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Alliance Strengthens as Membership Rises

Within the last year, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (the Ohio Alliance) has had some incredible achievements. In every part of Ohio and within the organization itself. In 2010 we forged new friendships with local partners who work tirelessly to end sexual violence in their respective communities, with partners in the Ohio General Assembly who share our desire to see an Ohio where all individuals have the protections they need to thrive, and with the new members of our Board of Directors who share these common bonds and have dedicated their talents to ensure the success of this newly established Alliance.

The Ohio Alliance has a number of exciting new initiatives and projects for members in 2011 as we work to provide leadership in

Ohio with respect to ending sexual violence and advocating for the rights and needs of survivors.

We are looking forward to facilitating collaborative response networks, providing more robust and extensive training and technical assistance, providing public



policy updates and working toward a public policy strategy for all of Ohio, providing online resources, and sharing informative and up-to-date communications through a variety of outlets. As we quickly approach 2011, we need your membership support

to continue our vital programming efforts.

Annual Alliance membership offers tangible benefits such as technical assistance, training, education materials, current news updates as well as opportunities and resources for effecting public policy changes to protect survivors and prevent sexual violence. Please consider visiting [our website](#) and joining our ranks today.

Please read through our [membership packet](#) to see what the Ohio Alliance has accomplished in the last year and what exciting initiatives you can be a part of in 2011.

As always, please contact us with any questions that you may have or to provide us with feedback on what we can do to better serve you in the coming year.

Sexual Violence and Educational Institutions

Educational institutions are integral in the lives of Ohioans – we entrust our children to their care 40 hours a week for 12 of the most formative years of their lives: totaling over 17,280 hours, before extracurricular activities. Many Ohio students go on to attend a college or university,

spending their first years without a curfew or direct parental supervision. They are completely under the purview and authority of their educational institution.

The Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence is committed to working with Ohio's schools, colleges and universities to prevent sexual

violence, and, when it does occur, to provide survivors of sexual violence with comprehensive and timely support. In this newsletter we bring you current practices, personal stories, articles and research relating to sexual violence and educational institutions.

Elizabeth Williams: One Survivor's Story



**Elizabeth Williams,
Founder of
Survivors to Alivers**

“As a living testimony of the painful effects of trauma and the often scary, yet empowering journey of healing, I was inspired to found Survivors to Alivers in June of 2009.”



In 1996 I was a sixteen year old junior at Walnut Ridge High School here in Columbus, Ohio. I was a well-behaved child getting good grades and enjoying a wealth of friends and good times. I was part of student council, drill team, marching band, track and basketball. I came from a middle class family with a father who was a Columbus police officer and a mother who enjoyed a career in telecommunications. Life as I knew it took a turn for the worse on September 23, 1996 when my teacher made a choice to abuse his authority and raped me. Considering I had a father who taught me how to protect myself and to be aware of potential dangers, one would think I would have fought back, kicked, and screamed. I didn't. I laid there in disbelief. I laid there hoping it would be over soon. I just laid there. Tears were running down my face as he penetrated me. When he was done, I got up, put my clothes back on, and drove home. I was scared. I didn't know what to do. Even though I had a father at home who would do anything to protect me and was in a position as a police officer to do more than most fathers can, I didn't tell a soul.

It wasn't until a few days later when I was called to the principal's office and was told that a teacher was concerned that I had an inappropriate crush on him that I found the courage to disclose the truth. The reporting process began. My parents were called and before I knew it, I had been interviewed what felt like a million times by several police detectives, case workers, attorneys, and family. It was embarrassing. I didn't want to tell anyone. I didn't want to talk about the details of what happened. They asked me if I remembered what his penis looked like and if there were any scars or marks that I could remember. They asked me if I had ever had sex before. They asked me every question

imaginable. I felt dirty. I felt ashamed. I felt like I was on display for the world to see. I was soon taken to my first gynecologic appointment to have another stranger between my legs. I felt so uncomfortable. I had never been to a gynecologist before. This old, bald-headed white man was between my legs sticking some metal thing in there and kept telling me to open my legs. Once again, I'm on my back with tears running down my face waiting for another man to finish. In addition to the physical discomfort, there was the emotional discomfort of knowing that I may be pregnant and/or have a Sexually Transmitted Disease.

