

CALENDER OF EVENTS:

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH!

- ~ April 6th - National Day to End Sexual Violence
- ~ April 11th - SAAM Awards Ceremony 12 - 2
- ~ April 13th - "Take Back the Night" U of U 7:00 pm
- ~ April 19th & 20th - Crime Victims Conference
- ~ April 22nd - RRC Volunteer Social
- ~ May 9th - 20th - RRC Volunteer Training

NEW VOLUNTEER & ADVOCACY COORDINATOR:

We are very happy to welcome Catherine Barnhart to the RRC staff. She comes to us from the Engineering Dept. at the U of U where she worked to diversify their engineering student population. Cathy has a lot of great ideas & energy and we are excited to have her on our team. ~

This project funded by the CDC Rape Prevention Education Grant #VF1/CCV819939-04

RAPE RECOVERY CENTER SERVICES

Recovery Center is a non-profit agency that provides no-cost confidential crisis intervention therapy in spanish and english, advocacy, and referral information to victims of sexual assault, and to their families and friends. The crisis hotline* is operated by trained and certified volunteer counselors 24-hours a day. All services are available to all primary and secondary survivors, including recent and former victims of child sexual assault. The Center also provides free presentations to civic, educational, business and professional groups. Presentations can be tailored to the interest and educational level of the audience ~

**Confidential, yet governed by mandatory reporting laws.*

24-hour crisis line: 467-RAPE (7273), **TTY:** 746.5551

Utah toll-free, 24-hour crisis line and information line: 1-888-421-1100

RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)



United Way of Salt Lake



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RAPE RECOVERY CENTER

SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER

UTAH CRIME VICTIMS LEGAL CLINIC: ADVANCING THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS

January 2005 marked the ten-year anniversary of the passage and implementation of the Victim Rights Constitutional Amendment and the Victim's Bill of Rights. Notably, the past decade has marked a significant increase and improvement of victim participation in the criminal justice system and a flourishing of victim advocate programs and services available to crime victims in Utah. The implementation of the VINE notification system, the Victim Assistance Academy and additional laws relating to restitution have further added to the smorgasbord of options service providers and crime victims have to access the criminal justice system.

Now, Utah is prepared to tackle enforcement of all the rights victims have, by instituting a new legal clinic for crime victims. In April of this year, the Rape Recovery Center was chosen to participate in a demonstration project funded by the federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)-administered through the National Crime Victim Law Institute in Portland, Oregon-to establish The Utah Crime Victims' Legal Clinic (hereafter, "Legal Clinic"). Two-thirds of the funding (up to three years) for the Legal Clinic is provided by OVC with the other third being awarded by the Utah State Crime Victims Reparations Board.

The Legal Clinic is designed to provide free legal representation to crime victims when victims' rights issues are at stake. The Legal Clinic is available to serve victims of all types of crime and has a state-wide focus. The goals of the Legal Clinic are three fold-namely, 1) to provide free legal services to crime victims in criminal district, justice, juvenile and appellate courts; 2) to recruit and train a roster of pro bono attorneys and law students to provide legal services to victims; and 3) to provide education to criminal justice professionals on victims' rights.

The Legal Clinic is available to help individual crime victims whose victims' rights are in jeopardy, and victims whose rights have already been violated. The Legal Clinic will also be looking for "test cases"-namely cases in which a victims' rights issue has significance for many victims; it is hoped that the Legal Clinic can identify and take these test cases to the appellate courts and establish case precedent advancing the rights of crime victims in Utah. The priority issues the Legal Clinic has identified as needing to be addressed in the legal arena include: a victim's right to privacy, including the right to keep private and confidential records from being subpoenaed; ensuring that frivolous continuances are minimized so victims can exercise their right to a speedy trial and final disposition; restitution; child-victim rights, and the rights of victims of juvenile crime.

If you are a victim or assist victims of crime, the Legal Clinic may be a valuable resource. To contact the Legal Clinic, please call Heidi Nestel, Clinic Director and staff attorney at 2035 South 1300 East in Salt Lake City; or call (801) 721-8321; or email at heidi@utahvictimsclinic.org. ~

By: Heidi Nestel, Project Director/Staff Attorney

This project is supported by a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice, administered by the National Crime Victim Law Institute. Points of view in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S.

