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Women RISING on the Middlebury Green as part of the One Billion Rising event on February 14, 2012.



**ONE BILLION RISING**

By Carina Valadez, Bachelor's of Social Work Student Intern,  
University of Vermont

On February 14, 2013, WomenSafe joined the worldwide celebration of V-Day's 15th Anniversary, to STRIKE, DANCE, and RISE to speak out against domestic and sexual violence. WomenSafe staff, community members, and allies in Addison County gathered from 12–1pm at the Route 7 traffic circle green across from the Middlebury Inn.

Participants were encouraged to join us and bring poetry, musical instruments, signs, and their voices to speak out against violence against women and girls. And of course, we cannot forget, their amazing dance moves. WomenSafe provided the music for dancing and also hot beverages to keep warm!

*“When we started V-Day 14 years ago, we had the outrageous idea that we could end violence against women,” said Ensler. “Now, we are both stunned and thrilled to see that this global action is truly escalating and gaining force, with union workers, parliament members, celebrities, and women of all backgrounds coming forward to join the campaign. When we come together on February 14, 2013 to demand an end to violence against women and girls it will be a truly global voice that will rise up.”*

—Eve Ensler, V-Day Creator

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**The Supervised Visitation  
Program**  
(The SVP) 802.388.6783

info@womensafe.net  
www.womensafe.net

Language interpretation  
services available.

Deaf callers please use  
telephone relay.

For more information on the V-Day's One Billion  
Rising Events WORLDWIDE, check out their website at [www.onebillionrising.org](http://www.onebillionrising.org).

# Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence Affecting Youth

By Dana Allen, *Master's of Social Work Student Intern, University of Vermont*

A review of child sexual abuse statistics is sure to capture one's attention. As revealed in the 2012 PreventConnect web conference series, 44% of victims of sexual violence are under the age of 18. Additionally, 1 in 3–4 girls and 1 in 6–10 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. However, the numbers are certainly larger due to the well-known fact that child sexual abuse is grossly underreported.

The issue of child sexual abuse evokes intense emotion. Accounts of young people being violated leads to

outrage, horror, sadness, and disgust. Stories such as the Penn State scandal, as well as other publicized incidents (e.g., sexual abuses within the Catholic Church) are alarming and disturbing. Due to our discomfort, we may find ourselves detaching from the reality that child sexual abuse occurs within our communities by people with whom we are familiar. Contrary to common belief, assaults perpetrated by strangers occur with far less frequency than abuses perpetrated by relatives, friends, and acquaintances. According to the Bureau of Justice statistics, 90% of

youth victims are abused by someone they know and 34% of perpetrators are family members.

The numbers inform us that no one can afford to remain detached from the issue. Attention paid to stories in the media might serve as a reminder to look within our own locales, not only to recognize concerns or issues, but also to become more aware of attitudes and behaviors that reinforce the shame, stigma, and pain associated with child sexual abuse. These attributes serve to silence child victims and render adults unable to act.

*(continued on page 5)*

**Thank You!** A special thank you to **Karen** for all her administrative support, to **Yvonne** for her support with our mailings, and to **Connie** for her consistent office coverage when the staff is unavailable!

## New Visitation Room for The SVP

By Christina Grier, *The Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator*

The Supervised Visitation Program at WomenSafe (The SVP) has provided parents with a safe, neutral place to visit with their children since 1998. The SVP is able to provide this service because of the excellent collaboration of our community. For example, because safety is of utmost importance, The SVP has been using a room at the Frank Mahady Courthouse for visitations since the inception of the program. Due to changes in the needs of the court, The SVP has been using different rooms at the courthouse until a new space could be developed.

We are pleased to report that our new and improved space will be ready soon! We appreciate the patience of families who remained flexible and understanding during this transition. The

new location will be larger, allowing families more comfort and flexibility. We are grateful to the Court Administrator's Office, the local Courthouse staff and especially Jo LaMarche for their commitment to The SVP and for making sure we have a safe visitation space within the Courthouse. We also appreciate the Addison County Sheriff's Department because the security they provide is vitally important for the safety of children and families whom we serve.