During the months following my rape, I woke up every day watching the news as I got dressed for school. The cameras were outside of the school daily reporting about a student accusing a teacher of rape. Their version seemed slanted to encourage people not to believe me. At school, my "friends" began wearing pins to school saying "NOT GUILTY" in support of my perpetrator. There were rumors that I had sex with him and got pregnant so I lied and said he raped me. Others said I wanted to have sex with him and he wouldn't have sex with me so I lied and said he raped me. Still others said I had sex with him and my boyfriend found out so I lied and said he raped me. In dealing with all this negativity, I became suicidal. One day, I got out a gun and sat down and wrote several short notes; one to my mother and father, one to my boyfriend, and one to the man who raped me. While talking on the phone with my boyfriend and telling him my plans to end my life, he told me to hold on. I sat there with the phone in my hand for 20 minutes and was still on hold when he showed up at my door. Had he not shown up, I would not be here

today.

As a living testimony of the painful effects of trauma and the often scary, yet empowering journey of healing, I was inspired to found Survivors To Alivers in June of 2009. Our original focus was sexual violence survivors, but as I began to share my story publicly and speak with people after presenting at various events, I found that others could relate closely with my emotional journey whether they had experienced sexual violence or not. This prompted me to begin to reflect on various clients I had worked with in the past as a Social Worker and research trauma in general. I discovered that the long-term journey of all trauma survivors was similar. I also realized that there aren't many resources for trauma survivors who have made it beyond initial emergency stages but are still struggling with and feeling the effects of their trauma, even years later.

These discoveries lead me to expand the mission of [Survivors To Alivers](#) to provide healing centered programs and services to all trauma survivors. Our primary service is our support site which provides trauma survivors the information, support, and inspiration they need to reclaim life. My hope is that this and other services we offer will assist trauma survivors to move beyond surviving and reclaim life by becoming an Aliver.

If you are a trauma survivor, I urge you to join our membership site and get connected with people who can relate to what you are feeling and resources that will give you the support you need to [become an Aliver](#).

To all others, I extend great thanks for your support of Survivors To Alivers and those we serve.

Advocating for Student Survivors at Ohio's Largest University

I recently started working at the Ohio State University as the campus advocate program coordinator. During my short time here, I have come to realize that working at an institution of higher education presents unique challenges when providing advocate services to survivors of sexual violence. Advocates are well versed in focusing on the survivor—empowering them, making their needs a priority, validating their feelings and experiences, allowing them the time and space they need until they feel ready to move forward. New complications and considerations arise, though, when providing advocacy services on a college campus.

As with working with any survivor, there is a compelling case for supporting students in their decision to *not* move forward if they do not feel ready. First of all, it is important to allow the survivor the autonomy to make the decision about if or when she or he is ready to address the violence in the legal arena, or in any arena for that matter. Going through the legal system or campus judicial system can be re-traumatizing for survi-

vors since they will likely have to re-tell and re-live the assault in front of a room full of people, while also in the same room as the perpetrator. Additionally, it can be hugely disappointing to spend an excessive amount of time and money and experience extreme emotional distress going through the legal processes, only for the perpetrator to be found not guilty.

As an institution of higher education, though, a university has an obligation to promote public safety, and we are required to take prompt action under Title IX in order to protect students. If it comes to our attention that an assault has happened and identifying information for the perpetrator has been revealed, we have a responsibility to respond. On one hand, advocates can encourage survivors to report the incident, and we can highlight the benefits of filing a report and pursuing services on campus. Following through with the legal system or campus judicial system can be empowering for the student—she can feel that she is doing everything she can to hold the person accountable and can feel perhaps a slight sense of satisfaction in

knowing that, regardless of the outcome, the perpetrator is not being allowed to just walk away from the crime. Additionally, when one student comes forward to name a perpetrator, often times other students feel empowered to come forward as well. This can validate the experience of other survivors, and it can also provide corroboration in a trial (if the judge allows it) to show a pattern of behavior.

But on the other hand, what happens if the survivor still does not want the assault reported or does not want to pursue any legal or support services? If the university takes action in order to be compliant with Title IX, the survivor may feel that she was ignored and further violated. The survivor could feel that she was not yet ready to deal with the impact or trauma of the sexual assault but is being forced to confront it when she does not feel safe or supported. This, too, could be further traumatizing or could induce additional fear.

