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WomenSafe, Inc.
PO Box 67
Middlebury, VT 05753

24 Hour Hotline
 802.388.4205 or 800.388.4205

Business: 802.388.9180
 Fax: 802.388.3438

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info@womensafe.net
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The #MeToo Movement: A Global, Social Media Sensation

By Anna Dennis, *Middlebury College Winter Term Advocate Intern*

Social media outlets were flooded with #MeToo when, on October 15th, actress Alyssa Milano posted a tweet calling for survivors of sexual harassment and assault to reply “Me Too” in response to the Harvey Weinstein case. Milano’s mission was to show the magnitude of the social problem of sexual violence and to give survivors an invitation and platform to have their stories heard. But what Milano did not mention was that the phrase “Me Too” and the movement behind it was not a new one, but rather a campaign that was started ten years ago by Black activist Tarana Burke.

This immediately sparked controversy as it became clear that Burke was not being cited for her work and opened a larger conversation of the historic erasure and exclusion of women of color from feminist movements. A couple days later, Milano officially credited Burke with the #MeToo campaign. Burke stated that she sees the #MeToo campaign as being bigger than just one person; that “it is bigger than me and bigger than Alyssa Milano. Neither one of us should be centered in this work. This is about survivors.” Although the recent #MeToo movement has had a strong and sweeping start, it is certainly not without backlash or controversy.

The #MeToo movement is focused on shifting the conversation away from perpetrators and towards survivors by providing a platform for their stories and experiences to be shared and heard. One critique of the movement that has surfaced is the sentiment that it is not

always safe or healthy for survivors to publicly share their stories, or to even publicly self-identify as survivors, due to fear of re-traumatization or further violence. There has also been backlash against the perceived broadness of the movement. There have been calls for there to be more emphasis placed on the spectrum and gradients of sexual assault and harassment, rather than lumping all acts of sexual misconduct together in one hashtag. Whatever the perceived weaknesses of the movement, however, its momentum and reach cannot be denied.

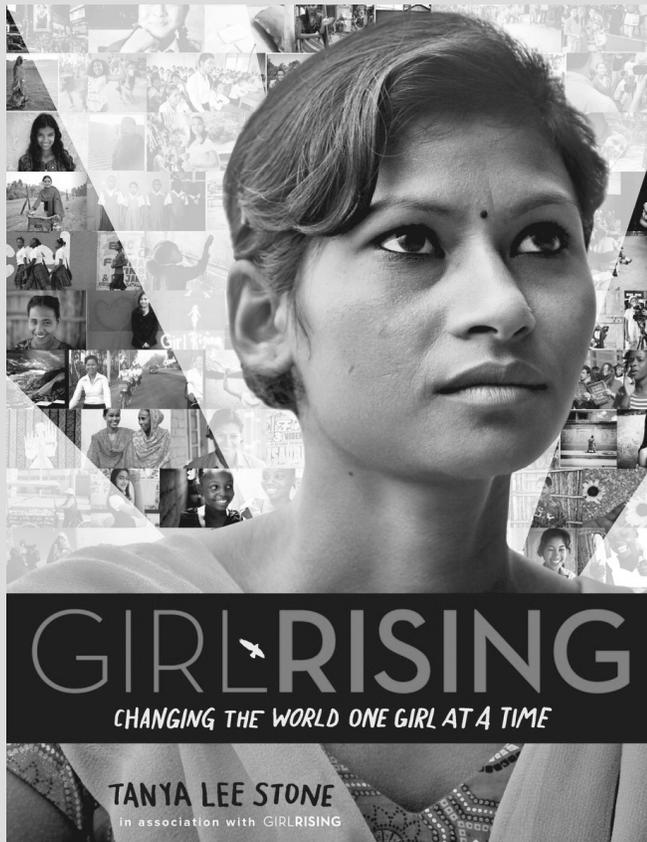
Since its initial appearance on Twitter, #MeToo has become a massive, global social media movement. By October 17th, two days after Milano’s original tweet, #MeToo had been posted over 500,000 times on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in the U.S. alone. Direct translations of #MeToo have been shared by Arabic speakers in Africa and the Middle East and by Spanish speakers in South America and Europe, while activists in France and Italy have developed distinct hashtags to express the sentiments of the movement. In less than a month, some form of #MeToo had reached 85 countries. Furthermore, the campaign has prompted survivors from across the country and world to share their stories and name their, oftentimes high-powered and high profile, perpetrators. It has also given rise to the ‘Time’s Up’ campaign, a legal defense fund working to end sexual harassment, assault and inequality in the workplace, which had

(Continued on page 5)

BOOK REVIEW

Girl Rising—Changing the World One Girl at a Time

By Heather Harrington, *Supervised Visitation Program Coordinator and Prevention Educator*



By Tanya Lee Stone

Currently, there are forty million victims of modern-day slavery, more than at any time in world history.