The SVP staff and volunteers will be working hard to design the new space and we are looking for donations of the following new or gently used items:

- Toys
- Table & chairs—adult sized or child sized

- Radio w/CD player
- Children's musical CDs
- Cabinet to store items not suitable for small children
- Bookshelf
- Children's books
- Child sized easel or dry erase board & markers
- Standing and/or desk lamp
- Bulletin Board
- Couch
- Comfortable chairs
- Vacuum or dust buster

If you are able to make a donation for the new Visitation Room, please contact Christina @ 388-6783 or email [cg@womensafe.net](mailto:cg@womensafe.net) to make arrangements.

Thank you for your support!

# Neurobiology of Trauma

By Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, *Assistant Director*

Over the past decade advocates have been introduced to another explanation of how traumatic experiences such as domestic and sexual violence affect our biology (NSVRC, 2009). Though much of this confirms what we have long known about how to heal, this new information about why certain approaches are useful can be validating and important. In addition, new information gained through this work can also open pathways to healing that institutionalize appropriate responses to those who experience violence. One example of how this research is useful is the wide understanding of a brain response known as “freeze response.” You may recall learning about the flight or fight response that our sympathetic nervous system creates in time of stress. However, what fewer of us learned is that there is a third response that our bodies use in times of extreme stress—the freeze response (Atkinson, 2008). In this response the conscious mind does not have domain over the

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*“In this [freeze] response the conscious mind does not have domain over the body during the time of threat, and we become immobilized.”*

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body during the time of threat, and we become immobilized. The knowledge of this response as a completely normal survival tactic of our bodies can be profoundly healing for women who are asked “Why didn’t you fight back?” This question becomes irrelevant when the freeze response is understood and incorporated.

As noted above, new research on why and how various activities help to heal our brains is also extremely beneficial. According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, the following activities help us to balance brain chemistry and regenerate neural

connections. Neural connections promote healing from trauma:

- New learning of any sort, but learning a new physical activity is especially helpful
- Eating a healthy diet high in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and fiber, while limiting or eliminating (if possible) caffeine, sugar and alcohol
- Getting adequate and regular sleep
- Stimulating multiple senses at once, for example listening to music with a scented candle burning, or folding laundry while watching a movie
- Exercise of any sort is beneficial, however those with mindfulness components (such as t’ai chi or yoga) are very beneficial

These are just a couple of examples of the many useful and important impacts that research on brain chemistry and trauma can have on the work to end domestic and sexual violence. More information can be found at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center’s website: [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org).

## Kimberly Krans Award

By Christina Grier, *The Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator*



WomenSafe was pleased to honor Betsy Ouellette as the recipient of the 2013 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award (Kimberly Krans Award). The 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/or children in our community.

Betsy is the Program Director of the Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) Childcare Center. As her nomination described, “Betsy is exactly the kind of role model all women and children need... [Betsy’s] leadership has enriched

the lives of hundreds of young children and their families...”

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 Thursday, March 28, 2012 in Middlebury. We were truly honored to shed some light on such a dedicated woman who has made such a tremendous impact on our community.

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2014 Kimberly Krans Award, please contact us at [info@womensafe.net](mailto:info@womensafe.net) or 388-9180. Nominations are accepted throughout the year and until December 31, 2013.

# Long-term Effects on Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

By Foresta Castañeda, *Outreach Advocate*

The high profile conviction last fall of Jerry Sandusky, on 45 criminal counts of sexual abuse of 10 child victims, his recent attempts at appeal, and the ongoing media coverage of the Catholic church child sexual abuse scandal and cover-up have brought new interest and attention to the often hidden topic of child sexual abuse. While it is impossible to truly know just how many people experience child sexual abuse, according to the Rape Abuse and Incest Network 44% of rapes are experienced by children under the age of 18 and that 15% of sexual assault and rape victims are

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*“...the reaction to a survivor's first disclosure of abuse may have a significant impact on that survivor's long-term ability to seek support and cope with abuse.”*

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under the age of 12. According to Stop It Now! 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will experience sexual abuse before they turn 18 years old. While the true extent of child sexual abuse may never be known, many studies have linked child sexual abuse with an increased risk of a wide array of physical, behavioral and mental health symptoms and adverse effects.