How do advocates working on college campuses balance these intricacies? How do we best meet

the needs of the survivor while also acting in our duty to protect other students from a known perpetrator? I don't yet know the answer to this. No doubt it is a delicate balancing act, and I will do my utmost to ensure that each survivor on campus will feel safe, supported, and empowered.

Brienne Billman is the Campus Advocate in the Sexual Violence Education and Support Office located in the Student Wellness Center at the Ohio State University. She can be reached at 614-292-4527 or billman.20@osu.edu

“How do we best meet the needs of the survivor while also acting in our duty to protect other students from a known perpetrator?”

Prosecuting Alcohol-Facilitated Sexual Violence

When students begin their college career, for many it is the first time they are without direct parental supervision. Freshmen students attending college parties may anticipate flirting, dancing and/or making out, while older students may perceive them to be seeking sexual partners. These clashing expectations, the common pres-

ence of alcohol at college parties, and the lack of direct accountability to a parent leads to a high frequency of alcohol-facilitated sexual violence on college campuses. In fact, college students' highest risk period for sexual assault is between their first day of classes and Thanksgiving break. It is hard to identify an exact statistic for how

frequently alcohol is involved in sexual violence, but studies consistently find between 50%-75% of college and non-stranger sexual violence occurrences include alcohol consumption.

The particularities of Alcohol Facilitated Sexual Assault (AFSA) can cause it to be difficult to prosecute. Because alcohol can impair mem-

Prosecuting AFSA

“Perhaps the most difficult component of prosecuting AFSA is that the very factors that render a survivor vulnerable to a perpetrator result in less perceived credibility and likeability for the jury.”

ory, it may be difficult for the survivor to recall facts, details and events that are needed to construct a case. The survivor may be incapacitated by alcohol or recovering from the effects of alcohol for a long time period following the assault; as every hour passes, the forensic evidence deteriorates.

Along with barriers to the investigation, AFSA often comes down to survivor credibility and "likeability." The often voluntary consumption of alcohol can be viewed by a jury without specific education about sexual violence to conclude culpability in the assault.

Despite the challenges, it is possible to build a viable case in AFSA. When prosecuting an AFSA case, it is essential to make the correct charging decision. For a full assessment of how to make the charging decision, see the Office for Violence Against Women's Guide to Prosecuting Alcohol Facilitated Sexual Assault. Corroborating any of the victim's account of events adds factual evidence to the case and begins to build the survivor's credibility in the eyes of the jury. Although there is rarely an eyewitness to the sexual assault, there are generally witnesses to the context in which it occurred, the events leading up to it, and previous interactions between the perpetrator and the survivor. The OVW Guide emphasizes that "There is always something more to corroborate the victim if we look hard enough."ⁱⁱ

Along with corroboration, to build the most compelling case for the prosecution, compiling physical and medical evidence is vital. After looking for traditional physical evidence, investigators should look for photos on digital cameras and cell phones, cell phone records,

and all forms of recordings or surveillance of the survivor before, during or after the sexual assault. Physical evidence can be the standard variety collected in a sexual assault forensic examination, but can also include anything indicating drunkenness, such as vomit and non-SA-related scrapes and bruises from tripping or alcohol-related clumsiness. A pretext call, in which the survivor tape records a phone call to the defendant, may be an option to corroborate intercourse, to corroborate that the victim was passed out, to show that the victim said no, or to corroborate that the victim was substantially intoxicated.ⁱⁱ

Perhaps the most difficult component of prosecuting AFSA is that the very factors that render a survivor vulnerable to a perpetrator result in less perceived credibility and likeability for the jury. "Likeability" is an ugly term, especially when applied to a survivor of sexual violence. Yet it's a real factor in a jury's decision-making process, and must be addressed when working to prosecute AFSA cases. There are survivor behaviors that add to jury suspicion, but the largest contributing factors are the myths held by jury members. To prosecute an AFSA case both must be addressed.

Aequitas, an organization dedicated to providing resources about Violence Against Women to prosecutors, recommends using the voir dire process of jury selection both to select jurors with no firmly held mistaken beliefs about AFSA and, when possible, to "use a juror's life experiences to educate the other jurors about friends or family members who have been victims of sexual assault and discuss their reactions to being victimized." This

can help make the survivor and her/his experiences easier to relate to. Visit Aequitas' library for more extensive information on using voir dire to eliminate jury bias.

