

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Alliance works to identify needs
- Executive director and Victim Services Coordinator Hired
- Representative Dan Stewart receives Visionary Voice Award
- Upcoming Open House: April 19

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## Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence Opens Doors

We are pleased to announce that Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence is a newly formed coalition of individuals, sexual assault, domestic violence, and population specific organizations throughout Ohio working to eliminate all forms of sexual violence. In November, the Alliance formally opened its doors at the YWCA in downtown Columbus.

In 2010, the Ohio Alliance hired their Executive Director, Samar Kaukab Ahmad. Ahmad will direct the organization in providing support, advocacy, policy information and funding to organizations working to advocate for the rights and needs of survivors and co-survivors of sexual violence. "We're thrilled to have Samar on board as Executive Director," said interim board president, Julianna Nemeth.

"Her experience and dedication to the organization, along with her passion are what we need as Ohio builds a strong foundation for our coalition against sexual violence."



Prior to serving at the Ohio Alliance, Ahmad was the Executive Director at SalamCorps, a Central Ohio based community service organization promoting civic engagement with the American Muslim community. Ahmad brings a strong history of working for social justice, and was selected as a 2005 Equal Justice Works Fellow for her work ad-

ressing domestic violence within immigrant communities in Southwest Ohio. She received her J.D from The Ohio State University Moritz college of Law in 2005, and attended Oxford university as a participant in an intensive law study program.

In addition to Ahmad, the Ohio Alliance brought Jennifer Yoder on board as their Victim Services coordinator. Yoder, a former volunteer advocate for the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio, seasoned organizer of Columbus' annual Take Back the Night march, and community self-defense instructor through The Ohio State University, is passionate about ending sexual violence.

## April 19th Crime Victim's Rights Event

In Honor of National Crime Victim's Rights Week, the Ohio Alliance is hosting an Open House, "Fairness, Dignity and Respect for Ohio's Sexual Assault Survivors" from 6-7:30.

We will have a speaker from the Ohio Attorney General's office present to share an assessment

of Victim's Rights in Ohio. Please come to the Alliance office to see the resources we have available for survivors and co-survivors, and to brainstorm with others about how to best enhance fairness, dignity and respect for victims of sex-

ual violence in Ohio. We are located on the fourth floor of 65 S Fourth St. in Columbus, Ohio.

### Fairness, Dignity & Respect for Ohio's Sexual Assault Survivors:

An Open House in honor of National Crime Victim's Rights Week at the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence

April 19, 2010, 6-7:30pm  
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence Office  
64 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 405  
Columbus, OH 43215



## Ohio Coalition on Family Health Applauds Prevention First

**Excerpted From Ohio Coalition on Family Health Press Release** Representatives of Ohio's Coalition for Family Health applauded [the] introduction of legislation that backers say would prevent unplanned pregnancies and reduce the demand for abortion across the state. In addition to expanding access to family planning resources, the bill includes provisions that would provide comprehensive, medically accurate sex education; require hospital emergency rooms to provide emergency contraception to victims of sexual assault; and mandate insurance parity for

FDA-approved prescription contraception.

The bill's introduction came one week after the Coalition for Family Health released a white paper study that found Ohio to be 48th among the fifty states and DC in terms of contraceptive access and identifies the state's \$50 per woman-in-need spending less than half the national average. Citing laws and policies that are among the most restrictive in the nation and a statewide shortage of publicly supported family planning clinics, the 17-page *Report on Access to Family Planning Resources in Ohio* documents in detail the

causes and effects of Ohio's dismal record.

According to coalition spokeswoman Judi Wolf of the National Council of Jewish Women, "Our 32 members represent rural, urban, and suburban Ohio and encompass everyone from organizations that serve a state-wide constituency to those that operate within a single neighborhood. Together, we intend to impact policy and improve the health and well-being of women, children and their families across Ohio." <http://www.ocfh.org/Media/Releases/tabid/980/Default.aspx>

*"Most recently, CRCC Megan O'Bryan was appointed to a special task force to investigate how the police handle cases of sexual assault and missing persons."*

## Dan Stewart Receives Visionary Voice Award

State Representative Dan Stewart of the 25th District serves his hometown of Columbus in the Ohio House. Stewart represents the area including central, west and south Columbus, in addition to Franklin, Hamilton and Jackson Townships.

