

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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Ending Teen Dating Violence: Minnesota Responds

Danielle Kluz, Public Awareness and Prevention Coordinator

We've all heard the terrible teen dating violence statistics. For example: women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest per capita rates of domestic violence and 1 in 3 high school or college women has experienced dating violence.

In 2005 alone, young Minnesotans Jessica Rose, 18, Mai Yia Lee, 22, Tiffany Bowes, 22, and Crystal Halloran Drummer, 23, were murdered by their current or former male partners. These young women were our daughters, our sisters, our friends, our classmates and our neighbors. Dating violence is a problem that affects *all* of us in Minnesota. It's time to redouble our efforts to end dating violence on behalf of all of the young women lost to us.

One way the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is responding is by working with youth on prevention and intervention efforts. Our goal is to stop the violence before it stops.

This issue of the MCBW newsletter highlights only a few of the innovative initiatives around our state to raise awareness of dating abuse with teens and parents. Many MCBW members are successfully working with schools and community groups to reach out to youth on dating abuse. For example, Casa de Esperanza in St. Paul has organized several groups of teen girls to respond to dating violence and Women of Nations in St. Paul has created the first-ever national crisis line for Native American youth.

We hope that featuring initiatives such as the statewide Centers for Disease Control's Choose Respect campaign and the Pearl Crisis Center's Teens Against Dating Abuse group will motivate you in your current work with youth or inspire you to involve your community's teens to work on efforts to end violence against women.

Director's Update

Cyndi Cook, Executive Director

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women is in the midst of some very exciting change and growth as the planning that has taken place over the last two years comes to fruition through the hiring of new staff and the creation of enhanced programming on behalf of MCBW members and women and children across Minnesota. We are looking forward to the coming months and the development and implementation of new and expanded efforts toward the goal of ending battering.

This newsletter is just one small example of the shifts that will be taking place as we work to better meet the needs of programs and battered women and their children. Throughout this newsletter you will see articles and resources related to youth, including MCBW programming that is attempting to specifically reach youth as a key component to ending violence. In the future, you will continue to see newsletters that focus in on important issues and top-

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MCBW Welcomes Four New Staff Members

For the last two years, MCBW has been engaged in an extensive planning process with the goal of strengthening the organization in order to better meet its mission. Part of that process included securing additional resources, including generous multiple-year grants recently provided by the Bush Foundation, the Minneapolis Foundation, the Otto Bremer Foundation, and the Grotto Foundation, which have enabled us to expand our staff and program capacity. MCBW is very pleased to announce the addition of the following four new staff members who will help to achieve that vision.

Jeanne Barkey joins the MCBW staff as the Membership Outreach and Special Projects Coordinator. This is a part-time position responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive membership outreach plan that will provide technical assistance and support to Coalition member programs to enhance their ability to serve their communities and facilitate networking opportunities between members and others.

Jeanne has worked for many years towards ending violence against women in a variety of capacities. Having served as the Battered Women's Program Director for the State of Minnesota through the Department of Corrections and as the former Executive Director of an MCBW member program where she participated in several MCBW committee and projects, Jeanne is well-versed in the diverse needs of our member programs. Jeanne can be reached at (651) 646-6177 ext. 26 or jbarkey@mcbw.org.

Carla Ferrucci comes to MCBW as our Director of Public Policy and Systems Change with many years of management, public policy, and systems change experience. Member programs may be familiar with her work at the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Carla brings over ten years of experience working to end violence against women, beginning with work as an advocate for battered women and sexual assault survivors at a metro program on the University of Minnesota campus. At the coalition level, her passion to end violence against women saw her leading pioneering work in the prevention of gender-based violence by addressing both the criminal and public health response to violence against women.

Carla has also been a leader in lending victims' voices to the debate on sex offender management, which culminated in an appointment to the Governor's Commission on Sex Offender Policy. Her work in the prevention of sexual violence also led to the creation of an award-winning media campaign. Carla will bring valuable experience, connections, ideas, and passion to our shared work in ending violence against women, and her commitment to member programs will ensure that your voices will con-

tinue to be integral to the work of the Coalition. Carla can be reached at (651) 646-6177 ext. 27 or cferrucci@mcbw.org.