Throughout the trial, framing the case is key. Instead of anticipating the defense's probable attempt to frame the case in terms of a survivor's regretted consent, prosecutors should direct the focus to the behavior of the perpetrator. In addition to working with the survivor to reduce suspicion, the perceived flawed behavior of the survivor can be framed for the jury in terms of a perpetrator who looked for and targeted vulnerability.

Because jury bias is such a crucial factor in AFSA cases, the companion work to investigating, building and prosecuting AFSA cases is educating potential jurors, also known as "the public." Dispelling rape myths through media and educational programming in schools, workplaces and communities is a critical component of making it easier to convict perpetrators of AFSA. As we continue to work together in our communities, counties and statewide to thoroughly investigate and prosecute AFSA and to educate the public about rape myths, survivors, perpetrators and AFSA we will raise conviction rates and assist survivors in Ohio in achieving a measure of justice through Ohio's legal system.

i <http://www.factsontap.org>

ii <http://www.ndaa.org>

iii <http://www.aequitasresource.org>

iv <http://www.aequitasresource.org>

v <http://www.aequitasresource.org>

By Jennifer A. Yoder, Victim Services Coordinator, Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Bros Before Hos: College Fraternities and Sexual Exploitation

By **Nicholas L. Syrett** on **June 1, 2009**

In the late 1980s the *Florida News Herald* reported that a Florida State University student had been gang raped by some fraternity brothers. Allegedly the attackers painted the Greek letters of their house on her thighs, symbolically claiming her as they had also claimed her through sexual assault.

In 2001 Dartmouth College's campus newspaper, *The Dartmouth*, published graphic excerpts from Zeta Psi's weekly newsletters in which brothers described their sexual encounters:

"She's baaaackk. And she's dirtier than ever; if young [female name] hooks up with one more Zete, I'm going to need a flow chart to keep up."

"Commenting on [Brother B]'s chances for a highly-coveted spot in the Manwhore Hall of Shame, [Brother C] said, 'Are you kidding me? Rancid snatch like that makes you a fucking lock.'"

"Next week: [Brother X]'s patented date rape techniques!"

These two examples—a gang rape fraught with symbolism and the misogynist publication describing sexual exploits—are clearly extreme, but both of them are the logical outcome of a culture of masculine supremacy and sexual exploitation that has made its home in some college fraternities since the 1920s. While most do not participate in such acts, there is ample evidence to show that many, fraternity members are expected to report on sex they have for the entertainment of their entire house. College fraternities—currently numbering three

hundred fifty thousand undergraduate brothers with more than four million alumni—have become a haven for a masculinity that takes sexual conquest as one of its defining characteristics. Indeed, the social science literature of the past three decades has shown that fraternity men are more likely than their nonaffiliated classmates to rape women, and some studies have estimated that as many as 70 to 90 percent of reported campus gang rapes are committed by members of fraternities. This makes fraternities a dangerous place for the women who frequent their houses and attend their parties. In their sexist logic—and in their own words—"Brothers Over Babes" or "Bros Before Hos."

But fraternities and the men who join them have not always behaved this way. So where did the culture of sexual exploitation and masculine bragging come from? Clearly the men's behavior is a product of time, place, and cultural circumstance, not simply an instance of "boys will be boys." Nor is the behavior a natural outcome of all-male organizations, as even fraternities themselves have not always behaved this way.

Dating, 'Homosexuality,' and Frat Culture

In the early twentieth century two phenomena that we now take to be commonplace were invented. The first was dating and the second was homosexuality as a discrete identity category. Both have impacted fraternity culture. Dating arrived on college campuses in the

1920s. Fraternities, established a century earlier in the 1820s, and sororities, which had been founded on some college campuses by the 1870s, were the hubs of the collegiate dating scene. With rare exceptions fraternity men and sorority women dated each other in an exacting scale that was governed by each organization's popularity. The reputations of the individual brothers and sisters and thus of their collective memberships were in part determined by whom they dated. Fraternity members were judged by their attractiveness, their charm, and by what they called "their line," the verbal method they used to make themselves appealing to young women. Popularity—evaluated through dating women—came to define a properly enacted collegiate masculinity. And fraternity men themselves knew this; they picked new members based on the perceived expectation of potential brothers to attract women. As Dartmouth's Zeta Psi boasted in 1924, "Brother 'Stan' Lonsdale has improved the already magnificent reputation he had attained in past years as Lothario and Don Juan put together, and as representative in the chapter in all women's colleges within a radius of several hundred miles."