Rep. Stewart sponsored bills al-

lowing victims of rape to know all the treatment options available to them including those concerning emergency contraceptives.

It is for this work that the Ohio Alliance is proud to present Rep. Stewart with the Visionary Voice Award. The Visionary Voice

Award is presented through the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. It is an opportunity to offer national recognition for the creativity, hard work, and tireless dedication of individuals around the country working to end and prevent sexual violence in their communities.



## Cleveland Responds to Sowell

In late October, Cleveland was hit with the news that three, then six, then ultimately 11 women had been murdered and their bodies found in the home of Cleveland resident Anthony Sowell. The community was shaken as the victims were

identified and family and friends learned the their loved ones were dead.

The Cleveland Rape Crisis Center (CRCC) responded quickly, working with many other local organizations to hold a forum for the community to provide them resources and a space to raise concerns.

They followed up by creating a special hotline for survivors involved in the Sowell case.

Most recently, CRCC Megan O'Bryan was appointed to a special task force to investigate how the police handle cases of sexual assault and missing persons. The task force has 90 days to investigate current

# Sowell Continued



**Special Task Force With Mayor: Megan O'Bryan, Mary Bounds and Teresa Beasley**

(Cont.) standards, the approaches of other cities, and best practices, then report back on their findings and make recommendations. Here

is an excerpt from an editorial by O'Bryan days after the discovery of the women's bodies.

*Where was the public outcry when that many women became missing in and around one inner-city neighborhood? How did this go virtually unnoticed until recently? How many more women are currently missing in our city? This case demonstrates that a segment of our population—women who are poor, black, drug-addicted and/or mentally ill—are invisible. As we grieve as a community about the loss of so many women we need to*

*confront the reality that race and economic class are key factors directly linked to their tragic deaths.*

*And central to our conversations must be the fact that Sowell's violent acts were targeted against a specific gender, women. Many recent murder cases in Cleveland have been targeted at women and were committed by men that the victims knew. Nearly all involve domestic violence and/or sexual violence—crimes that impact women far more proportionately than men.*

OAESV commends CRCC for their hard work.

**“It has taken the dedication of many individuals and organizations to get to this exciting juncture.”**

## Ohio Alliance History, Needs Assessment

It has taken the dedication of many individuals and organizations to get to this exciting juncture. In April 2008, a small group of people (now know as the OAESV Steering council) met with the assistance of the National Resource Sharing Project with the aim of developing a statewide coalition focused on sexual assault in Ohio.

Since then, the Steering council continues to meet monthly toward the establishment of that goal. With the assistance of the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center as fiscal sponsor and the initial financial commitment from both the Ohio Department of Health and the Office of Criminal Justice Services, OAESV was able to engage in a statewide assessment and begin regional meetings with stakeholders. In November 2008, OAESV received its state not-for-profit status and the federal 501(c) 3 designation in April 2009. Then

OAESV was recognized as Ohio's state sexual assault coalition by the Center for Disease Control, qualifying it for specific dollars to support its work through the Department of Justice, Office of violence Against Women.

To ascertain the needs of those the Alliance will be serving, OAESV assessed the needs of its stakeholders. Any individual, agency, group or system that is working on issues related to sexual violence or interacts with survivors of rape/sexual assault in either a formal or informal way was asked to fill out a survey about the needs of providers and survivors from a coalition.

The goal was to capture diverse perspectives from a variety of organizations and community members working with survivors in traditional and non-traditional ways from all over the state.

The survey results were compiled

with the help of I.S.P. Consulting and used to plan the work of the Alliance and to inform the public and funders about the needs identified around the state. These results can be accessed at [www.oaesv.org/Stakeholder%20Report.pdf](http://www.oaesv.org/Stakeholder%20Report.pdf).





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Sexual Violence**

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**Officially established in April of 2009, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence is a coalition of sexual assault and domestic violence organizations throughout Ohio working to eliminate all forms of sexual violence. OAESV provides support, advocacy, policy information and funding to organizations working to advocate for the rights and needs of survivors and co-survivors of sexual violence.**

**To become a member please e-mail  
[membership@oaesv.org](mailto:membership@oaesv.org).**

**For more information please e-mail  
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