Deb Foster comes to MCBW as our new Director of Community Connections with a broad range of experience in domestic violence, violence prevention and non-profit management. Deb has extensive experience in establishing and managing community partnerships and communications, program assessment, grassroots community engagement, and violence prevention/awareness conferences, workshops and seminars. She also brings 10 years of experience and passion for educating the public and advocating on behalf of battered women, as well as over 17 years experience in non-profit management.

Deb will be responsible for leading MCBW's Community Connections team and will be responsible for expansion efforts to promote greater public awareness of battering; identify and garner resources to support the work of MCBW and our members; respond to the needs of our member programs; increase training opportunities for advocates and system practitioners; and expand efforts to prevent domestic violence. Deb can be reached at (651) 646-6177 ext. 13 or dfoster@mcbw.org.

Welcome **Liz Richards** as the new Legal Program Coordinator at the Coalition. Liz has over 20 years of experience working with battered women. She is currently an attorney in private practice representing battered women in family court matters—namely divorce, custody and order for protection cases. Previously she worked for eight years as the training program manager for the Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project (BWLAP), a statewide project providing support to advocates, attorneys and battered women on legal issues. Liz has also worked as a battered women's advocate with Domestic Abuse Project in the Hennepin County Attorney's Office and worked as an investigator of civil rights complaints for the City of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota.

As the Legal Program Coordinator, Liz will be responsible for assessing gaps in legal services and advocacy for battered women and their children and work in collaboration with other legal advocacy organizations to develop programming to meet these needs. This position will provide statewide leadership on legal advocacy issues, coordinate research, perform public policy analysis, and guide impact litigation for the Coalition. This is a half-time position and Liz will be in the MCBW office on Wednesdays and Fridays. She can be reached at (651) 646-6177 ext. 25 or lrichards@mcbw.org.

We are very excited to have Jeanne, Carla, Deb and Liz on board at MCBW! We encourage you to call or e-mail our new staff members to introduce yourself and get to know them.

MCBW and MNCASA Partner with 23 Member Programs on the Choose Respect Initiative to End Dating Violence and Sexual Assault

Danielle Kluz, Public Awareness and Prevention Coordinator

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW), the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) and 23 of their member programs are launching a new initiative to help teens form healthy relationships. The national effort, called Choose Respect, has been designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to increase awareness about the importance of forming healthy relationships to prevent dating abuse and sexual assault, a problem that affects countless teens in the U.S. each year.

Recent research by the CDC shows adolescents who report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year are more likely to report binge drinking, suicide attempts, physical fighting, and current sexual activity.

Findings from this and other recent research led to the development of a new CDC-sponsored initiative to help adolescents, ages 11 to 14 years old, form healthy relationships. The effort focuses on how teens and the caring adults in their lives can prevent dating abuse and sexual assault before it starts. Dresden Jones of the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault said, "Many youth have little knowledge or experience in forming effective relationships. Choose Respect highlights the importance of respecting other people, and it provides information on how to recognize the signs of an abusive relationships and get help—and it does so by encouraging positive action."



MCBW and MNCASA chose to work with this national initiative because of a real need for a statewide public awareness campaign that focuses on younger teens. "Most awareness efforts have been geared towards youth ages 14-18," said Jones. "We think it's important to also reach younger teens who are just forming their attitudes about relationships." 23 MCBW and MNCASA member programs, both rural and Twin Cities metro, signed on to partner with the two coalitions on the project. Jones added, "This initiative is a way to support the amazing work sexual and domestic violence programs are already doing with youth." Each Choose Respect partner will hold an awareness event with community teens before October 31, 2006. Partners will be provided with resources such as Choose Respect materials and a 13-minute educational video and

technical assistance from MCBW and MNCASA staff. For a list of the Minnesota Choose Respect partner organizations and events happening in August-October 2006, please go to the MCBW web site at www.mcbw.org.