This celebration of men's attractiveness to women necessitated a concurrent demand that brothers *themselves* recognize what made a man attractive. They had to come to terms with themselves as men evaluating other men's good looks.

In a world like that of the nineteenth century United States,

where there was little recognition of a homosexual subculture and where most men could not conceive of a man whose sexual desires were centered exclusively on other men, this would not have been a problem. But by the 1920s fraternity men did *not* live in such a world. They still don't. By the early twentieth century—thanks to sexologists, Oscar Wilde, Sigmund Freud (and his popularizers), as well as the very people who identified with the label "homosexual" or

"How do we best meet the needs of the survivor while also acting in our duty to protect other students from a known perpetrator?"

"invert"—that some men were in fact attracted exclusively to other men was widely understood. It was also at this time that masculinity itself became yoked exclusively to heterosexuality in a decisive refutation of homosexuality.

Thus, at precisely the moment when fraternity men were becoming highly conscious of the characteristics that made males attractive to females, and were indeed evaluating their broth-

Bros Before Hos, cont.



“Because fraternities remain , organizations that choose to haze their initiates in explicitly homoerotic ways, they compensate for what might be perceived by outsiders as gay behavior by enacting masculinity that takes aggressive heterosexuality as one of its constitutive elements.”

ers based on these characteristics, they were simultaneously coming to terms with the possible meanings of these evaluations. They were also in the compromising position of being members of organizations that enrolled only single men, organizations that, through shared living, bathing, sleeping, and erotic hazing practices, fostered an atmosphere of camaraderie, intimacy, and loyalty that most found to be the fraternity’s biggest selling point.

They were caught between a rock and a hard place, even more so when some fraternities actually did turn out to be havens for homosexually inclined students, as my own research indicates, and as Dorothy Dunbar Bromley and Florence Haxton Britten found in their fascinating 1938 study, *Youth and Sex*. From the 1920s onwards fraternity men have responded to this dilemma with the enactment of particularly active dating and sexual lives designed to refute suspicions of homosexuality and to assert heterosexuality, and thus masculinity. These practices have only increased throughout the twentieth century, in part as a reaction to the intensified denigration of homosexuality at mid-century and as a result of the increasing sexual permissiveness of college women in the wake of the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

These were not conscious choices made by fraternity men, however. Rather, they were gradual changes over generations in response to

cultural shifts like the advent of dating and the emergence of modern conceptions of homosexuality. It is also clear that these two phenomena are by no means exclusive to men in fraternities. That said, because fraternities remain organizations made up exclusively of single men, organizations that choose to haze their initiates in explicitly homoerotic ways and that foster an intimacy among men not common in society more generally, they compensate for what might be perceived by outsiders as either feminine or gay behavior by enacting a masculinity that takes aggressive heterosexuality as one of its constitutive elements. This often has adverse effects for the women with whom they interact.

Misogyny Rules when Sex Takes Center Stage

By the 1960s, as a result of the sexual revolution, college women were more willing to have sex before marriage. Fraternity men thus turned to them not just for dates but also for sex, rather than to the prostitutes and working-class women of earlier eras who had previously met their needs. In 1957 two sociologists found that fraternity members were particularly likely to have attempted to take advantage of their female dates, some using “menacing threats or coercive infliction of physical pain.” Fraternity men in one 1960s study, despite having more sex than their nonaffiliated peers, expressed the highest rates of

dissatisfaction because, in the estimation of the sociologists, the pressure upon them to have sex was so much greater.. Finally, in 1967 sociologist Eugene Kanin concluded: “Erotic achievement is now evaluated by taking into account the desirability of the sex object and the nature of its acquisition. A successful ‘snow job’ on an attractive but reluctant female who may be rendered into a relatively dependable sex outlet and socially desirable companion is considerably more enhancing than an encounter with a prostitute or a ‘one night stand’ with a ‘loose’ reputation.” Sex was being used explicitly to bolster a man’s reputation amongst his fraternity brothers.