Inspirational—That is how I would describe the compilation of stories by Tanya Lee Stone, *Girl Rising: Changing the World One Girl at a Time*. The brutality of their stories and their ability to hold onto “hope” ultimately provoked the author to write the book.

Girl Rising tells the stories of nine young women from different countries who were forced into servitude, sold and bought like cattle, and miraculously find the courage to endure and survive. These young girls were sold into slavery as early as five-years old and forced to work long hours under brutal conditions. Beaten daily, forced to prepare meals, clean the home, wash clothes, they are often sexually assaulted and forced to become child brides. These young children have no say in their lives. They are led to believe that in exchange for working they will be provided an education or that they will return to their families only to learn that neither is true.

The young women in *Girl Rising* share their stories with dignity and optimism. Bravely, they share their struggles and their fears. Despite the circumstances, they were driven to get the education they deserved; they persevered.

Many think that slavery no longer exists, but unfortunately that is not the case. The reality is that slavery still exists today and is thriving. Currently, there are forty million victims of modern day slavery, more than at any time in world history.

America is not immune to this startling statistic. So often we think it happens somewhere else. However, we too have issues with modern day slavery, including human trafficking resulting in forced labor that includes sex trafficking of vulnerable young girls in the United States. It is widespread and affects every community.

The sad reality is that worldwide, more than 62 million girls are not in school and often live under brutal conditions, just because they were born a girl. The author asks why is that, and what can we do about it?

The young girls profiled in the book are now pursuing an education, some writing poetry, and others studying for exams. They are so grateful for the opportunity to become productive global citizens so that they can provide for their families and support their communities. They have dreams, they have hope.

Blog Post: Technology Safety Training

By Foresta Castañeda, *Transitional Housing Program Coordinator*

Safety Net is a project of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) and focuses on the intersection of technology and intimate partner abuse and works to address how it impacts the safety, privacy, accessibility, and civil rights of victims. The following is a blog post by Safety Net after I (Foresta) attended the 2017 Technology Summit:

Last week we (NNEDV) welcomed almost 300 people to our 5th Annual Technology Summit in San Francisco. For four days we worked, laughed, strategized, and built new ways to think and talk about how privacy and tech safety impact the lives of survivors of abuse and harassment.

We had over 30 brilliant and passionate presenters from around the world, including representatives from Google, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Uber, Mozilla, and Niantic. A wide array of content was presented, such as: the Internet of Things, the intersection between technology and human trafficking, cutting edge technology legislation, online gaming and dating, teens and tech, innovative uses of technology to address abuse, and much more.

In addition to our world class presenters, this year we had our largest group of participants ever, including from partner agencies in Australia, Finland, the Netherlands, and Canada. Technologists, advocates, lawyers, and survivors enriched the conversation as participants and presenters. Many participants came from programs providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, non-residential services, and crucial legal assistance. Others teach coding and tech skills to survivors to help them gain financial freedom. All of them make a difference every day.

Throughout the conference, participants discussed all aspects of Technology Safety for survivors, including:

- How abusers misuse tech,
- How survivors can strategically use tech to maintain their safety and privacy,
- How agencies can use tech to increase accessibility and ensure privacy, and
- The importance of designing technology with survivors in mind.

At NNEDV we work and play hard, and the 2017 Tech Summit was no exception! Receptions, dinners,

snacks, networking opportunities, and informal discussions provided a chance for participants and presenters to connect and collaborate. Tech Summit is ultimately a tech conference, so we also had ample time to try out tech, including learning how to opt-out of data brokers at our Opt-Out Station and testing out the virtual gaming system, Oculus.

We are thrilled that the conference was a success and we look forward to taking back many great ideas on how to make next year's conference even better. The conference was filled with ideas on how technology safety can improve the lives of survivors of abuse and harassment. We are excited to provide that information in the coming year through technical assistance, new written materials, and our ever-expanding training catalogue.

For more information about Tech Safety, please contact Foresta or go to the Safety Net website: www.TechSafety.org or www.NNEDV.org the Safety Net website: www.TechSafety.org or www.NNEDV.org

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Benefit Bake for WomenSafe

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What's Faith Got To Do With It?

By Rev. Mary Kay Schueneman, Ph.D.

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Did you know Vermont is ranked as the “least religious state” in the United States? Perhaps, then, you might ask, “What’s faith got to do with it?”

And I would answer you, “A lot. Much more than you might think.”

In my personal experience of answering the hotline for WomenSafe, as well as stories related to me by other volunteers and advocates, it is clear that matters of faith loom large in the lives of people experiencing domestic violence. It might be something as general as, “The universe must be paying me back for my previous misdeeds,” or something as specific as, “God is punishing me because I...”