The Minnesota initiative will begin on August 1, 2006 with the Choose Respect Minnesota Lynx Game Night, generously sponsored by Verizon Wireless. Youth from all over the state will receive free tickets to see the Lynx play the Seattle Storm. At the game, Choose Respect materials will be handed

out to attendees and the Choose Respect television public service announcement will air.

"We are so appreciative of Verizon Wireless' great support of Choose Respect. Verizon is committed to working to end violence against women and we are excited to partner with them for the Lynx Game Night," said Cyndi Cook, Executive Director of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women.



The Choose Respect message is designed to motivate kids and teens to take dating abuse seriously, challenge harmful beliefs about dating abuse, and take steps to form respectful dating relationships. To do this, the initiative includes tools designed to help youth and adults recognize and prevent unhealthy, violent relationships. Choose Respect resources available on the official web site at www.chooserespect.org include:

- Games and interactive learning tools, including conversation starters such as e-cards, clickable quizzes and activity ideas for parents and other caring adults.
- Streaming video clips for teens to make their own music videos about healthy relationships
- A video with compelling stories of real teens that have experienced dating abuse.
- Television and radio public service announcements
- A Community Action Kit with handouts, statistics, talking points and information for community leaders and parents.

For more information about the Minnesota Choose Respect initiative, please contact Danielle Kluz at (651) 646-6177 or Dresden Jones at (651) 209-9993 ext 213.

T.A.D.A.: Teens Work to End Dating Violence in Central Minnesota

Judy Pearson, Pearl Crisis Center

In the last few years battered women's programs in Minnesota have been responding to more and more teenagers and their parents calling for help with dating violence. The Pearl Crisis Center in Milaca decided to address this issue head-on by working with teenagers to empower them to become leaders in ending violence against women in their schools and communities. Our agency felt this issue needed its own advocate/coordinator to assist teens and the problems unique to them. We also felt that teens knew these issues best and would be the best group to address their own peer group and teach adults about the issues at hand.



T.A.D.A. and their float getting ready for a parade in Onamia

Pearl approached several funders to support a teen project and the idea was well received. The project was eventually funded by the Initiative Foundation, the Bush Foundation, the Bremer Foundation, the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe/Corporate Commission, the Grotto Foundation, ECM Publishers, and Lambda Chi Omega. In August 2005, Teens Against Dating Abuse (T.A.D.A.) went into action.

T.A.D.A.'s goals are to raise students' awareness of what constitutes healthy and abusive dating relationships, raise awareness of dating abuse and its causes and consequences, equip students with the skills and resources to help themselves or friends in abusive relationships, and learn skills to develop healthy dating relationships, including positive communication, anger management, and conflict resolution. Teens are given the tools make healthy life decisions, educate others and make positive social changes within our community.

By having T.A.D.A. work on community campaign projects, teens gain knowledge on how to demonstrate respect for others in the group, engage in active listening and

communicate ideas respectfully, identify strategies to deal with conflict, display empathy for others and communicate in a clear manner during conversation. Teens build empowerment amongst the group along with individual confidence building. T.A.D.A. teens learn strategies to troubleshoot complex, real life situations and skills to be able to speak out and advocate for their issues and for others.

By providing T.A.D.A. members with training on fundraising and grant writing, teens learn the skills needed to sustain the group and also learn fundraising techniques and grant writing skills which they can take with them in future careers and community service in adulthood.

Currently, T.A.D.A has 41 members (37 girls and 4 boys). Their ages range from 12 to 17 and the students come from the Princeton, Milaca, Onamia and Nay Ah Shing school districts.