By the the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, fraternity men had built upon some of these traditions and elaborated others as well. For example, fraternities foster an atmosphere where long-term intimate relationships with women are actually discouraged. As Allen DeSantis has shown in his book, *Inside Greek U*, many fraternity men perceive their brothers’ girlfriends as a threat both to the time that the brothers might spend with the fraternity as well as to their loyalty to the brotherhood. Casual sex is valued more highly because it can be chronicled in a way that many are unwilling to do when it comes to the sex they have with girlfriends. Regular reporting on each member’s “conquests” further cements the bonds of brotherhood. This emphasis upon casual sex

Bros Before Hos, cont.

is part of a bigger problem, however. Social scientists have demonstrated that it places pressure on men who are not otherwise having sex to do so in order to save face, and this can lead to sexual assault. In order to ensure that brothers always have a steady supply of sexual partners, fraternities throw regular parties, often replete with grain alcohol punch. The parties are designed to supply intoxicated women who will either consent—or succumb—to sex.

Two other practices are also worthy of note. Some fraternity men take pleasure either in watching their brothers have sex with women or in being watched as they do so. One brother interviewed by anthropologist Michael Moffatt for his book *Coming of Age in New Jersey* put it this way: “When my friends pick up chicks and bring them back to the fraternity house everyone else runs to the window to look at somebody else dominate a girl and I tell you what you almost get the same satisfaction. Some of the guys like to put on a show by doing grosser things each time...Watching my friends have sex with other girls is almost as satisfying as doing it myself. . . . By the same token I enjoy conquering girls and having people watch.”

The view of women as objects of

domination seems to preclude any understanding that women might be acting on their own desires. That they are exploiting these women—regardless of the women’s own feelings or desires—goes without saying for this brother. Indeed, he uses the verb “conquering” to describe what seems to be otherwise consensual sex. Finally, some brothers simply compete with each other to see who can have the most sexual encounters in a year. Like the infamous Spur Posse of 1990s Lake-wood, California, these men keep a tally to determine who is the winner in a competition that has little to do with the pleasure that may be gained from sexual acts themselves, and everything to do with bolstering one’s self-esteem and reputation through the perceived connections between masculinity and sexual exploitation. It is predicated on a double standard that sees women as lesser than men and as possessing something that must be coerced from them.

This version of sexually aggressive masculinity is not inevitable. The first generation of fraternity men would not have recognized it because they did not live in a world that denigrated their intimacy or encouraged them to prove their masculinity through sexual conquest, at least not to the degree that

we see today. Of course not all fraternity men necessarily practice it, and just how many of them subscribe to this version of masculinity is impossible to calculate. That said, it should not surprise us that the structure and the historical context of the fraternity give rise to this phenomenon: an all-male organization intent on proving masculinity in a world where masculinity is seen as antithetical to intimacy amongst men, because that intimacy is too often understood to be “gay.” Until fraternity men learn to be more comfortable with the intimacy fostered through the bonds of brotherhood without demanding its concurrent disavowal through homophobia and the conquest of women, it seems unlikely that women will be much safer on college campuses with active Greek populations.

http://nsrc.sfsu.edu/article/bros_hos_college_fraternities_and_sexual_exploitation

This article draws upon Dr. Syrett’s book, *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities*, published in 2009 by the University of North Carolina Press

“This version of sexually aggressive masculinity is not inevitable. The first generation of fraternity men would not have recognized it.”

Staff Profile: Jasmine Finnie

Many of you have worked with Jasmine in the past as she served most recently as Sexual Violence Prevention Technical Assistant/Trainer at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN). At the Ohio Alliance, Jasmine will continue in her work to provide technical assistance and training related to primary prevention of sexual violence to Ohio’s sexual violence prevention community through receipt of Violence Against Women Act Rape Prevention Education (VAWA RPE) funding offered by the Ohio Department of Health

(ODH). In the absence of a sexual violence coalition for many years in Ohio, ODVN graciously established a partnership with ODH to continue sexual violence prevention work in Ohio. Now that the Ohio Alliance has established itself as the sexual violence coalition in Ohio, ODVN and the Ohio Alliance are working together to transition VAWA RPE funding from ODVN to the Ohio Alliance.

The Ohio Alliance, ODH, and

ODVN are all committed to accomplishing a seamless transition for all involved, including you. No matter where you call or email- to the Ohio Alliance or to ODVN - for primary prevention technical assistance you will be assisted and referred to the most appropriate agency. All three agencies are committed to modeling the kind of collaboration and relationships we would like to see in the world - meaningful, peaceful and healthy!