As a clergy person, the light bulb went on for me a couple of years ago when I was volunteering one day at the WomenSafe office. Kerri handed me a folder and said, “I thought you might be interested in this.” The folder was from an organization called Safe Havens and bore the title: Hearts and Hands: Piecing Together Faith and Safety for Rural Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Piecing Together Faith and Safety... I guess I knew this intuitively, but never really thought about it explicitly – especially how the faith piece I was a part of and the safety piece the advocates at WomenSafe were a part of could actually be pieced together!

This got the ball rolling. The leaders at Safe Havens in Boston, Kerri, and I organized a training event for lay and ordained faith leaders in Addison county that was held in November 2016. Leaders from a variety of faith traditions, and advocates

from WomenSafe gathered to learn more about the experience and trauma of intimate partner violence. We shared insights into the ways words of faith and faith experiences could either magnify the trauma or facilitate hope and healing. And we also learned how faith communities can actively support the work of WomenSafe.

As follow-up to the November gathering, Rev. Tim Franklin from Bridport Congregational Church, Shannon McMahon, Outreach Advocate with WomenSafe, and I went to Chicago in September 2017 for a workshop that included faith leaders and advocates from across the United States! This was an exciting opportunity to learn about work being done in rural communities in Alaska, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Tennessee, New York, Colorado, and Texas.

Completing these two workshop and training experiences has Tim and Shannon and I fired up to go about the work of cultivating intentional links between faith communities and WomenSafe. Over the next several months, Tim and I will be contacting faith leaders to introduce them to Shannon and the work of WomenSafe. WomenSafe will provide a brochure for faith communities that lists their availability for speaking and teaching in worship, education, or other gatherings. We will be organizing a book group for faith communities and WomenSafe advocates and volunteers for discovering the ways languages and experiences of faith intersect with experiences of domestic violence. And we are going to continue training workshops for faith leaders and advocates.

Are you a faith leader or a concerned member of a faith community? Are you not religious at all, but interested in “piecing together faith and safety?” Please stay tuned as our plans for building a coalition of faith communities and advocates for domestic safety come to fruition. Together, we can build a community of wholeness for all.

Rev. Mary Kay Schueneman, Ph.D., is the pastor of 1st Congregational Church of Cornwall, UCC, and the Middlebury United Methodist Church.

Update from Shannon McMahon, Outreach Advocate

Since the Safe Havens training, WomenSafe has been meeting with faith leaders in the community to collaborate. The meetings focus on how to best provide awareness of domestic and sexual violence and how WomenSafe can help, serving people who disclose experiencing violence to their faith leader, and how WomenSafe and faith leaders can come together to end domestic and sexual violence in Addison County.

WomenSafe is currently working with faith leaders to create a breakfast event for advocates and the faith leaders of Addison County.

For more info about WomenSafe’s work in the faith community, please call our office at 388-9180. The hotline is 24/7 for anyone experiencing domestic, sexual, dating violence and stalking: 388-4205.

#MeToo

(Continued from page 1)

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raised nearly \$16 million as of January 7th, 2018.

The #MeToo movement has proved to be viral, far-reaching, quickly evolving, and controversial. While its future is unclear and its platform and reach are constantly shifting, it has undeniably put a powerful spotlight on the stories and experiences of survivors of sexual assault and harassment and revealed the magnitude of the social problem of sexual violence. This movement is just getting started and only time will tell what its future holds.

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I Survived

By Anonymous

-
- Monster** You are the monster that is stuck in my head. My friends warned me to stay away from you, that you were no good. I didn't listen.
 - Depression** It's hard to get out of bed. I didn't want to go to school because I was scared that you would hurt me again. I never felt safe. I have a hard time sleeping since you assaulted me.
 - Anger** You took my freedom away. A black hole in my head. I taste my anger and it is the "I want someone to kill you" flavor. But this is all so awful; I would never wish this pain even upon you.
 - Coping** I didn't mean to tell. It slipped out of my hot mouth like a bloody carp falling back into the lake. I felt guilty when the police brought the papers to your house. Stuck in a maze, I didn't and still don't, know where to go.
 - Proud of** Moving on with my life, finishing school without seeing your face. I survived, I survived, I survived.
 - Finally Happy** Not quite, but almost there.

THANK YOU!

WomenSafe would like to give **HUGE thanks** to the following people, businesses, and organizations that have held benefits in our honor, or donated services or funds to **WomenSafe**:

- American Flatbread
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- Community Barn Ventures
- EJ Bartlett
- Langrock Sperry & Wool, LLP
- Middlebury Community Players
- Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op
- Middlebury Underground
- Otter Creek Yoga
- Rebecca Kincaid
- Rough Cut
- Stonecutter Spirits
- Town Hall Theater

Gendered Intimate Partner Homicide in America

By Rita Munro, *University of Vermont Master of Social Work Intern*

***Please note that the following article may be a trigger for some people.**

A new Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study published in July of 2017 suggests that more than 55 percent of homicides of American women were related to intimate partner violence, and the vast majority of those were carried out by a male partner. The study analyzed the data of over 10,000 female homicide victims above the age of 18 across eighteen states from 2003–2014.