While no two survivors are exactly alike and each survivor reacts to and heals differently from the abuse, many

survivors report long terms effects including physical ailments such as:

- chronic headache
- chronic back pain
- musculoskeletal pain
- gastrointestinal problems
- insomnia and sleeping disorders
- disordered eating
- sexual dysfunction
- pelvic pain
- decreased likelihood of seeking regular, preventative medical care

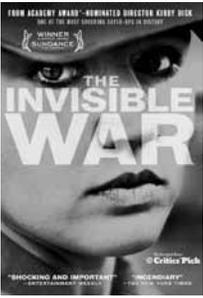
Emotional, behavioral or psychological symptoms are also often self reported and survivors of child sexual abuse may be at an increased risk of experiencing the following:

- depression
- anxiety
- thoughts of suicide
- Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome
- low self esteem
- dissociative disorders
- use and abuse of illicit drugs or alcohol
- engaging in risky behaviors such as unprotected sex

Depending on the type and severity of child sexual abuse, the victim's relationship to the perpetrator, the victim's age and developmental status at the time of victimizations, the length and frequency of victimizations, and access to social support, medical and mental health treatment, and/or legal justice following victimizations will impact each survivor's capacity for resiliency and impact her or his ability to cope with and heal from the abuse. In addition, a survivor's individual life circumstances at the time of victimization, social environment, cultural

and social identity may influence their capacity for healing from abuse. Depending on the individual circumstances these factors may increase a survivor's risk of developing long term adverse effects or increase a survivor's capacity to cope with and heal from victimization.

A 1992 study from the American Academy of Adolescent Psychiatry (and several others) indicate that the reaction to a survivor's first disclosure of abuse may have a significant impact on that survivor's long-term ability to seek support and cope with abuse. For this reason, it is recommended that those working with child sexual abuse survivors, potential child sexual abuse survivors or adult survivors who have never disclosed, create a safe and supportive environment that allows the person disclosing to speak freely about the abuse. It is also important to remind survivors that they are not to blame and assist them in seeking medical, psychological, legal or other assistance or alternative healing measures needed to achieve safety and healing. Adult and child survivors of child sexual abuse, parents of child survivors and those working to support survivors of child sexual abuse are encouraged to reach out to WomenSafe or Family Services (Department for Children and Families) for more information about child sexual abuse, support and advocacy for survivors and their friends/family, and prevention programming available within Addison County and the town of Rochester. To reach Family Services, please call 388-4660 and to reach a WomenSafe advocate, please call our 24-hour hotline at 388-4205.



# The Invisible War: A Movie Review

By Kara Francis, *Legal Advocate*

**T**he *Invisible War*, a 2012 investigative documentary directed by Kirby Dick and produced by Amy Ziering, examines the epidemic of sexual assault within in the US Military and of the chain of command used to sweep incidents of sexual assault under the rug. Heartbreaking interviews from Military Sexual Trauma survivors detail the trauma of sexual assault and the re-victimization experienced when a victim chooses to report. Shocking statistics are presented throughout the film that uncovers the systematic failure of the military's justice system to support victims of military sexual trauma.

Since World War II roughly half a million women and men serving in the military have been sexually assaulted, and, according to the Department of Defense (DOD), about 80% of sexual assaults of both women and men go unreported. Motivation to remain silent is rooted in the reality that the victim is blamed. Those being interviewed

in the film spoke to the response of reporting a sexual assault; their experiences included threats to their lives, losing rank or even being discharged, being charged with adultery, experiencing additional assaults and immeasurable humiliation. Retired Navy officer Trina McDonald said "They made it very, very clear that if I said anything, they were gonna kill me." Understandably, the poor response to those who do report results in increased numbers of those women choosing not to report. Another reason not to report—*The Invisible War* reported that "25% of servicewomen didn't report their rape because the person to report to was the rapist."