Each year Jasmine organizes a

statewide sexual violence prevention conference for Ohio. The conference usually takes place in June and is in Columbus Ohio. Topics for the conference are selected from prevention specialists in Ohio. Previous topics have included the spectrum of prevention, cultural inclusion, media literacy, and engaging men. Please join the Ohio Alliance as we welcome our newest staff member, Jasmine Finnie.

Experiencing the 5th Biennial Justice for Deaf Victims National Conference

Imagine a large nationwide gathering of Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocates united in the fight against domestic and sexual violence being perpetrated against Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf Blind survivors under one roof.

The 5th Biennial Justice for Deaf Victims National Conference (JdVNC) in partnership with Sego Lily Center for the Abused Deaf (SLCAD) made this reality for us in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 19th to 23rd, 2010. Nowhere else in this world do we have the highly unique opportunity to network, exchange information, and explore best practices for providing accessible and culturally relevant intervention and prevention services on a national scale!

The purpose of JdVNC/SCLAD conference is to encourage each one of us to gain insight in re-defining the creation and provision of accessible services in our respective agencies for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf Blind survivors and co-survivors. In looking back on the past 25 years of our movement, JdVNC and SCLAD hosted a recognition ceremony to honor and celebrate contributions of Marilyn J. Smith, the founder of Deaf Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault movement.

In the past 25 years, our Deaf Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault movement has evolved with the first training of 15 groups in 2000 to establishment of numerous non-profit Deaf advocacy services in Deaf and Hearing centers nationwide in 2010. This accomplishment originated from Marilyn J. Smith's dream in founding Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS) within her home basement with two part-time staff and a budget of \$4,000 in 1986. This dream grew with the

first ADWAS transitional housing, A Place of Our Own under ADWAS for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf Blind survivors/co-survivors. With the funding support of Department of Justice, Ms. Smith with her team completed additional training in 24 cities across America to replicate the ADWAS model in 2009 to 2010.

Several representatives from the 24 cities were able to attend SCLAD/JdVNC conference and shared their inspiring experiences from ADWAS training during the SCLAD/JdVNC conference. For seasoned advocates in the movement, our journey in providing culturally relevant intervention and prevention services has been challenging in the midst of this uncertain economic climate in regard to availability of local, state, and federal funding.

In the beginning of our life-changing conference experience, we asked ourselves what the next 25 years hold for all of us in this movement. Joene Nicolaisen, SCLAD Executive Director beautifully summed this up in her opening welcome within our program booklet.

"Accessibility CAN be 'elevated' beyond merely ensuring a person has interpreters, equipment, and so on. While these needs are extremely important, it also means creating the most accessible advocates possible. How? By serving people with generous hearts and open minds! Let's always be asking ourselves, 'Am I as accessible to our clients as I could be.' The more accessible WE are, the more empowered and free our Deaf communities will be!"

This sentiment was echoed in numerous workshops with a panel of Deaf survivors that educated advocates in improving service

delivery; emphasis on self-care for advocates; witnessing barriers survivors face in accessing multiple systems through an "In Her Shoes" activity; facilitating a self-esteem workshop series in a twelve-step journey; teen dating violence; effective collaboration strategies with criminal justice systems, service providers, interpreters, and researchers; overview of Deaf Wellness Center's IPV research project with Centers for Disease and Control; and insight into utilization of advocacy language.

In respect to the Ohio Alliance's mission, purpose statement and core values, a workshop, "Advocacy: Empowerment Through Language" was given birth in a conversation with Jeannie Brown and myself on a rooftop of a Tex-Mex restaurant in Austin, Texas in the beginning of 2010. The startling realization of the impact of our utilization of advocacy based language necessitated a series of email exchanges and videophone conversations with seasoned Deaf and Hearing advocates from Colorado, Utah, Washington State, California, Iowa, New York, Minnesota, and Vermont. Their invaluable input breathed life into a plenary workshop intended to foster thought-provoking dialogue in how we can best offer hope through empowerment to survivors/co-survivors who honor us with their trust.

We assembled two components of the workshop with a panel presentation and a video with advocates demonstrating the varying advocacy based signs with regional dialects. The purpose of the plenary workshop was intended to discuss how to use *empowering* language in facilitating healing in our work with survivors/co-survivors.