Some noteworthy statistics from the study are as follows:

- Of intimate partner violence (IPV) related homicides, over 90% were carried out by a current or former partner.
- In ten percent of homicide cases, violent acts in the month preceding the homicide might have provided an opportunity for intervention.
- The figures highlight the racial disparity and intersectional experience of women of color in IPV. Black women and indigenous women had the highest rate of death by homicide overall, while Hispanic women were the most likely to be killed in connection to IPV (61 percent of all homicides).
- Firearms were used in over half (53.9 percent) of female homicides, while 20 percent involved some sort of blade.

The CDC report states that its intention was to find information

that could help prevent homicides connected to partner violence. The report highlights that IPV risk assessments could be conducted by first responders to identify victims at risk for future violence and homicide. These assessments, the report states, might "facilitate immediate safety planning and to connect women with other services, such as crisis intervention and counseling, housing, medical and legal advocacy." The report also discusses possible state statutes to limit access to firearms for persons under a domestic violence restraining orders and stresses the important of "bystander programs," such as Green Dot, to teach participants how to recognize situations that could lead to violence and assault, and discern what safety measures should be implemented.

Recent homicides this year in the state of Vermont continue to highlight the need for domestic violence education initiatives, crisis support and services, as well as community education around safe partnerships. We grieve for the friends and family of Cindy Cook, 59, whose body was found in Middlesex, VT on July 12. She died of strangulation. We grieve for the friends and family of Molly McLain, 27, killed by her husband on July 26 in Maidstone, VT. She was stabbed and shot. We grieve for the friends and family of Yogeswari Khadka, 32, who was killed on October 12 in Burlington, VT. She died of a brutal attack by her husband.

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VPR, Burlington Free Press, Seven Days.

Prevention Education Programs at WomenSafe

Our trained professionals are available to speak to local school staff, educators, students, and others about the ways to prevent dating violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse. We believe that we reduce the risk of harm to our children by providing accurate, age appropriate information to our youth and the important adults in their lives. Information is powerful! Together, we can offer our young people the tools to be healthy and joyful in their relationships. They will learn how to treat each other with kindness and respect while embracing individuality and setting boundaries.

Please join us in our efforts to eliminate dating violence and sexual assault in Addison County and Rochester! Contact Annie B. or Heather at 388-9180 to find out more about our prevention programs around healthy relationships, communication, empathy, and consent.

WomenSafe Newsletter

If you enjoy the paper copy of our newsletter, thank you for subscribing! If you would like to receive our newsletter over email, please let us know by calling 388-9180 or emailing us at cg@womensafe.net.

KIMBERLY KRANS

Women Who Change the World Award Celebration

By Christina Grier, *Services Director*

Valerie Ortiz

WomenSafe was pleased to honor Valerie Ortiz as the recipient of the 2018 Kimberly Krans Women Who Change the World Award on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 in Middlebury. Several of Val's patients, friends and colleagues spoke about her work and dedication to her patients. Over 70 people attended the celebration.

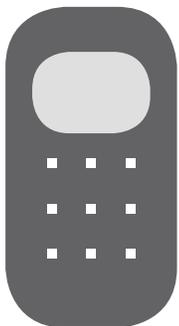
Valerie Ortiz has worked as a Registered Nurse within community health settings for over three decades in Washington, DC, Virginia, and Vermont. She focuses her efforts on women and maternal child health needs, as well as acute and chronically ill children in the community. Since moving to Shoreham, Vermont in 2003, Valerie has served as the Maternal Child Health/Pediatric Nurse for Addison County Home Health and Hospice.

Throughout her career and life experiences, Valerie has cultivated her passion for women and children's health, particularly in underserved populations and complicated life scenarios. Her biggest goal is to promote healthy families through empowerment and education. Valerie's

patients consistently regard her as more than a nurse, but as a valued advocate and provider. Her colleagues, both direct and tangential, hold Valerie's expertise and consideration in the highest regard and trust her judgment as well as her unique role in the lives of her patients.

Valerie puts in extra effort by working alongside other community agencies and resources to best aid her patients, and promotes comprehensive care coordination for families. She also gives back to the healthcare community by working with nursing students from Vermont Technical College. Students ride along with Val during a portion of their pediatric/community health rotation. While helping the families of our community raise their children, Valerie has two of her own - her daughter Genevieve and her son Nicholas, along with two goats, five cats, and four dogs.

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.



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