sexual assault is an extremely pervasive issue. To change such deeply ingrained cultural beliefs that allow it to continue, we all must take a stand. We deserve to live in a world where we feel safe... Where every man is not a threat, especially not our classmates, friends and partners. "Remember that our silence is affirming. When we choose not to speak out against domestic and sexual violence, we are supporting it" (ACT Men Inc., 2004).

Voices from our Readers...

Several readers shared with us their opinions about an article that appeared in the fall edition of our newsletter. We value this feedback and we're glad to hear that our newsletters are being used to stimulate further conversations. If you would like to provide us with feedback about something you have read or want to read, please contact us at info@womensafe.net or 388-9180.

Here are the recent thoughts of some of our readers:

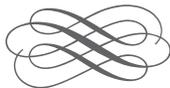
Someone had just sent me a copy of your newsletter (Fall

2009, Volume 14, Issue 2) with an article entitled "Is the Twilight Series Good for Young Readers?" I was disappointed in what the author, Christina had to say about this book. As a mother who has read the books along with her teenager, none of these situations read, even to me, as Christina states and I don't feel a teenager would read into these situations as acts of violence. For those of us who do not work specifically with domestic and sexual violence no red flags go up. There are other things in the book that tend to stick in the minds of teenagers. I have heard girls who have read this series comment on what a gentleman Edward is and how that's the way men should be. continued on page 7

A Message from the Board of Directors of WomenSafe, Inc.

The WomenSafe Board of Directors is seeking new members. Candidates must have a strong commitment to the domestic and sexual violence movement and the WomenSafe mission. Effective communication skills and sound decision making are essential. Experience with policy governance is desired.

If you are a woman who resides in Addison County or Rochester and would like more information on a position with the board, please contact Naomi Smith, Executive Director of WomenSafe, Inc., at 388-9180.



New "Advice" Column

By Foresta Casteñada, Outreach Advocate

Have you ever had a question relating to domestic and dating violence, sexual violence or stalking that you were afraid to ask? Now is your chance. *The Advocate* invites you to submit general questions to our new "Ask an Advocate" column. Whether you want to know more about the tactics and warning signs of violence, state or national statistics, or more information on resources available for victims of violence, this column hopes to provide an interactive forum for readers. WomenSafe advocates will attempt to respond to all questions over email as they come in, and selected questions and answers will be chosen for inclusion in this newsletter. For your privacy, questions will be printed without names. Questions can be emailed to: info@womensafe.net. Watch for the first installment in our fall 2010 newsletter!

Voices... (continued from page 6)

I think what shocked me the most was when the author stated things in the book were not "realistic". I hope she is not reading teen books about vampires for any type of reality. Unfortunately she fails to mention what I think most teens picked up on which is the fact that Bella and Edward are both virgins and he insists on marriage before they consummate their relationship. I wish that had been mentioned in your newsletter.

Most of my daughter's friends who have read this book have had their mothers read it as well. The parents I spoke to, took the time to ask their daughters questions and discuss any situations in the book, such as the wedding night, that may be sketchy to them. It started some good conversations between mothers and daughters. To me, that's a good book.

Thank you for your time.

-Patti Wakefield 

Dear WomenSafe folks,

I wanted you to know that I have heard great feedback about Christina's recent article about the Twilight series. Several women told me that they deeply appreciated the eye-opening perspective in this article. Mothers intend to discuss it with their children, and teachers with their students. I have gotten requests for copies of the article. This article is really making a difference in the community!

I just wanted to pass along this feedback and say kudos for this timely and insightful work.

Thanks, especially to Christina!

- Pam Berenbaum, WomenSafe Board Member 

As a Cadette girl scout leader, I read the "Is the Twilight Series Good for Young Readers" article with interest. My girls (ages 13 and 14) and I have read all the books and seen the movies, Twilight and New Moon together. They loved the books for many of the same reasons as Ms. Grier. They found the series entertaining, intriguing and romantic. While my girls did not agree with Grier's conclusion that the book is sending bad messages they did engage in some dialog about what it means to be a strong and independent woman. We discussed the changes in Bella and what caused it. We also discussed Edward's controlling behavior and how these attributes do not represent a healthy relationship. Although the girls didn't think the books should be kept from young readers they did believe that our discussion made them look at the book differently. I hope it keeps them thinking and evaluating their own relationships as they enter the dating world. So thank you Ms. Grier as it was your article that helped generate the conversation.

- Lisa Sausville 

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WomenSafe

Committed to ending
domestic and sexual violence

The Advocate

Newsletter of WomenSafe

Volume 15, Issue 1, Spring 2010

WomenSafe Provides:

▪ Advocacy Services (Free & Confidential)

24-hour Hotline
Information & Referrals
Emotional Support
Medical Advocacy
Legal Advocacy
Systems Advocacy
Support Groups

▪ Community Outreach & Education

▪ Supervised Visitation & Monitored Exchange

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