To this day the US Military continues to allow high ranking commanders to determine the prosecution of sexual assault cases and in December of 2011 a lawsuit filed on behalf of 18 survivors was dismissed, ruling that rape is an occupational hazard. Former Marine Officer Ariana Klay, assigned to Washington DC's Marine Barracks, recalls

her experience with rape as an occupational hazard, "There was a senior officer in my command who, the first time he spoke to me, he said: 'Female Marines here are nothing but objects for Marines to f\*\*k.'" Klay described the horrific atmosphere at Marine Barracks where abuse and harassment seemed to be condoned, 'WM' stood for two things, 'woman marine' and 'walking mattress'. Klay and other female Marines were frequently called 'whore' and 'slut', even after reporting this harassment Klay was told to 'deal with it.' Then, Klay was gang raped by a senior officer and one of his friends. *The Invisible War* reported that "in environments where sexual harassment is tolerated incidences of rape triple."

With the intent to increase public awareness and spark change on a legislative level, *The Invisible War* is a must see documentary. In 2012 it won the Audience Award at the Sun Dance Film Festival and has been nominated for a 2013 Oscar.

## Primary Prevention (continued from page 2)

Solutions to the problem of sexual violence against children seem complex and elusive. However, primary prevention must begin within families and neighborhoods. All of us have a responsibility to work towards changing social norms that contribute to the harm. Elimination of sexual violence against children can begin with protesting against the over-sexualizing of youth and glamorization of violence in the media, promoting policies that provide more educational and awareness-raising resources, encouraging relationships that do away with rigid gender roles, and supporting people in ways that will end the devastation that accompanies isolation and silence.

*"All of us have a responsibility to work towards changing social norms that contribute to the harm."*

Please see the following resources for more information:

### Online Sites:

- The Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
- PreventConnect
- Darkness to Light
- generationFIVE
- Women & Girls Collective Action Network

### Other Links:

- CDC Violence Prevention Programs
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- VAWNet: National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women

## Spring Has Arrived!

If you have gently used clothes or household items, consider donating them to Neat Repeats and designating WomenSafe as the recipient of the proceeds. If you are able to contribute in this way, Neat Repeats has the following reminders to donors:

- They gladly accept clean, current styles of clothing
- Consignments must arrive in the shop during business hours. Please do not drop them, with a note, into the outside donation box
- If Neat Repeats has to launder items, they become the property of the shop and not a sale for WomenSafe
- There is a difference between sellable and useable items; WomenSafe only makes money on the sellable items

For more information, call Neat Repeats at 388-4488 or Carol at 388-9180.

## A Wish List

Please consider donating an item that can make a huge difference in the lives of people fleeing domestic or sexual violence. WomenSafe often needs the following items:

- Toiletries including soap, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothbrushes and tooth paste;
- Personal care items including hair brushes, combs, small mirrors, wash cloth/towels, nail care set, sewing kit, etc.;
- Gently used baby dolls, doll clothes, toy bottles, pacifiers, etc. for our Care for Kids Education and Training Program
- Prepaid gas cards
- Prepaid phone cards, including Trac Phone minute cards
- Gift certificates to local grocery stores
- Gift certificates to local clothing stores

If you are able to make a donation, please call us at 388-9180 so we can arrange to pick it up or you can mail it to WomenSafe, PO Box 67, Middlebury, VT 05753. If you mail it, please include your name and address so we can send you a thank you note.



**A M E R I C A N  
FLATBREAD**  
Middlebury Hearth

### Benefit Bake for WomenSafe

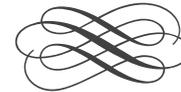
Committed to ending  
domestic and sexual violence.

*“A community will be safe only when the women  
and children in the community are safe”*

**Wednesday, April 17th, 5–9:00**  
**Eat in or take out**

**\$3 (\$1.50 per small) from the sale of  
each flatbread will be donated!**

For more info please call:  
AMERICAN FLATBREAD: 388-3300 or  
WOMENSAFE: 388-9180





### 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 families, 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 our 94 e-readers who already receive the newsletter via email! If you would like to “Go Paperless,” let us know at [info@womensafe.net](mailto:info@womensafe.net). In order to avoid gaps in delivery, please inform us of any email address changes by calling Carol at 388-9180.