Department of Justice or the National Crime Victims Law Institute.]

Congratulations to Heidi Nestel who is a 2006 SAAM Award recipient! Heidi will be honored at the 4th Annual SAAM Awards Ceremony and Reception on Tuesday, April 11th at The City Library.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The beginning of spring always makes me pause to reflect on the state of the community and recent events. And for me, this spring brings with it a renewed optimism in our mission to educate the community about the impact of sexual violence.

The Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice completed a study in 2005, Rape in Utah, which confirmed my anecdotal experience working with victims of sexual violence for the past 15 years. The study found that the scope of sexual violence in our community is staggering, with one in three women in Utah reporting that they have been a victim. And, while these numbers are troubling, even more so is the fact that Utah's "rape rate" is the only category of violent crime that continues to go up, while every other category is going down. Whether we have been victimized, or our mothers or daughters, sexual assault leaves many (including men and boys who were not captured in this study) to struggle to regain control of their lives and heal from the devastation of sexual violence.

What is optimistic about these disturbing statistics, you ask? I would suggest that community recognition of the depth and breadth of the pandemic is the first step in reducing the impact of sexual violence. It is through public awareness campaigns and the investment of the community that we will reduce the incidence of sexual violence.

As you may know April is Sexual Assault Awareness month, and I invite you to join me in participating in community events and continue the conversation with your family and friends about the impact that rape and sexual assault has on us all. And finally, consider identifying ways in which you can invest your time, expertise or financial support to help in the fight to end sexual violence in our community. ~

*Heather Stringfellow, MPA
Executive Director*

Please join me for our second annual An Evening with the Arts at Westminster College on May 5th. As we emerge from a month of activities and awareness - the event will be an opportunity to celebrate the great work that the Rape Recovery Center staff and volunteers and our community partners have done this past year.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

We now offer our educational program "Rape 101" in Spanish. We also have Rape Recovery Center brochures and posters in Spanish and will soon have an electronic brochure in Farsi. Please call Cindy Taylor at ext. 13 to schedule a presentation or order brochures and posters. ~

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HOSPITAL RESPONSE--A DAY IN THE LIFE...

At 12:45 a.m. I get a call from a crisis line volunteer, "Sorry for calling you so late, but there is a Code R at U of U Hospital". I get the information from the volunteer and get dressed.

Within fifteen minutes I am in my car and enroute to the U. The drive is about 10 minutes, and as I drive I try to do my best to wake up, stop yawning, and I can feel my heart rate increase as I get closer.

I start to wonder about the situation I am going to encounter, what is the environment like, are there family and/or friends there for support? I also wonder, as a male advocate, how will the victim react to me? Hopefully, it will be healing for her to have a positive, supportive experience with a man so soon after having been victimized by one.

I arrive at the hospital, and I sign in at the front desk, "How can I help you?" I reply, "I am here from the Rape Recovery Center, I was called in for a Code R". As I am escorted to room 21 I am at my most anxious; how they first react to seeing me will be the predictor of how well I can help the client.

I walk into the room, where I introduce myself. She welcomes me in, and mentally I give a large sigh of relief. I find that the SANE nurse has already begun the examination, and the police officer has already taken her statement. I explain to her why I am there, and that she is in total control of this situation;

I can leave at any time she feels uncomfortable with me being there. The SANE nurse continues her exam, and I fill out the necessary paperwork as the victim responds to the nurse's questions. As the exam continues I ask if I can get any water, food, blanket, pillows, etc. for the client; she says yes to water and a blanket. I also ask how she is doing, or if she needs a break during the exam; she says she is okay.

Finally, after the exam is over I explain the services we provide at the RRC, explain about Crime Victims Reparations and how it can help her. I tell her that if she is ever in crisis or just needs to talk, she can use our 24-hour crisis line.

I ask her if there is anything else I can do for her at that moment; she says no and thanks me for the help. As I leave I tell her, "I am sorry we met under these conditions, but I do hope to see you at the RRC soon" and "Thank you for being so strong".

As I drive home I think to myself I hope she does come into the Center. I feel great for helping her through her experience at the hospital, and for sharing the information I had. I get home and go back to bed, trying to quiet my mind and stop thinking about the unpredictable path to her healing. ~

By Robb Henry, BSW Intern