Throughout the week, we mulled over Marilyn Smith's keynote presentation, Joene Nicolaisen's opening welcome, Julie Riems Smario's insightful comments, and individual conversations with each other. Their messages were reinforced in our panel presentation that empowerment in our work must stem from ongoing self-evaluation and acknowledgment of our own privilege and power as advocates. If we do not create self-awareness on this, we are potentially part of an oppressive system built on power and privilege by rein-

"Let's always be asking ourselves, 'Am I as accessible to our clients as I could be?' The more accessible WE are, the more empowered and free our Deaf communities will be!"

forcing this through our actions.

Consistency, flexibility, transparency, and honesty is vital in engaging those who've experienced violence and struggle with the absence of these basic building blocks in a personal and/or professional relationship. We must adhere to a code of ethics in exercising utmost care and accountability in how we provide culturally relevant intervention and education/prevention services with non-judgmental compassion and empathy. Above all, survivors/co-survivors are the EXPERTS who've provided their trust in

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us to re-discover their own hidden strengths, develop newfound skills and incorporate useful tools in empowering themselves in the path to healing. In the face of their expertise, we must be humble in our endeavors in order to take on the role of a team player. Advocacy work must start where they are in their journey and honor their resilience with full access to information, options, and rights.

In this we challenged ourselves to explore how we work with survivors who come to us with signs that accurately represent their life experiences. Both Marilyn Smith of ADWAS and Julie Riems Smario of Deaf Hope wisely explained that "culture breathes, culture changes, and language changes...as it's not static." Our movement started 25 years ago after the advent of the

hearing domestic violence and sexual assault movement with the establishment of rape crisis centers and shelters. There is an ongoing debate in the selection of advocacy based words to define the spectrum of violence. In the Deaf advocacy community, we must explore and come to an agreement before we create a curriculum that we hold as a standard for new and seasoned advocates. Whose feedback is imperative? The answer, as Julie pointed out, is a focus group of survivors who can lend us their expertise as the journey to healing through effective advocacy services is rightfully theirs.

What does the future hold for the Deaf DV/SA Movement in the next 25 years? With the support of Justice for Deaf Victims National Coalition, we are united in promoting

greater accessibility for ourselves as advocates and the survivors/co-survivors who join us in our fight against domestic and sexual violence. Our next conference will take place in Denver, Colorado under the visionary leadership of DOVE and JDVNC in 2012. To learn more about JDVNC and the respective agencies, please visit their websites.

My deepest appreciation goes to the phenomenal team of Deaf advocates who contributed countless hours in supporting the tweaking of the workshop, consenting to be videotaped, creating the video, and sharing their professional experiences during SLCAD/JDVNC Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Contributed by:

Stephanie Smith-Bowman

"Culture breathes, culture changes, and language changes, it's not static."

Member Highlight: Deborah Schipper

In this issue of the Ohio Alliance Newsletter, we'd like to highlight member Deborah Schipper, who works as the Coordinator at the Sexual Violence Education and Support Office at The Ohio State University Student Wellness Center. She has been working in the social justice movement for over 34 years, and directly serving survivors of sexual violence in Ohio for over 30 years.

Throughout her career, Schipper has been at the forefront of sexual violence crisis intervention, prevention, and education. She continues to work in all three areas at the The Ohio State University.

In her work as coordinator of SVES, she supervises and presents workshops on various prevention

and intervention topics for individuals, campus departments and the community. In addition, she supervises and provides advocacy for individuals making sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner abuse and sexual assault reports.

Another large part of Schipper's work are self-defense classes. In 1999, she organized the Self-Defense Teaching Practicum, during which 40 Ohio women were trained to present an Introductory Self-Defense Workshop.

Schipper attained First Dan Rank in Tae Kwon Do in 1988, and is currently a student at the Wah Lum Kung Fu and Tai Chi School in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. She is a lifetime member of the National Women's Martial Arts Federation (NWMAF), and is certified by

NWMAF as a Self-Defense Instructor. In 1993, she was presented with The Women's Leadership Award from The Ohio State University, for outstanding leadership in education and service to the Rape Education and Prevention Program.

We are proud to count Deborah Schipper as a member of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence. She is an excellent resource and addition to the Ohio Alliance, and we hope to work with her for many years to come.

"Schipper is a lifetime member of the National Women's Martial Arts Federation (NWMAF), and is certified by NWMAF as a Self-Defense Instructor."



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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, government agencies, corporations, and concerned individuals throughout Ohio working to eliminate all forms of sexual violence.

The Ohio Alliance provides support, technical assistance, 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.