# ACUSI Office Opens in Middlebury

By Fred Saar, *ACUSI Executive Director*

The Addison County Unit for Special Investigations (ACUSI) has opened their office at 35 Court Street in Middlebury. ACUSI is a non-profit corporation that is supported by a state grant and coordinates the investigation of sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and crimes against individuals with physical or developmental disabilities.

The objective of ACUSI is to provide a neutral location where the victims of abuse can be interviewed and receive referrals for needed services. ACUSI has two family friendly interview rooms and our objective is to provide the coordination so the victim only needs to participate in one interview. Interviewers are skilled professionals and receive specialized training in interviewing children, teens and adults.

Each county in Vermont has a Special Investigations Unit, but the approach differs slightly from location to location. ACUSI has chosen to hire an investigator to work in ACUSI and

*“ACUSI...coordinates the investigation of sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence and crimes against individuals with physical or developmental disabilities.”*

to supplement the investigators that are in the local law enforcement agencies. This approach is unique to Addison County, but addresses the unique needs of the County identified by the Board of Directors.

While approaches may vary around the State, all of the Special Investigations Units have the same five objectives:

- To minimize the potential trauma to victims given the intrusiveness of the investigation and prosecution process;

- To protect victims from further abuse;
- To investigate criminal allegations in a timely, thorough manner with specially trained investigators in order to maximize the likelihood that offenders will be held fully accountable;
- To provide referrals for specialized medical, trauma focused mental health, and other services the victim and caregiver may need, and
- To create public awareness through the media, public forums and other community outreach programs.

ACUSI is managed by an Executive Director and community members include the Addison County State's Attorney's Office, area law enforcement agencies (the Middlebury, Vergennes and Bristol police departments and the Vermont State Police), the Department of Children and Families, WomenSafe, and the Counseling Services of Addison County.

# Gang Rape and Murder in New Delhi, India

By Leah Swanson, *Bachelor's of Social Work Student Intern, University of Vermont*

December 16, 2012 may seem like some time ago, but we cannot forget the attack of an innocent woman in New Delhi. It was on this day that a 23-year-old paramedical student and her male friend boarded a private bus after getting out of the movies on a leisurely Sunday evening. On that bus, the driver and five of his friends began to beat up the male passenger and then turned to severely beat, gang rape, and assault the woman with an iron rod. After the men were finished mercilessly attacking the two innocent people, they were left on the side of the road for hours until

found. The unidentified woman died a few days later from organ failure and acute internal injuries including brain injury, liver damage, and an infection in her abdomen and lungs. An innocent woman's death all because of a "joy ride."

*"If this isn't a call for action, I do not know what is."*

A movement has risen in India. Protests, blog posts, candle light marches, heated discussions, and rallies have dominated the streets, but the underlying question still remains: Will this incident really change anything? Or do we need to look at the root of the problem, instead of jumping to such typical responses?

This is just one example of the overbearing injustices that women face worldwide. If this isn't a call for action, I do not know what is.

# WomenSafe

Committed to ending domestic and sexual violence

## The Advocate

Newsletter of WomenSafe

### WomenSafe Provides:

#### Advocacy Services ■

(Free and Confidential)

24-hour Hotline

Information & Referrals

Emotional Support

Medical Advocacy

Legal Advocacy

Transitional Housing Support & Advocacy

Systems Advocacy

Support Groups

#### Community Outreach ■ and Education

#### Supervised Visitation ■ & Monitored Exchange

## Mother's Day Fundraiser

The 12th Annual WomenSafe Local Woman Artist Mother's Day Fundraiser provides an opportunity for friends and relatives to recognize and honor a special person while supporting the work of WomenSafe. Your donation will be acknowledged by sending this year's Mother's Day card to your honoree. Please watch the *Addison Independent* and check out our webpage at [www.womensafe.net](http://www.womensafe.net) for more information.

**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.

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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