The T.A.D.A. teens went to the State Capitol on March 29, 2006 for MCBW's Violence Against Women Action Day. A few weeks before the event, staff from MCBW and the MN Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition came up to Milaca to train the group on educating legislators. The teens rallied at the Rotunda wearing their T.A.D.A. sweatshirts and holding their awareness posters. They also had the opportunity to meet with Senator Betsy Wergin to discuss dating abuse and domestic violence issues. One student who came to Action Day later said, "The trip was worthwhile because I was able to voice my opinion to someone who can do something about it." T.A.D.A. just received funding from Lambda Chi Omega so that participating in Violence Against Action Day can be an annual event.



T.A.D.A. on the Minnesota Capitol Steps at Violence Against Women Action Day

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Teens Against Dating Abuse

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T.A.D.A. and Pearl have developed a resource manual and tri-fold cards for teen victims and a survey on dating violence, which was given to 10th – 12th grade students. The results of the survey and the prevention needs of the community were addressed with Sen. Wergin during Action Day.

T.A.D.A. has participated in three local parades in Milaca, Onamia and Princeton. The group designed a theme float for the parades and passed out prevention/awareness information on dating violence (posters, CDs, brochures, candy, nail files with T.A.D.A. information and 24-hour crisis numbers, and statistic pins). Other project focus areas the group is working on are grant writing workshops, media campaigns (i.e. billboard and screen ads at local theaters) fundraising, group recruitment, and financial sustainability for the group. We will hold a training for T.A.D.A.

on fundraising and grant writing on August 14, 2006. A local consultant with HBH Associates will provide the training at no cost.

I truly believe the reason T.A.D.A. works so well is because it is the teens' project. We here at Pearl just provide guidance and suggestions but ultimately the teens own the work. We let them have a voice, we listen and encourage. By allowing the group to decide and make decisions, it empowers them to do their best, as the project is a direct reflection of their own individualities. We have all learned a lot from each other. Teens know their issues best.

If you have any questions about Teens Against Dating Abuse or starting your own teen group in your community, feel free to call me at (320) 982-2901 or e-mail me at jpearson@milaca.net.

Director's Update

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ics related to ending violence against women and children. We hope that you will find the resources and information included in these articles useful as you continue to do the important work to end battering in your local communities. Indeed, our goal of much of the expansion that is taking place at the Coalition is to better support your work through all of our programming, whether through a resource like the newsletter or through expanding programming on a larger scale.

It seemed fitting that this newsletter would be focused on both strategies to address violence against young women in dating relationships and the role of youth in the work to end violence against women. It is all too easy in today's world to lose hope that the future could hold a less violent reality for women and children. As wars and violence tear across the globe and women and children continue to be brutalized in their own homes, it is sometimes difficult to keep moving in a positive direction with a sense of optimism about our future. It is times like this, however, that it is even more important to take the time to recognize the incredible good that occurs on a daily basis, even in the midst of war and violence. Across the planet people work every day to bring peace and comfort to their communities in the face of tremendous obstacles. We need only look to the enthusiasm

and commitment of the young people involved in groups such as the Pearl Crisis Center in Milaca's Teens Against Domestic Abuse (T.A.D.A.) to see the hope for our future here at home.

We hope you will not only find practical use for the resource materials in this newsletter focused on improving services for young women, but also gain encouragement from reading about some of the work that is being done by young people to make a difference in their own communities. Many of us have been involved in the effort to end violence against women in large part because we want a better future for our children. It is no small thing that we are now seeing many of our children working to create a better future for themselves, and for all of us, as well.

Working with Teen and Young Adult Battered Women

An Excerpt from an Upcoming MCBW Training Manual: Young Women Seeking Justice

Young women are no different than any other women in that they need and deserve safety, comfort, and competence from an advocate. Be clear about what you have to offer and what a young woman accessing your services can expect from you. Be especially clear about your status as a mandated reporter and your program's confidentiality policy. You are building a working relationship based on trust and respect. Teens and young adult women have identified the following as important in providing effective advocacy:

- Basic advocacy begins with professional dignity, respect, and honoring her as a young woman who needs guidance and support.
- Provide a private and comfortable place to talk, ensuring uninterrupted time to hear her story.
- If she has children, provide child care so that she can tell her story freely.
- Provide physical comfort to her by offering a snack or beverage.
- Treat her as the most honored and precious person you know.
- Let her know that she does not deserve the violence she has experienced and that nothing that she could say or do justifies violent treatment. Tell her that you will assist her in critically determining personal needs, safety options, resources, and a support system.
- Inform her that you don't have all the answers, but you will make a commitment to being resourceful in seeking the assistance of others.
- Provide her with a written policy stating how the program will respond to her request for assistance and what it will provide.
- Discuss your responsibilities as a mandated reporter and how that relates to her rights to confidentiality.
- Explain her rights as a crime victim and her rights to shelter.
- Answer any questions that she may have about your role or the program's policies.
- Compassionately listen to the young woman's story.
- When she has finished telling her story, ask her about her immediate safety needs, what it is that she would like to see happen, and what help or assistance she wants.
- Let her know what options are available to her.
- Assist her in determining a course of action, reviewing the implications of each step.

- As you listen to her story, remind yourself that you have a dual responsibility for social/systems change advocacy and individual advocacy.
- Keep in mind that your responsibilities are to young women's present and future safety as well as seeking social and systems change.

Individual Advocacy for Young Women: Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Talk to her as a woman
- Be responsive to her status as a young woman
- Be conscientious about any special needs she might have
- Provide skilled advocacy
- Inform her of her legal rights
- Inform her of her legal options
- Assist her in pursuing legal options
- Follow her direction
- Support her decisions
- Support her self-determination
- Support her autonomy
- Educate her on existing resources and how to access them
- Educate her on how to advocate on her own behalf
- Assist her in finding permanent housing, if she needs it
- Assist her in finding culturally appropriate resources
- Assist her in establishing financial autonomy
- Assist her in developing a support network

ONLY DOCUMENT:

- What is needed to meet funding requirements
- Advocacy actions you have taken and the reasons for them
- History of abuse
- Any legal action taken
- Any mandated reporting action taken

DON'T:

- Mandate her to do anything
- Make decisions for her
- Compromise her safety in any way
- Compromise her right to privacy
- Violate her confidentiality

Thank You to Our Amazing Donors

Thank you to the wonderful people, organizations, and businesses that have donated to the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women. Your cash and in-kind donations are very much appreciated by us.

For more information on tax-deductible donations to the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, please call Kim Graham at (651) 646-6177. Please contact us if we failed to acknowledge you or your gift!

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Thank you to everyone who attended MCBW's An Evening with Victor Rivers fundraiser and those who participated in the live auction!

Farewell to Lonna Stevens

After almost five years of dedicated work on behalf of battered women and children at the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, Lonna Stevens left the Coalition in June to serve as the Director of the Sheila Wellstone Institute in St. Paul.

Lonna began working at MCBW in October of 2001. She first served as the Training and Program Coordinator, creating innovative trainings for Coalition members and forging alliances to better the lives of battered women. In 2003, Lonna became the Public Policy and Legislative Coordinator, bringing her passion to end domestic violence to the Minnesota Capitol.

Among the many legislative victories that Lonna played a key role in securing were the 2005 legislation that made

domestic assault by strangulation a felony; the 2005 restoration of \$400,00 for battered women's shelter funding and \$1.27 million for crime victim service program funding; \$2 million in funding for transitional housing for battered women in 2006; and 2006's requirement of entry of tribal and foreign orders for protection into statewide databases. Lonna was also the lead in statewide efforts to reauthorize the federal Violence Against Women Act.

"Lonna lives and breathes promoting justice, providing safety and preparing for the future for all battered women and their children," said Cyndi Cook, MCBW's Executive Director. "It will be extremely difficult to fill her shoes. However, the Sheila Wellstone Institute has gained an incredible leader. We all wish her the best as she continues her work on a national basis."

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

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details
coming SOON!

*Forging Alliances, Expanding Our Base:
Promoting Justice, Providing Safety and
Preparing for the Future for All Battered Women and Their Children*

October 25-26, 2006 at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge in Deerwood, MN

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